

LIBRARY ATTITUDES AND INFORMATION NEEDS OF HISPANIC PARENTS IN
SILER CITY, CHATHAM COUNTY: THE POTENTIAL OF SCHOOL LIBRARY
MEDIA CENTERS TO SERVE THESE NEEDS

by
Helen Sarah Dunn

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

May, 2003

Approved by:

Advisor

Helen Sarah Dunn. Library Attitudes and Information Needs of Hispanic Parents in Siler City, Chatham County: The Potential of School Library Media Centers to Serve These Needs. A Master's paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. May, 2003. 61 pages. Advisor: Evelyn Daniel.

This study describes a questionnaire survey of Hispanic parents in the Siler City School District in Chatham County, North Carolina. The survey was conducted to determine the school and library related attitudes and activities of these parents, as well as to assess their information needs.

Parents of students enrolled in Siler City School District's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) program and whose primary language at home is Spanish have high opinions of schools and libraries, because they believe these institutions can help their children excel in school, as well as provide important information to their families. While these parents do not regularly visit libraries, they agree that they would use library resources if services that they needed were provided. Parents also agreed that it would be convenient for them to use the libraries in their children's schools.

Headings:

Hispanics – Library service

School libraries – Hispanics

Library services – North Carolina

Surveys – Library service

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INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

North Carolina's Hispanic population is growing faster than any population in the state, and North Carolina has the fastest growing Hispanic population in the country. The Hispanic population of North Carolina increased from 1.2% of the total population in 1990 to 4.7% in 2000 as documented by the U.S. Census Bureau (Guzman, 2001, p. 4). This is a growth of roughly 394% in about ten years (North Carolina Division of Social Services and Children's Resource Program, 2002, p. 2). An estimated two-thirds of North Carolina's Hispanics are foreign born (64.2%) and almost all of the state's foreign-born Hispanics are non-citizens—only 5.9% have been naturalized. In addition, the Employment Security Commission estimates there are at least 58,000 Hispanic migrants in North Carolina, a figure that is not included in census data (North Carolina Division of Social Services and Children's Resource Program, 2002, p. 2). Based upon the 2000 Census data, the Migration Policy Institute (Federation for American Immigration Reform, 2002) issued a May 2002 study that estimated North Carolina's illegal-alien population at more than 100,000 ("Illegal Resident Aliens").

Due to the fact that the Hispanic population is relatively new to the State, North Carolina's school systems, health departments, social services and other community agencies are still trying to adapt their services to cater to the demands of changing demographics. The State has taken measures to identify and meet the needs of the Hispanic community by setting up the Office of Hispanic/Latino Affairs and

the Advisory Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs in 1998. However, the appointed director of these programs, Puerto Rican native Nolo Martinez, still believes there is much to be done, especially in the realm of education and providing information services to Hispanics (Carpenter, 2002).

The dropout rate among Hispanics in North Carolina is steadily growing (Associated Press, 2002) and the percentage of Hispanic children in the United States whose parents had not completed high school in 1999 was 49 % (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999). Research has shown that educational attainment of parents is linked to the academic success of their children (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001, "Indicator 4") and that children whose families have no successful educational experiences are at risk even before they begin school (Moller, 2001, p. 9). Because Hispanics constitute the largest school age minority population in the United States, and have the lowest level of education of any group in the country (Moller, 2001, p. 9), there is special need for educators to address social and cultural issues that may affect Hispanic education in the United States. One of these issues may be low level of parental involvement in education. The lack of involvement does not mean that Hispanic families do not care about the education of their children (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991, p. 22), but that Hispanic parents face many barriers to achieving an active role in the education of their children.

These barriers may be school-constructed, meaning that the school or school district does not promote active parental involvement or teachers do not have the basic skill or knowledge in working with parents to make collaboration successful (Barclay & Boone, 1996, p. 25). Barclay terms barriers to parental involvement that originate from

the family to be “barriers erected by homes” (Barclay & Boone, 1996, p. 33). Barriers may include: negative attitudes towards school held by parents and passed on to children, time and economic constraints, parent’s educational levels and abilities (Barclay & Boone, 1996, pp. 34-37). In addition, parents from diverse cultures, and especially those who are new to the country, may contend with language barriers, cultural differences and differences in parental involvement expectations, and lack of knowledge of the resources available for them to help their children in the schooling process.

Research has shown that higher levels of parent involvement lead to higher student achievement (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988, p. 76). Higher levels of parental involvement in immigrant communities has also shown to be beneficial to the parents themselves (Carnesi & Fiol, 2000; Osterling, 2001) because they become more familiar with the public resources available to them and to their children. The studies noted above show how libraries (Carnesi & Fiol, 2000) and schools (Osterling, 2001) can create programs that reach out to immigrant communities and involve families in the education process of their children, while at the same time provide valuable information and self-advancement services to parents.

Libraries are centers for the dissemination of information, and their duty is to provide for the information needs of their communities. Because of the favorable disposition to libraries showed by North Carolina Hispanics (Rincon & Associates, 2000), school library media centers could be used to provide services to Hispanic parents to help meet their information needs and to further involve them in the education of their children. Using the same facilities that their children use may appeal more to parents of Hispanic children who feel comfortable with schools because of the education their

children are receiving. At the same time, using media centers as outreach to the community would involve parents in their children's education. This could have a great effect on the educational experiences of Hispanic students and would take steps towards reaching the information needs of their parents.

Definition of the term *Hispanic*. For purposes of this study, I will use the term *Hispanic* to refer to people who trace their origins to a Spanish speaking country or culture and who reside in the United States. Other terms used to refer to this group of people include *Latino*, *Chicano*, or *Spanish American*.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of literature will provide insight into the study conducted by the researcher. The focus of this study will be the results of a questionnaire given to parents of Hispanic students whose primary language at home is Spanish and who are enrolled in the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) program in the Siler City School District in Chatham County, North Carolina. The study will investigate the library and school related attitudes and activities of these parents, the amount of involvement they have in their children's education, as well as their information needs.

This review of literature relevant to the study is divided into several sections. The sections are: Rationale for Serving the Hispanic Community's Information Needs Through School Library Services; Hispanic Students and Parental Involvement; Potential Barriers to Parental Involvement for Hispanics; Assessing the Information Needs of

Hispanic Families; Examples of Successful Outreach to Hispanics: Case Studies; and a Summary.

Rationale for Serving the Hispanic Community's Information Needs Through School Library Services

Addressing the needs. The public education system in North Carolina has been grappling with ways to improve education of the increasing Hispanic population. In June of 1998 the state Office of Hispanic/Latino Affairs, the Advisory Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs, and the position of Director of Hispanic/Latino Affairs were created to coordinate state and local programs to meet the needs of North Carolina's Hispanic/Latino residents. Then Governor Jim Hunt appointed Puerto Rican native Nolo Martinez Director of Hispanic/Latino Affairs to lead the effort to create a better infrastructure for identifying and meeting the needs of the Hispanic and Latino population (Shore, 1998).

In a 1999 interview with the North Carolina Global Center, Martinez speaks about the importance of serving the information needs of the growing Hispanic community in North Carolina, both in the public education setting as well as in the work force setting. He stresses the importance of the dissemination of information to members of the Hispanic community to raise awareness of the services and opportunities available to these new residents of the state (Carpenter, 2002).

Increasing Hispanic population. "A Profile of Hispanic Newcomers to North Carolina," written by James H. Johnson, Jr., Karen D. Johnson-Webb, and Walter C. Farrell, Jr., in 1999 gives some insight into the characteristics of North Carolina's

Hispanic immigrant population. The authors conclude that the population has grown rapidly, it is relatively young in comparison to the state's other ethnic populations meaning that the potential for continued growth through natural increase, as well as continued in-migration of other Hispanics, is great. Among their findings were that Hispanics were arriving in North Carolina from other states in the country as well as directly from other countries and that they have settled in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas in the state. Hispanic newcomers are concentrated in low-paying primary, transformative, and service jobs. Among their findings was also that there is considerable opposition to the Hispanic influx among long-term residents of the state. This information is important because it indicates the factors that will contribute to the increasing necessity of providing services to this growing population.

As the profile done by Johnson et al suggests, it is important to consider the difference between Hispanic Americans (those who are citizens) and Hispanic immigrants (those who are not). The Hispanic community in North Carolina is mostly made up of recent immigrants (Guzman, 2001, p. 4). An estimated two-thirds of North Carolina's Hispanics are foreign born (64.2%). Almost all of the state's foreign-born Hispanics are non-citizens—only 5.9% have been naturalized (North Carolina Division of Social Services, 2002). Most Hispanics in North Carolina communicate largely in Spanish and are insecure about communicating in English (Rincon & Associates, 2000, p. 2).

Economic considerations. As Alire and Archibeque (1998) note, “One of the most effective ways to convince a group of people...of the importance of a service is to tell them how it will affect their wallets (Alire & Archibeque, 1998, p. 35). On this note,

one could argue that a library providing information services to increase “human potential” (such as self-help materials, ESL instruction, parenting courses, or resume building courses) to Hispanics which could help them become more economically productive, or compete for higher-paying jobs, is in turn helping the community by making these residents more economically productive. This way, these residents will pay more sales, income, and property taxes, which will then support public services such as police, fire, and library (Alire & Archibeque, 1998, p. 35).

In addition, it is important to consider the economic implications of increasing levels of knowledge and education within a community. The Hispanic high school dropout rate is the highest among population sub groups in the country (Keeping the Promise, 2002, p. 2), and in North Carolina, over 25 percent of high school dropouts were Hispanic in 2000, up from about 2 percent in 1990 (Associated Press, 2002). This means that a large segment of the population will not be well educated, and this segment perhaps will not be as economically productive as they could be. However, by involving Hispanic parents in literacy programs, libraries can “indirectly affect Latino student achievement. Once Latino parents learn to read, they will also understand the importance of reading often to their children” (Alire & Archibeque, 1998, p. 36). By reading often to their children, parents can teach the value of knowledge and information in books. Libraries can help Hispanics develop “human potential” by providing opportunities for them to improve their economic status so that they may contribute more to their community’s economy.

The educational, social, and personal development of Hispanic children is another rationale for providing library services to the Hispanic community (Alire & Archibeque,

1998, p. 37). Children are our future, and will eventually be responsible for contributing financially to retirements of older generations, so it only makes sense to allow all children to develop to their full potential (Alire & Archibeque, 1998, p. 37). While costs for developing programs and collections for Spanish-only speaking patrons may seem unreasonable and costly, the benefits of this investment “would far outweigh the initial cost of these services in their formative years. The future economic success of Latino children will affect everyone’s future economic well being” (Alire & Archibeque, 1998, p. 38).

Hispanic Students and Parental Involvement

High level of high school dropouts among Hispanic students. The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee released a study in June 2002 that cited the major achievement gap between Hispanic and other students in the United States. The number of Hispanic school age children has grown by 61% since 1990; one out of every six children that attends public school in the country is Hispanic. The Hispanic school age population is growing at the greatest rate in communities in the Midwest and in the South with little or no history of serving them.

In North Carolina, the Hispanic school age population has grown by over 397 percent since 1990 (Keeping the Promise, 2002). This is the largest percentage jump in the country. Hispanics older than age 16 are more than twice as likely to drop out of school than African Americans and four times more likely to drop out than White students (Keeping the Promise, 2002). As noted earlier, in North Carolina, over 25

percent of dropouts were Hispanic in 2000, up from about 2 percent in 1990 (Associated Press, 2002).

El Pueblo, Inc. suggests that immigration status and having to pay out of state tuition are directly related to high Latino dropout numbers and education achievement gaps. The organization contends that because Latino students cannot see a future in higher learning, they see less benefit in completing high school (El Pueblo, 2001). All school age children (3 to 21 years old) in the state of North Carolina have the right to free public education regardless of residency status. This is mandated by federal law. However, once a foreign-born individual without residency status is above the age 21, his or her access to state education services becomes more complicated. While under federal law, no state institution of higher education can refuse enrollment because of residency status, non-residents must pay out of state tuition to attend public universities or community colleges and are not eligible for financial aid or federal scholarships. The Dream Act, under review in the U.S. Senate, would take measures to change this policy, and make public post secondary education more accessible to the Hispanic foreign-born population by allowing them to pay in-state tuition. As of now, the majority of North Carolina's fastest growing population does not have access to advance in education beyond high school, and this could also be a contributing factor to the high level of Hispanic dropouts in the state.

There are other factors that may contribute to low levels of Hispanic high school completion. For example, Hispanic students who enter school at a later age may not do well because they are not proficient in English or they may not feel accepted and drop out as a result. Also, some school age Hispanics may bypass the school system entirely

(Associated Press, 2002). Problems such as higher growth rates of English as a Second Language (ESL) students than of ESL teachers, and inadequate appropriations of state funding contribute to the problems and to the high drop out rate among Hispanic students (Carpenter, 2002). The state has begun several bilingual education programs in response to the failures of ESL programs to improve academic achievement among Hispanic students (Martinez, 1999).

Importance of parental involvement in education. Research has shown that educational attainment of parents is linked to the academic success of their children (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999; Moller, 2001) and higher levels of parent involvement leads to higher student achievement (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988). A lower level of parental involvement in schools has been associated with African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic parents, as well as parents from a lower socio-economic status (Eccles & Harold, 1993). Moreover, there appears to be a correlation between educational attainment of parents and their children in the Hispanic population of the United States (Moller, 2001, p. xvi).

Bermudez (1994) identifies benefits to be gained by involvement of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) parents in their children's schooling. He writes, "Benefits for students include (a) improved student academic achievement, (b) increased language achievement, (c) improved overall school behavior and attendance, (d) sustained achievement gains, (e) improved attitudes in science among adolescents, and (f) increased cognitive growth" (Bermudez, 1994, p. 7). While there are no figures available for educational attainment of Hispanic parents in North Carolina, the percentage of

Hispanic children in the United States whose parents had not completed high school in 1999 was 49% (Child Trends Data Bank, 2002).

The North Carolina Division of Accountability Services conducted a study in 2001 to examine the school environments of 8th grade students across North Carolina. The aim of their research was to determine the relationship between school environment and student outcomes. They found that lack of parental involvement was one of the factors contributing to lower student outcomes. Another factor of lower student outcomes was less desirable psychological and behavioral climates in schools where Hispanics and other minorities attended (North Carolina Division of Accountability Services, 2001). This study is valuable because it makes the link between parental involvement and overall quality of education.

Potential Barriers to Parental Involvement for Hispanics

Barriers erected by homes: cultural considerations. Nicolau and Ramos, as well as Moller, suggest that there are considerable differences in the roles of parents in schools in Hispanic's home countries than in the United States. Hispanics in the United States may feel like they should not get involved with schools because they feel unworthy and feel they have no right to question school systems that are governed by educated non-Hispanics (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990, pp.13-14; Moller, 2001, pp.10-15). Because of their non-involvement, many school administrators and teachers take this to mean that Hispanic parents do not care about their children's education. This leads to poor communication and mistrust between school personnel and Hispanic families (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990, pp.13-14).

Another factor that may contribute to low Hispanic parental involvement in children's education is the language barrier. The State Library of North Carolina "Survey of Library Needs for North Carolina Hispanics" found that North Carolina Hispanics were very Spanish language dependent and insecure about communicating in English. The survey conducted by telephone of a representative sample of Hispanics residing in North Carolina documented that over 8 in 10 Hispanics (81.7%) preferred to be interviewed in Spanish (Rincon & Associates, 2000).

Other factors may be the inability to help their children with school work due to low levels of educational achievement, parent's unsuccessful educational experiences, and cultural differences in the perceived role of the parent in education (Moller, 2001, p. 9). For example, Hispanic parents may believe that it is the school's job to educate their children, and that they should not become involved.

Barriers erected by schools. A school-constructed barrier is what Epstein and Dauber (1989) refer to as an attitudinal barrier that exists among teachers who differ from their students culturally, educationally, and socio-economically and do not believe that their parents are willing or able to become involved in the education process of their children. This "attitude" makes it harder to reach culturally diverse parents, and has been challenged by research that has shown that parents of all backgrounds are capable of being productively involved in their children's education (Dauber & Epstein, 1989).

Assessing the Information Needs of Hispanic Families

Hispanic information needs. The results of an investigation initiated by the State Library of North Carolina called "Survey of Library Needs for North Carolina

Hispanics” in 2000 suggest that North Carolina Hispanics are not strong library users, but are favorably disposed to libraries. Results revealed the low number of Hispanic library users in North Carolina but also positive attitudes towards libraries among Hispanics because of the belief that they helped children perform better in school and because they could provide useful information.

The survey showed that respondents believed visitation levels would increase (1) if library signage in Spanish improved to the point that non-English speakers could conduct searches in Spanish for the information they needed, (2) if more books and materials were provided related to Hispanic people and culture, and (3) if other relevant information on day to day life was provided, such as health information, parenting resources, self-help resources, government forms and instructions for applications, such as those for housing and jobs (Rincon & Associates, 2000).

The study also revealed that Hispanics would consider visiting a library if there were classes providing instruction to reading and speaking in English, if there were information provided about citizenship, information regarding health services and if children’s books were provided in Spanish.

The State Library study is an important milestone for North Carolina libraries interested in better serving Hispanic populations in their communities. The results of this survey show that Hispanics in North Carolina are favorably disposed to libraries. Because of this positive attitude towards libraries, school library media centers could be used to provide services to the Hispanic community (both students and parents) to help meet their information needs. At the same time, using media centers as outreach to the community would involve parents in their children’s education. More research into the

information needs of potential Hispanic library patrons is needed in states such as North Carolina that have not traditionally served the Hispanic community, but have recently experienced an influx. Alire and Archibeque (1998) suggest that “Latino information needs are as important as the needs of others but they will probably also differ from your non-minority users’ needs” (p. 41).

Increasing Spanish language materials. There is a great need for further development of school library and public collections in Spanish in North Carolina not only to increase the materials available to students but also to increase materials available to parents who do not speak English. According to the Texas Committee for the Humanities, in the United States, up to 87% of non-English speakers who are illiterate in English are also illiterate in their native language (Alire & Archibeque, 1998, p. 38). Research done by Alicia Sosa in 1993 suggests that in order to succeed in a second language, a strong foundation in one’s first language is necessary. Sosa’s research looked at Mexican-American students and how their progress in learning English is affected when they are forced to learn only in English in what is called “English Immersion Programs.” She found that Mexican-American students who are encouraged to remain fluent in Spanish, and who are provided with reading materials in Spanish are more likely to succeed in English, and do better academically (Sosa, 1993, p.13).

Moller (2001) cites studies done by the Colorado State Library and Adult Education Office that have shown that the size of school library media centers’ staff and collections is the best predictor of student academic achievement (p. xviii). Moller adds that “Library resources in Spanish would therefore help Latino students learn the fundamental concepts being introduced in the curriculum, bridge gaps in understanding,

integrate new material into their current knowledge base, and ultimately achieve more success academically and in life” (p. xviii).

According to media specialist Rose Pate, of Jordan Matthews High School in Chatham County, North Carolina’s school library media centers often do not have adequate funding to stock their shelves with needed resources in English, let alone to develop a collection in Spanish (Rose Pate, personal communication, October 14, 2002). However, Alire and Archibeque challenge that “providing services to [Hispanics] should not be viewed as a funding issue” (Alire & Archibeque, 1998, p. 41). Likewise, Moller states, “Spanish-language materials should not be seen as merely supplemental library materials, but as integral parts of collections serving Latino populations” (2001, p. xviii). Hispanics, like non-Hispanics, pay taxes that support the libraries, schools, and other public services in their communities, and thus should benefit from the tax-paid services as others in the community do.

School library media centers are often overlooked and "are rarely thought of as central players when anyone - even government - is planning to distribute information to the public" (Nichols, 1995, p. 352), even though these libraries are the ideal places to provide and disseminate information to the public.

Characteristics of the “Hispanic family.” It is important to identify the role of family and community in Hispanic culture in order to see how school library media centers could be used as outreach centers to the Hispanic community. While generalizations about Hispanics is somewhat difficult due to the great variety of cultures and countries they come from, Alire and Archibeque believe that the similarities are greater than the differences among Hispanic subgroups (1998, pp.6-7). The family (la

familia) is a very important social institution among Hispanics (Garcia, p.124). Family includes not only the nuclear unit, but also an extended community of family members. Activities, or “outings,” that include the entire family are prevalent in Hispanic culture due to the strong family ties and sense of unity felt within the family (Alire and Archibeque, 1998, pp. 6-7).

Research suggests that children are the main focus of the Hispanic family, and that the best way to get Hispanic parents into the library is through children’s programming and family centered activities. (Alire and Archibeque, 1998, p.101). North Carolina Hispanics have mostly positive attitudes toward schools and libraries because of the belief that they helped children perform better in school (Rincon & Associates, 2000). Suarez-Orozco suggests that Hispanic immigrant families strongly believe in the importance of schooling, and recognize its importance in the upward mobility of their children (2001, p.152) and that “newly-arrived immigrant parents tend to be positive about the schooling opportunities offered to their children” (p.149). This suggestion combined with the findings of the State Library Survey relays the importance of outreach to this community through the library medium to involve parents in their children’s education and also to provide them with the information they need.

Capitalizing on the importance of family in the Hispanic community by creating school library media center programs that encourage parental involvement could lead to an increase in library use by the Hispanic community. Parental participation of Hispanic students would not only benefit students, but would also open the door to creating ways to meet the information needs of the Hispanic community.

Examples of Successful Outreach to Hispanics: Case Studies

Introduction. There are many examples of effective outreach programs to Hispanics of public libraries and school systems across the country, but a great lack of literature on outreach done through school library media centers. However, an argument could be made for using school library media centers as outreach to the Hispanic community using evidence provided by research that the Hispanic population trusts of schools, while generally distrustful of government agencies including public libraries (Sundell, 2000, p. 145; North Carolina Division of Social Services and Children's Resource Program, 2002, p. 7). However, much can be learned from successful programs in the public library and school outreach realm.

Empowering Families Through Literacy (EFTL). Case studies, such as that of the El Salvadoran population in Arlington, Virginia (Osterling, 2001), provide good information as to how school systems can better engage culturally diverse student and community populations whose primary languages are not English to increase literacy and academic success. The article notes the high percentage of dropouts by Hispanic students in the country, and specifically of Salvadoran students in the schools of Arlington. The Salvadoran population in Arlington has reached upwards of 200,000 in the Arlington area as a result of the Civil War, which spanned from 1979 to 1992 in El Salvador. Over 1 million fled El Salvador in these years, and most of these refugees came to the U.S. Arlington County opened its doors to these refugees and is now trying to address the issues that have come about after years of failing to provide proper educational opportunities to these families. Educators had failed to look at the circumstances surrounding the Salvadoran children in their schools. Many were separated from the

families for years because there was not enough money to bring them across the Guatemalan and Mexican borders into the U.S. As happens with many immigrant families from Latin America, one family member crosses the border first to establish a place for their family. Then, when enough money is earned to bring a child or a spouse over, it is sent back so that they may make preparations with a *coyote* (a person who is paid to get immigrants across the border illegally.) Also, in this case, many of the children and parents had seen murders and other horrendous acts during the war.

A program called Empowering Families Through Literacy (EFTL) was launched in 1996 by a group of volunteer Latino professionals with collaboration of Arlington School teachers and administration. The program was started based upon the knowledge that many of the parents of the students enrolled in the Arlington area schools were not literate in Spanish due to lack of educational resources in their war torn country. They also realized that the families were very tightly knit and that familial support and unity was the basis of their survival. Parents and other relatives could not help their children with schoolwork, and could not participate in school functions because of the language and literacy barrier. Also, school age children often found themselves in role reversal. That is, children served as translators and caretakers of their parents because they learned English before them. The volunteers envisioned creating a program that would work with entire families by teaching parents literacy and math skills in Spanish while at the same time tutoring and providing activities for their children. Once the parents could fend for themselves, they could also begin to help their children and to give them more hope in how staying in school can really benefit them.

This case study is very pertinent to school communities who are seeing a dramatic increase in Hispanic enrollment, like many of North Carolina's schools. Promoting literacy to the Hispanic community is one way the school library media centers could attract Hispanic parents into the libraries. While I am not aware of any Literacy Programs through school systems in North Carolina, I do know that ESL classes are already being offered to some Hispanic community members through teacher volunteerism and media center coordination in the Bilingual Parent Resource Center in Siler City, Chatham County.

New Americans Project (NAP). Successful outreach programs in the public library realm in communities that have had significant Hispanic populations for a number of decades have marketed their services highly to potential Hispanic patrons. For example, the Queens Borough Public Library offers workshops on immigration law, workers' and tenants' rights, and the American education system (Moller, 2001, p. 29). In order to better serve its growing international population, the Queens Library formed the New Americans Project (NAP) in 1977. Since its beginnings, NAP has developed into the New Americans Program, and has a professional staff of eight, a secretary, and twenty-three ESL teachers. The program, geared only toward newly arrived immigrants, began from the idea that public libraries in the United States are distinctive. "Immigrants for the most part come from countries where libraries are perceived as being for the use of scholars alone, where books may not be allowed to circulate, where community information referral services are all but non-existent. It is unrealistic, therefore, to expect immigrants to seek out libraries by themselves" (Carnesi & Fiol, 2000, p. 134).

Forsyth County Public Library, North Carolina. In 1996, the Forsyth County, North Carolina, Public Library applied for and received a grant of \$41,000 from the North Carolina State Library to begin serving its Hispanic population. Forsyth's Hispanic population at this time were mainly new immigrants; nearly half of households had at least one child; the educational attainment of adults was relatively low; almost 90% of the population was employed (94% of those employed worked full time; 29% worked more than 45 hours a week); the population was not highly proficient in English; the most common free time activity was going to church (65%); formal sources of information were television and newspaper; the most important informal source of information was from church leaders and friends; and the ranking for most needed services were English classes, Spanish television, immigration resources, health resources, Spanish radio, and employment resources (Sundell, 2000, pp. 144-145). This assessment of the Hispanic population's activities and needs was used to create a program that would cater to and attract Hispanics, however, despite efforts to market to the Hispanic population and expand the usage of the library by the Hispanic immigrants of Forsyth County, Sundell acknowledges that many of the Hispanics who could benefit from the library's services will probably never use them.

As Carnesi and Fiol note that library service to the public is not offered in many immigrants' home countries, Sundell also suggest that unfamiliarity is a barrier to getting potential Hispanic patrons into the library. Sundell points out another important barrier: distrust of government agencies. He writes, "Since many are undocumented [immigrants] and also because they are accustomed to widespread government corruption in their home countries, there is also a mistrust of government agencies" (Sundell, 2000,

p.145). Other potential barriers identified were heavy workloads, and difficulties with transportation to and from the library (Sundell, 2000, p.145).

Summary

North Carolina's Hispanic population is mostly foreign born and includes many recent immigrants from their home countries, or from other states, who may be in the country legally or illegally. The Hispanic population is relatively new to North Carolina and because of this the state is still developing strategies to better serve their information needs. Research has shown that educational attainment of parents can affect the academic success of their children, and linked parental involvement to academic success of children. Research has also suggested that the level of these two factors is low in the Hispanic population in the United States. However, Hispanic immigrants have demonstrated the desire for their children succeed in school, as they see academic success as a benefit to their children. Hispanics in North Carolina have shown themselves to be family oriented, as well as favorably disposed to libraries because of their ability to help children do better in school. Might school library media centers be used as outreach to the Hispanic community, drawing in families and involving parents in the education of their children? Could the school library media center meet the information needs Hispanic of "[parents], most of whom care deeply about the achievement and future of their children, but are unfamiliar with the system of education in the United States, do not understand how they are expected to relate to it, and do not know how or where to find assistance" (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990, p. 15)?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Goals

This research for this study focused on the parents of Hispanic students whose primary language at home is Spanish and who are enrolled in the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) program in the Siler City School District in Chatham County, North Carolina. The research was conducted through a questionnaire developed to assess the library and school related attitudes and activities of these parents, the level of involvement they have in their children's education, as well as their information needs.

The Siler City School District in Chatham County was chosen because of the recent increase in Hispanic student enrollment. In all of Chatham County, there was a 598% surge in Hispanic public school enrollment from 1990-1998. Most of the newly enrolled Hispanic students were in the Siler City School District. This increase can be attributed to the employment of many of the students' parents in the manufacturing industry, such as lumber and wood products, textile making, metalworking, and poultry processing (Rose Pate, personal communication, October 14, 2002). Siler City is Chatham County's largest town, and approximately 40% of the County's workforces of 21,000 people are employed in Siler City's manufacturing and processing plants. Major employers, located in Siler City, include textile manufacturers such as Mastercraft and Glendale Group LTD, and poultry processors include Townsends and Goldkist (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2003).

Chatham County has three public libraries in Siler City, Pittsboro and Goldston. Each school in the district has a school library media center, and the school system has a Bilingual Parent Resource Center that is supported by Title I funds and serves the parents

of children in Chatham County schools. It is located in the Sage Academy in Siler City, and is across the hallway from the Parent Intake Center for the Siler City School District.

The Center has about 15 computers with Internet access, parenting books in English and Spanish, children's books in both languages, and they offer ESL and parenting classes for free. The Center also has access to online computer courses. There is a Homework Hotline that is open several days a week. Kids, or parents, can call in to speak (in English or in Spanish) with one of the teachers that staff the phones. The Center is open every school day during normal business hours, and parents are welcome to stop in without appointment.

The "open doors" philosophy of the Resource Center is much different than that of the library media centers in the schools. In order to visit one of the school library media centers or visit anyone inside the schools, visitors have to make an appointment and then sign in at the front office to get a visitor's pass and wait until the appropriate contact has been notified of his or her arrival. Of course, this is to protect the safety of the students, yet it may be an additional barrier to parental involvement in the education of their children, as well as impede parents' use of libraries in the schools. For the purposes of this study, the Bilingual Parent Resource Center is included under the term "school library media center."

The goal of the research is the investigation of the information needs of Hispanic parents in an area in which they are a relatively new segment of the population and where efforts are already being made to meet their needs. The research is intended to shed light on any correlations between school and library related attitudes, school and library related activities, and levels of participation in the education of their children. For

example, the survey results could identify if parents who actively participate in the education of their children also visit libraries on a regular basis. Or, the results may show that parents who actively participate in the education of their children do not go to the library, but believe the library is a good place to find information and to help their children do better in school. This would provide an argument that school libraries could market their services to this group of parents as the research suggest that these parents are favorably disposed to libraries.

Framework for Developing the Questionnaire

There is an abundance of literature on the importance of family, school, and community in the education process. Epstein (2002) developed a “typology,” that elaborates on the types of involvement needed to bring together school, family, and community. This typology provides a framework for incorporating parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration that can be used to strengthen connections between the groups. Epstein’s typology of family and community involvement in education provides an excellent basis for developing a plan to reach out to North Carolina’s Hispanic community through school library media centers.

The bases of Epstein’s typology as related to the role of the parent as paraphrased by the author of this paper are as follows:

1. Basic obligations of parents. Parents provide children with basic needs (health, educational support, emotional support, and social support) and schools are responsible for helping parents learn how to provide for their children
2. Basic obligation of schools. Schools actively communicate with parents (through memos, report cards, notices, and parent conferences) by reporting

future events, school programs, parenting resources and children's progress in school.

3. Parent involvement. Parents are given the opportunity by schools to become involved as volunteers assisting teachers in the classroom, administrators, media specialists, or assisting children in other areas of the school. Parents also participate in supporting the school by attending sports events, student performances, and other events.

4. Parent involvement in learning at home. This refers to parent initiated or child initiated requests for help in response to ideas from teachers for parents to monitor and assist their children with home learning activities or homework.

5. Parent involvement in governance and advocacy. Parents are involved in the decision making process of their PTA, Advisory Councils, or other councils and groups at the school, district and state levels.

This typology was used to form the questions for the questionnaire, making sure that all categories were included (See Appendix B). In addition, the questionnaire asks general questions about library use and attitudes towards libraries, in order to discern whether or not school library media centers can be successful mediums through which to perform outreach to Hispanic parents.

As noted by Brilliant (2001, p. 5), when developing survey questions to study parent involvement among the Hispanic community or any other culturally and linguistically diverse population, it is necessary to address the social, linguistic, and cultural background of participants. Past studies have shown a dichotomy between parent concern and low response rate to survey questions, perhaps because the research methodology did not address the background of the participants (Brilliant, 2001). Several questions that had to be considered were; (1) should the survey be written only in English, or translated into Spanish?; (2) are parents literate in English, and/or in Spanish?; (3) will parents understand the survey techniques and survey-taking directions?

As Brilliant writes, “Just as languages and cultures vary widely, research methods used in the United States can differ from those used in other countries, as can patterns of response” (Brilliant, 2001, p. 5)

In consideration of these factors, the questionnaire was written in Spanish and tested for understandability and time of completion with a small group of Spanish speakers of different education levels. The average time to complete the survey was 14 minutes, and there were no problems in understanding any of the questions.

Research Participants

The sample of participants included 182 parents from different households. The participants were parents of Hispanic students who receive LEP (Limited English Proficiency) services in the Siler City School District and whose primary language used at home is Spanish. All members of the sample resided in Siler City, and their children attended school in the Siler City District. These parents were chosen for the questionnaire because of their relationship to the school system and as potential users of the school library media centers and other libraries in the area. The names and addresses of the parents were provided by the Parent Intake Center in Sage Academy, Siler City. All students new to the District are registered in the Parent Intake Center. However, this does not mean that all of the parents who were sent questionnaires were new to the school district. Many already had children registered prior to this year. There was no distinction made in choosing parents according to the grade level of their children. The only requisites were that the parents reside in Siler City and their children attend a Siler City School, that their children be listed as Hispanic, be enrolled in the LEP program and

that Spanish be their primary language at home. All of this information was provided by the Parent Intake Center. From this, I made the inference that the parents of these children would be primarily Spanish speaking.

Research Procedure

Approval Processes. The study was first approved by the UNC AA-IRB and then by the Chatham County School System. Both the consent letter (See Appendix A) and the questionnaire (See Appendix B) were approved by both authorities.

Distribution and receipt of the questionnaires. The names and addresses of the sample of 182 parents were obtained through the Chatham County Schools Parent Intake Center at Sage Academy in Siler City. The questionnaires, along with accompanying consent letters and self-addressed stamped envelopes for returning the questionnaire were sent to the sample on April 14, 2003. The respondents were given three weeks to return the questionnaires. Of the 182 questionnaires sent, twenty-one were sent back “Return to Sender” because of inaccurate postal information. Thirteen (13) questionnaires were returned completed.

Analysis of the data. Because of the small number of returned questionnaires, the data was reviewed by identifying groupings of similar responses and then analyzed.

Research Findings

Mastery of English language. Most respondents replied that they were more comfortable communicating in Spanish (9) or they were comfortable communicating in both English and Spanish (4). The number of respondents who could speak English very

little or more or less (11) was equal to the number who could read and write in English very little or not at all.

Education level. The majority of respondents had completed elementary and middle school (9), while the remaining had completed high school (2) and university (2).

School related attitudes among respondents. All (13) respondents agreed very much or agreed that the school their children attended was good for their children, the teachers in the school were interested in the progress of their children, they felt good about the school, their children were learning as much as they could in the school, the school was one of the best in the area for parents and children, the school gave parents the information they need to help their children succeed, and the school encouraged parents to be volunteers and to participate in the education of their children.

Level of participation in the education of their children among respondents. Most respondents (11) participated in the education of their children at home. They always or frequently spoke with their children about the importance of school (13), they helped children with homework always or a lot (9), to study for tests always or a lot (9) and read to their children always, a lot, or frequently (8).

Most respondents did not participate in the education of their children outside of the home. Most rarely or never spoke with their children's teachers on the telephone (9), never or rarely visited their children's classrooms (10), never or rarely go to a library with their children (10). About half of the respondents always went to special events in their children's school and to PTA meetings (6) while the other half rarely or never went to special events or PTA meetings (7).

How respondents fill their information needs. Most respondents agreed that family and friends were their main source of information for day-to-day needs (9). Respondents also used radio (8), television (4), newspaper (4), library (2), magazines (2), Church (2), Internet (1), and none used the yellow pages.

Frequency of library visitation among respondents. Most respondents had visited a library once in the past 12 months (4) or never in past 12 months (4). The rest of the respondents replied that they visit a library every month (2), every three to six months (1), and every week (1).

How respondents would use a library. Most respondents (9) agreed they would definitely or probably use a library to borrow materials for adults, materials for children (8), and materials for young adults (8). Most respondents agreed they would definitely or probably (8) use a library to read magazines and newspapers, to attend classes on how to use computers (10), to talk with a librarian about books their children could read (9), to use a computer to access the Internet (8), to bring their children to children's programs (8), to attend classes to learn English (9), to attend parenting classes (8), and to access government information about taxes, laws, and citizenship (8).

Libraries visited by respondents in Chatham County. About half of the respondents had not visited a library in Chatham County (7). The libraries visited by respondents were one of the area public libraries (3), the Bilingual Parent Resource Center (2), and the library in the school of their children (2).

Library related attitudes among respondents. All respondents agreed very much or agreed that libraries are good places to find information (13), that libraries can help their children do better in school (13), that they would visit libraries more if they

didn't have to work so much (13), that it would be convenient to have more access to the library in their children's school or to the Bilingual Parent Resource Center (13), and that they would visit libraries more often if libraries provided more information about Hispanic people, culture, and events (13). Most respondents replied that library staff could more or less communicate with Hispanics (8), and that library staff was friendly with Hispanics (8).

Analysis of Data

Low response rate. The low response rate can be attributed to several factors. While the research methodology for this study attempted to address the social, linguistic and cultural background of participants, past studies in the United States of culturally and linguistically diverse populations have also experienced low response rates (Brilliant, 2001). The questionnaire was tested with a pilot group of educationally diverse members for understandability and ease of completion; however, there may be other factors involved in the low response rate. While the questionnaire was approved by Chatham County Schools, it was not sent to parents as a communication of the schools, but as a personal communication from the researcher. Perhaps having the "seal of approval" from the schools would have aroused more confidence in the participants as to the intent of the questionnaire. While those who responded seemed to be very grateful for the interest of a researcher in the needs of the Hispanic community (See Appendix C), many may not have trusted the intentions of such research if it was not conducted directly by the schools their children attend.

Mastery of English language and education level of parents. The majority of respondents were more comfortable communicating in Spanish, and could get by speaking in English, but could not read and write well in English. This means that a language barrier could exist in communications with their children's schools, impeding their involvement in school encouraged functions and activities. It also may affect the ability to help their children with homework, as their children will be learning in English. Another factor that could impede parents' ability to help children with homework is their level of educational attainment. Most respondents had completed elementary and middle school, but not high school or university. As children advance beyond the grade levels the parents themselves completed, helping them may become more difficult. Another consideration is that most of the parents in the sample were probably educated in their home country, meaning that their education would be fundamentally different from that which their children are receiving in the United States.

School related attitudes among respondents and level of participation in the education of their children. All respondents showed favorable dispositions to the schools their children attended. They all believed that their children were getting a very good education, that the schools cared about the progress of their children, and that the schools provided parent the information and encouragement they needed to help their children succeed. This disposition is positively reflected in amount of parental participation in their children's education at home (teaching children the importance of education, reading to children, helping children with homework and preparing for tests). However, responses indicated that parental participation outside of the home did not

correspond with the encouragement that parents received from schools to be volunteers, speak with their children's teachers, or to visit their children's classrooms.

According to Epstein (2002), this means that parents were only partially completing the basic obligations of parental involvement. The fact that parents rarely spoke with their children's teachers and rarely visited their children's classrooms may be attributed to the language barrier. It could be inferred that parents may not feel comfortable visiting their children's schools because they do not feel comfortable about their ability to communicate with school personnel. Another factor could be cultural differences in the perceived role of parents and schools in the education of children.

Information acquisition, frequency of library visits, and library related activities and attitudes. Respondents mostly got the information they need from family and friends, radio, television, and newspaper. Only two respondents listed the library as a place where they went to find information. Corresponding with this, most respondents had visited a library only once in the past 12 months or had not visited a library at all in past 12 months. About half of the respondents had not visited a library in Chatham County. This data clarifies that libraries are not regularly used as a resource to find information by this group of parents.

However, most respondents agreed that libraries were good places to find information, could help their children succeed in school, and that they would use a library if services were more catered to their information needs. Most respondents also agreed that it would be convenient for them to have more access to the libraries in their children's schools as well as the Parent Resource Center and that they would visit the library more if they didn't have to work as much. Most responded that they would use a

library to borrow materials for adults, for children, and for young adults as well as to read magazines and newspapers, to attend classes on how to use computers, to talk with a librarian about books their children could read, to use a computer to access the Internet, to bring their children to children's programs, to attend classes to learn English, to attend parenting classes, and to access government information about taxes, laws, and citizenship.

This information provides insight into services that libraries could be offer to attract patrons with similar needs as the respondents: providing Spanish language materials for adults, children, and young adults; posting library signage and information in Spanish; having bilingual staff members; and offering ESL, computer, and parenting courses at times when parents were not working. It also confirms that these parents would find it convenient to have more access school library media centers as well as the Parent Resource Center.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study point to some conclusions that school library media centers in Siler City could use to increase the involvement of Hispanic parents in their children's education as well as provide the parents access to the information they need. The parents who participated in this study think highly of the schools their children attend and also participate in the education of their children at home. While the study suggests that educational, cultural or linguistic barriers may impede participation in their children's education outside of the home, it also points to how this participation could be increased. This is important because research has shown that educational attainment of

parents can affect the academic success of their children, and has linked parental involvement to academic success of children (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999; Moller, 2001; Dornbusch & Ritter, 1988).

The parents unanimously agreed that libraries can help their children do better in school, and could provide them information they need to involve themselves more in their children's education. The parents also demonstrated the desire for their children succeed in school, as they see academic success as a benefit to their children. These findings correlate with the findings of the study done by the State Library of North Carolina (Rincon & Associates, 2000).

By providing parents convenient access to library services that would help them further educate themselves and their families (materials in Spanish, ESL classes, computer classes, parenting classes), they would begin to break some of the educational, cultural and linguistic barriers that may be a contributing factor to the high level of drop outs among Hispanic high school students in North Carolina. Supporting this idea is the comment of one of the respondents of this study who wrote that it would be helpful to have a library, "in which I could learn more English and find more information about things that I need to know and that can help me and my family." Another respondent wrote, "I go to the public library in Siler City with my children. I would like for them to have more videos or visual systems to learn English as second language. The ones they have are obsolete and they are always checked out, so I believe that they should acquire more. This would also bring in more Latinos to the library and would bring more participation by Latinos in the library's programs."

The parents in this study showed themselves to be family oriented, concerned for the well being of their children and very positive about the schooling their children are receiving, just as respondents did in the State Library study (Rincon & Associates, 2000). This finding, combined with the suggestion of research that children are the main focus of the Hispanic family, that Hispanic parents often make their first visit to school or public libraries with their children (Moller, 2001, p. 20), and that the best way to get Hispanic parents into the library is through children's programming and family centered activities (Alire and Archibeque, 1998, p.101), provides the argument for using school library media centers to increase parental involvement in children's education as well as meet the information needs of the parents.

While the questionnaire did not ask if respondents were foreign born, we know from their answers that their primary language is Spanish, and that Hispanic community in North Carolina is mostly made up of recent immigrants who are not naturalized citizens (Guzman, 2001, p. 4, North Carolina Division of Social Services, 2002). The State Library study also suggests that most Hispanics in North Carolina communicate largely in Spanish and are insecure about communicating in English, which also corresponds with this study (Rincon & Associates, 2000, p. 2). The fact that the parents who participated in the survey did not regularly use any library to acquire information could be attributed to the fact they may not feel comfortable in libraries that do not provide services, materials, or information in Spanish. One of the respondents of this study commented that he/she did not go to libraries "because I was not sure if I would find people who could speak Spanish."

The parents all agreed that they would use library services more if (1) they didn't have to work so much, (2) the library provided more information about Hispanic people, events, and culture, and (3) the library provided more information and services that were relevant to their lives. And all parents in this study said it would be convenient for them to have more access to the library in the school of their children or to the Bilingual Parent Resource Center. From these responses, it can be concluded that in this case, the Siler City School District could use its school library media centers or the Parent Resource Center to draw in Hispanic parents by offering the services that these parents have said they would use.

Besides family and friends, respondents also frequently used radio, television, and newspaper to obtain the information they need in their day-to-day lives. Successful outreach programs by public libraries to the Hispanic community have marketed their services highly to potential Hispanic patrons (Moller, 2001, p. 29). Knowing the communications mediums that the group who participated in this study use to obtain information could be useful as a starting point for marketing library services to the Hispanic community in Siler City. In addition, the library services could be marketed through the schools themselves.

Once again, we come back to the question: could the school library media center meet the information needs Hispanic of “[parents], most of whom care deeply about the achievement and future of their children, but are unfamiliar with the system of education in the United States, do not understand how they are expected to relate to it, and do not know how or where to find assistance” (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990, p. 15)? I believe this is best answered by one of the comments of a respondent. This respondent explains that

he/she arrived in the state six months ago, and when he/she brought his/her daughters to the Intake Center to register them for school, he/she was offered a free English as a Second Language course to be held in the Bilingual Parent Resource Center. He/She explained to them that he/she did not have transportation, but the Center offered her transportation to and from the course. The respondent adds that he/she is very grateful to the state of North Carolina for offering services like English as a Second Language courses and writes, "I know nothing, absolutely nothing about the English language, so I am going to begin from zero. I hope to soon be able to speak, write, and read English because it is something that interests me very much and is very important to me and my family and because of this I want to make sure that I participate in the programs that the state offers."

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Appendix A: Consent Letter in Spanish (and English translation)

Estimado/a señor/a:

Mi nombre es Helen Dunn, y estoy conduciendo un estudio hacia cómo las bibliotecas del condado de Chatham sirven para la comunidad hispana. La información de este proyecto es parte de la investigación que estoy haciendo como estudiante de la escuela de Información y Ciencias Bibliotecarias de la Universidad de Carolina del Norte. El objetivo de este proyecto de investigación es intentar entender como las bibliotecas de las escuelas pueden tener mejor información para las necesidades de los estudiantes hispanos y sus familias. Aproximadamente 180 padres de estudiantes hispanos que están matriculados en las escuelas del condado de Chatham participarán en el estudio.

Con esta carta va un pequeño cuestionario que pregunta a Ud. acerca de sus actitudes y actividades relacionadas con las bibliotecas, y cómo participa en la educación de sus hijos. Le estoy preguntando que vea el cuestionario y si escoge hacerlo, entonces, por favor, complételo y regréselo a mi, usando el sobre incluido con la dirección y la estampa ya puestas. Ud. no necesita escribir su nombre en el cuestionario porque no necesito saber quien es. Para preservar su anonimato, no es necesario escribir su dirección en el sobre.

Su participación es voluntaria y no será penalizado por no participar. El cuestionario le llevará aproximadamente quince minutos para completar. Si Ud. decide o no participar en el cuestionario, Ud. puede tener un resumen de lo que he hecho en este estudio. Para recibir un resumen, marque la cajita en la última página del cuestionario y escribe su dirección de correo para que yo sepa dónde mandarlo. El resultado de este proyecto será sumariado y publicado en la página web de mi escuela en la dirección http://www.ils.unc.edu/html/5_master_paper_index.shtml, y también compartiré el resultado con las escuelas del condado de Chatham. Garantizo que sus respuestas no serán identificados con Ud. personalmente. Nada de lo que Ud. diga podrá infuir con la relación de sus hijos en la escuela.

Espero que tome pocos minutos para completar este cuestionario y regresarlo encerrado en el sobre que le proporciono. Si Ud. tiene alguna pregunta o duda acerca de completar el cuestionario o acerca de este estudio, puede contactarme a mi casa al teléfono (919) 960-2597 o a mi dirección electrónica dumnh@email.unc.edu (inglés o español). También, Ud. puede contactar a mi consejera, Dra. Evelyn Daniel, en la escuela de de Informacion y Ciencias Bibliotecarias. Su dirección electrónica es daniel@ils.unc.edu y el número de teléfono de su oficina es (919) 962-8062 (solo inglés).

Este proyecto ha sido revisado y aprobado por las escuelas del condado de Chatham y por el Consejo de Aprobación Institucional de Asuntos Académicos (AA-IRB-Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board) de la Universidad de Carolina del Norte (UNC). Si Ud. tiene dudas o preguntas acerca de sus derechos como participante en este estudio, puede contactar a la oficina del AA-IRB al teléfono (919) 962-7761, o por correo electrónico a aa-irb@unc.edu.

¡Muchas gracias por su tiempo y ayuda! Sinceramente,

Helen Dunn

Dear Respondent,

I am conducting a study on how libraries in Chatham County schools serve the county's Hispanic community. This research project is part of an investigation that is being conducted by me as a student at the University of North Carolina's School of Information and Library Science. The objective of this research project is to attempt to understand how school libraries can better meet the information needs of Hispanic students and their families. Approximately 180 parents of LEP (Limited English Proficiency) students in Chatham County schools will participate in this study.

Enclosed with this letter is a brief questionnaire that asks a variety of questions about your library related attitudes and activities, and how you participate in your children's education. I am asking you to look over the questionnaire and, if you choose to do so, complete the questionnaire and send it back to me. You do not have to write your name on the questionnaire. I do not need to know who you are. Your participation is voluntary and there is no penalty if you do not participate. The questionnaire will take about fifteen minutes to complete.

Regardless of whether you choose to participate, you can have a summary of the findings of this study. To receive a summary, use the enclosed letter size self-addressed and stamped envelope and the address form. To preserve your anonymity, you can send this request by separate mail. In this way, I have no way of knowing who sent back a questionnaire and who requested a summary of the results.

The results of this project will be published on the Website of the School of Information and Library Science at http://www.ils.unc.edu/html/5_master_paper_index.shtml. I guarantee that your responses will not be identified with you personally. Nothing you do or say will in any way influence your relationship with your child's school.

I hope you will take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire and to return it in the enclosed self-addressed and stamped envelope. If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about being in this study, you may contact me at home at (919) 960-2597 or at dunnh@unc.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Evelyn Daniel, in the School of Information and Library Science. Her office telephone number is (919) 962-8062 and her email address is daniel@ils.unc.edu.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board (AA-IRB). If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the AA-IRB Office at (919) 962-7761 or via email at aa-irb@unc.edu. Thanks again.

Sincerely,

Helen Dunn

Appendix B: Questionnaire (and English translation)

Estimado Señor/Señora:

Este es el cuestionario. Después de cada pregunta sigue una tabla en la que Ud. puede marcar su respuesta. La mayoría de preguntas solo deben de tener una respuesta. Ud. verá que después de algunas tablas viene un espacio marcado con la palabra “Otros,” en el que puede añadir su propia respuesta si no le corresponde nada en la tabla. Ud. también puede escribir sus pensamientos o comentarios al final del cuestionario en el espacio marcado “Comentarios.” Muchísimas gracias para su participación.

Cuestionario

1. ¿Ud. preferiría comunicarse con otras personas más en inglés, más en español, o está cómodo comunicándose en las dos lenguas? Por favor, *marque uno*.

Más en inglés	Más en español	Las dos lenguas
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2. Acerca de su uso del lenguaje inglés, ¿como calificaría su habilidad de hablar inglés? ¿Como es su habilidad de leer inglés? Y como es su habilidad de escribir inglés? Por favor, *marque uno para cada habilidad*.

Abilidad de hablar inglés.	Excelente	Buena	Más o menos	Muy poquita	Nada
Abilidad de leer inglés.	Excelente	Buena	Más o menos	Muy poquita	Nada
Abilidad de escribir inglés.	Excelente	Buena	Más o menos	Muy poquita	Nada

3. Por favor, *marque uno* de los siguientes acerca de su educación completada.

Primaria	Secundaria	Preparatoria	Universidad	Maestria	Doctorado
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4. Estoy interesada en saber cómo Ud. se siente acerca de la escuela donde asisten sus hijos, y si cree que la escuela está completando las necesidades de Ud. y sus hijos. Por favor, responda con la siguiente tabla, *marcando en su nivel de acuerdo*.

Esta escuela es muy buena para mis hijos.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo
Los maestros están interesados en mis hijos.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo
Me siento bien acerca de la escuela.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo
Mis hijos/hijas están aprendiendo lo más que pueden.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo

Esta escuela es una de las mejores para los padres y estudiantes.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo
La escuela me da la información que necesito para que mis hijos salgan adelante.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo
Esta escuela me anima a ser voluntario y participar en la educación de mis hijos.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo

5. Estoy interesada en saber cómo Ud. participa en la educación de sus hijos con ellos en casa y en la escuela. Por favor, responda con la siguiente tabla *marcando en su nivel de acuerdo*.

Hablo con mis hijos acerca de la escuela.	Siempre	Mucho	Con frecuencia	De vez en cuando	Nunca
Visito los salones de mis hijos.	Siempre	Mucho	Con frecuencia	De vez en cuando	Nunca
Les leo a mis hijos.	Siempre	Mucho	Con frecuencia	De vez en cuando	Nunca
Les ayudo con su tarea.	Siempre	Mucho	Con frecuencia	De vez en cuando	Nunca
Practico la ortografía y otras habilidades para los exámenes de mis hijos.	Siempre	Mucho	Con frecuencia	De vez en cuando	Nunca
Voy a la escuela a hablar con los maestros de mis hijos.	Siempre	Mucho	Con frecuencia	De vez en cuando	Nunca
Hablo con los maestros de mis hijos por teléfono.	Siempre	Mucho	Con frecuencia	De vez en cuando	Nunca
Voy a las juntas de PTA (Asociación de Padres y Maestros).	Siempre	Mucho	Con frecuencia	De vez en cuando	Nunca
Voy a eventos especiales en la escuela.	Siempre	Mucho	Con frecuencia	De vez en cuando	Nunca
Voy a la biblioteca con mis hijos.	Siempre	Mucho	Con frecuencia	De vez en cuando	Nunca

Otros: _____

6. A mi me gustaría saber cómo Ud. encuentra información que necesita acerca de su vida diaria. Durante los 12 meses pasados, cómo Ud. encontró información de la comunidad de dónde ahorita vive? Por favor, **marque todos los que apliquen.**

Televisión	Radio	Internet	Periódico	Biblioteca	La sección amarilla	Revistas	Familiares y amigos	Iglesia
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Otros: _____

7. ¿Cuánto Ud. podría decir que ha usado una biblioteca durante los 12 meses pasados? Por favor, **marque lo que le aplique.**

Todas las semanas	Cada mes	Al menos una vez en los 12 meses
Cada dos semanas	Cada tres a seis meses	Ninguna vez en los 12 meses

Otros: _____

8. Estoy interesada en saber para que cosas le gustaría usar la biblioteca. ¿Podría por favor decirme cuál de los siguientes servicios usaría? **Marque su nivel de acuerdo.**

Prestar materiales para adultos (libros, cassetes, CDs, DVDs, videos).	Sí	Probablemente	Tal vez	No muy probable	No
Prestar materiales de niños (libros, cassetes, CDs, DVDs, videos).	Sí	Probablemente	Tal vez	No muy probable	No
Prestar materiales para jóvenes (libros, cassetes, CDs, DVDs, videos).	Sí	Probablemente	Tal vez	No muy probable	No
Leer revistas y periódicos.	Sí	Probablemente	Tal vez	No muy probable	No
Aprender a cómo comprar casa, carro, etc.	Sí	Probablemente	Tal vez	No muy probable	No
Ver información del gobierno (taxas, leyes, ciudadanía , etc)	Sí	Probablemente	Tal vez	No muy probable	No
Atender a clases para aprender como usar computadoras.	Sí	Probablemente	Tal vez	No muy probable	No
Comprar libros usados.	Sí	Probablemente	Tal vez	No muy probable	No
Hablar con la bibliotecaria acerca de los libros que mi hijos pueden leer.	Sí	Probablemente	Tal vez	No muy probable	No

Usar la computadora para acceso al Internet.	Sí	Probablemente	Tal vez	No muy probable	No
Traer a sus hijos a un programa de niños.	Sí	Probablemente	Tal vez	No muy probable	No
Atender a clases para aprender inglés.	Sí	Probablemente	Tal vez	No muy probable	No
Atender a clases de asuntos de padres.	Sí	Probablemente	Tal vez	No muy probable	No

Otros: _____

9. Me gustaría saber cuáles bibliotecas en el condado de Chatham Ud. ha visitado. Por favor, **marque las bibliotecas** que ha visitado. Si Ud. no ha visitado a ninguna biblioteca en el condado de Chatham, por favor marquelo abajito.

	Biblioteca bilingüe del centro de recursos para padres (al lado del Intake Center en Sage Academy)
	La biblioteca que está en la escuela de mi hijo/a o mis hijos/as.
	Las biblioteca públicas del condado de Chatham (en Pittsboro, Siler City o Goldston)
	Otra biblioteca?:
	Otra?:
	No he visitado a ninguna biblioteca en el condado de Chatham.

10. Finalmente, me gustaría preguntarle acerca de cómo se siente sobre las bibliotecas del condado de Chatham en general. Lo siguiente es una lista de frases que quizá, o quizá no, describa como se siente acerca de las bibliotecas. Me gustaría que Ud. me dijera cuáles mejor describe su sentimiento **marcando con su nivel de acuerdo**.

Las bibliotecas son buenos lugares para encontrar información.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo
La gente que trabaja en las bibliotecas puede comunicarse fácilmente con los hispanos.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo
Los trabajadores de las bibliotecas son amigables conmigo y con mi familia.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo
Las bibliotecas pueden ayudar a los niños a desarrollarse mejor en la escuela.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo

Visitaría a las bibliotecas más seguido si no tuviera que trabajar tanto.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo
Sería conveniente que tuviera más acceso a usar la biblioteca en la escuela de mi hijo y la del centro bilingüe de recursos para padres.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo
Me gustaría visitar las bibliotecas más seguido si tuvieran más información acerca de la gente, de los eventos, y de la cultura hispana.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo
Visitaría las bibliotecas más seguido si diera más información y servicios que yo quiero.	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Más o menos	No muy de acuerdo	No de acuerdo

Otros:

¡Ud. ya terminó! Muchas gracias, le agradezco mucho por su tiempo y por su consideración en completar el cuestionario.

Si Ud. tiene alguna pregunta o duda acerca de completar el cuestionario o acerca de este estudio, puede contactarme a mi casa al teléfono (919) 960-2597 o a mi dirección electrónica dunnh@email.unc.edu (ingles o español). También, Ud. puede contactar a mi consejera, Dra. Evelyn Daniel, en la escuela de de Informacion y Ciencias Bibliotecarias. Su dirección electrónica es daniel@ils.unc.edu y el número de teléfono de su oficina es (919) 962-8062 (solo ingles).

Este proyecto ha sido revisado y aprobado por el Consejo de Aprobación Institucional de Asuntos Académicos (AA-IRB-Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board). Si Ud. tiene dudas o preguntas acerca de sus derechos como participante en este estudio, puede contactar a la oficina del AA-IRB al teléfono (919) 962-7761, o por correo electrónico a aa-irb@unc.edu.

Si Ud. quiere un resumen del estudio, por favor, marque aquí.
 Para mandarle un resumen, necesito una dirección de correo!!
 Lo puede escribir aquí:

Abajo Ud. puede escribirme sus comentarios. Si no le da espacio, puede continuar al otro lado de la hoja. Gracias otra vez.

Dear Respondent:

This is the questionnaire. Please read each question carefully. After each question is a table in which you may mark your response. The majority of questions should only have one response. You will see that at the end of some of the questions, there is a space marked "Others," where you can add your own response. You may also include your comments or thoughts at the end of the questionnaire in the space provided. Thank you very much for your participation.

Questionnaire

1. Given a choice, would you prefer to communicate with others mostly in English, mostly in Spanish, or both languages? Please **mark** one.

Mostly in English	Mostly in Spanish	In either language
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2. In regards to your usage of the English language, how would you rate your ability to speak English? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair or poor? What about your ability to read in English? And what about your ability to write in English? Please **mark** your responses.

Ability to speak English	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all
Ability to read English	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all
Ability to write English	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all

3. Please **mark** the highest level of education that you have completed.

Grade School	Middle school	High school	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate
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4. I am interested in finding out how you feel about the school your child is attending and how well you believe the school addresses your needs and the needs of your child. Please respond to the following statements by **marking** your level of agreement.

This school is very good for my child.	Strongly Agree	Agree	More or Less Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The teachers are interested in my child	Strongly Agree	Agree	More or Less Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel good about the school.	Strongly Agree	Agree	More or Less Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

My child is learning as much as he/she can in school.	Strongly Agree	Agree	More or Less Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This school is one of the best for students and parents.	Strongly Agree	Agree	More or Less Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This school provides me with the information I need to help my child succeed.	Strongly Agree	Agree	More or Less Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This school encourages me to volunteer and participate in my child's education.	Strongly Agree	Agree	More or Less Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Others: _____

5. I am interested in finding out more about how you participate in your child's education and with their school. Please respond to the following statements by **marking** your level of participation.

I talk to my children about school.	Always	A Lot	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never
I visit my child's classroom.	Always	A Lot	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never
I read to my child.	Always	A Lot	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never
I help my child with homework.	Always	A Lot	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never
I practice spelling or other skills for a test with my child.	Always	A Lot	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never
I talk with my child's teacher at school.	Always	A Lot	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never
I talk to my child's teacher on the phone.	Always	A Lot	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never
I go to PTA meetings.	Always	A Lot	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never
I go to special events at school.	Always	A Lot	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never
I take my child to the library.	Always	A Lot	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never

Others: _____

6. I would like to know more about how you find the information you need in your day-to-day life. During the past 12 months, which of the following sources have you used to find information about the community where you currently live? Please **mark** all that apply.

Television	Radio	Internet	Newspapers	Library	Yellow pages	Magazines	Family/friends	Church
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Others: _____

7. How often would you say that you have used a library during the past 12 months?

Every week?	Each month?	At least once in the last 12 months?
Every two weeks?	Every 3-6 months?	Or not at all during the past 12 months?

8. I am interested in knowing the likelihood that you would use the library for the following reasons. Could you please tell me the extent to which you would use following services, by **marking** your level of agreement?

Borrow materials for adults (books, tapes, CDs, DVDs, videos).	Yes	Likely	Maybe	Probably Not	No
Borrow children's materials (books, tapes, CDs, DVDs, videos).	Yes	Likely	Maybe	Probably Not	No
Borrow materials for teenagers (books, tapes, CDs, DVDs, videos).	Yes	Likely	Maybe	Probably Not	No
Read magazines and newspapers.	Yes	Likely	Maybe	Probably Not	No
Learn about buying a home, car, etc.	Yes	Likely	Maybe	Probably Not	No
Look up government information (taxes, laws, etc.).	Yes	Likely	Maybe	Probably Not	No
Attend classes to learn how to use computers.	Yes	Likely	Maybe	Probably Not	No
Buy used books.	Yes	Likely	Maybe	Probably Not	No
Talk with a librarian about books for my children to read.	Yes	Likely	Maybe	Probably Not	No
Use a computer to access the Internet.	Yes	Likely	Maybe	Probably Not	No
Bring a child to a children's program.	Yes	Likely	Maybe	Probably Not	No
Attend classes on learning English.	Yes	Likely	Maybe	Probably Not	No
Attend parenting classes.	Yes	Likely	Maybe	Probably Not	No

Others: _____

9. I would like to know which libraries you have visited in Chatham County. Please **mark below for the libraries you have visited**. If you have not visited a library in Chatham County, please mark the last box.

	Bilingual Parent Resource Center (next to the Parent Intake Center in Sage Academy)
	The library in my child's school..
	A public library in Chatham County (in Pittsboro, Siler City o Goldston)
	Another library?
	Another?
	I have not visited a library in Chatham County.

10. Finally, I would like to ask you a few questions concerning how you feel in general about the libraries in Chatham County. The following is a list of statements that may or may not describe how you feel about libraries. I would like for you to tell me the extent to which each statement describes your feelings, by **marking** the appropriate response.

Libraries are good places to find information.	Strongly Agree	More or Less Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The people who work in the libraries can communicate easily with Hispanics.	Strongly Agree	More or Less Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Library staff is generally friendly to me and my family.	Strongly Agree	More or Less Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The library can help my children perform better in school.	Strongly Agree	More or Less Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I would visit the library more often if I didn't have to work so much.	Strongly Agree	More or Less Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It would be convenient for me to be able to use the library in my child's school.	Strongly Agree	More or Less Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I would visit the library more often if it had more books and information about Hispanic people, events, and culture.	Strongly Agree	More or Less Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I would visit the library more often if there was more information that was useful to me.	Strongly Agree	More or Less Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Others: _____

You are finished!! Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration in completing this questionnaire!

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about being in this study, you may contact me at home at (919) 960-2597 or at dunnh@unc.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Evelyn Daniel, in the School of Information and Library Science. Her office telephone number is (919) 962-8062 and her email address is daniel@ils.unc.edu.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board (AA-IRB). If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the AA-IRB Office at (919) 962-7761 or via email at aa-irb@unc.edu.

If you would like a summary of the findings of this study, please provide a return address.

Here you can write any comments or questions you may have. If there is not enough room, please continue on the other side of the paper. Thank you once again for your participation.

Appendix C: Commentary by respondents (English translation)**Respondent 1:**

I think it would be useful to have a library in which I could learn more English and find more information about things that I need to know and that can help my family and me.

Respondent 2:

I feel very content that somebody is thinking about us in her studies, and I am happy to be able to contribute, and help so that this study is completed. Thank you and you can always count on my help, in whatever type of study. God bless you and I wish you the best in your life.

Respondent 3:

I would like for somebody to help us, to have more opportunities for work and as we are immigrants to help us obtain work visas, so as not to make rich the people who sell illegal papers to our community. Because all of us, the families who have come to the United States, have come to work and to have a better life. We do not want to have problems with the laws of the United States, and we work honestly. And that I wish that we weren't exploited, and that people were not racist towards us because thanks to immigrants, this country is what it is—and because we are honest people.

I would also like to have more cyber cafes, because there aren't any places where one can go to study computers. Thank you.

Respondent 4:

I personally go to the public library in Siler City with my children. I would like for them to have more videos or visual systems to learn English as second language. The ones they have are obsolete and they are always checked out, so I believe that they should acquire more. This would also bring in more Latinos to the library and would bring more participation by Latinos in the library's programs.

Respondent 5:

I don't go to libraries because I was not sure if I would find people who could speak Spanish.

Respondent 6:

I am very appreciative of the authorities of the state of North Carolina for caring about the health and education of the Hispanic community. I arrived here in Siler City about six months ago and in the moment I went to register my daughters to attend school, I was offered a free English class which I am going to take, my first class is on April 14. They offered me transportation to and from the classes, because of lack of transportation I did not attend these classes earlier.

I know nothing, absolutely nothing about the English language, so I am going to begin from zero. I hope to soon be able to speak, write, and read English because it is something that interests me very much and is very important to me and my family and because of this I want to make sure that I participate in the programs that the state offers. Thank you.

Respondent 7:

Thank you for contacting us. We hope the answers are useful to you, and when you want, we are here to help you.

Respondent 8:

Miss Dunn: I just wanted to say thank you for thinking about the Hispanic community in your studies, and to wish you success in your project. Keep going!