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CREATING A COLLEGE-GOING PARTNERSHIP WITH LATINA/O PARENTS
AND FAMILIES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

A Dissertation
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership

by
Mary M. McAllister-Parsons

June 2019

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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

The pursuit of higher education has become a highly desirable aspiration for many children in the United States, yet majority of these children are not provided the opportunity to make this a reality. Research reveal Students of Color and lower socio-economic status are largely under-represented in institutions of postsecondary education (Camacho Liu, 2011; Choy, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Latina/o students, in particular, continue to experience some of the lowest levels of educational attainment in this country. Education scholars contend that a college-going culture can help counteract the educational limitations experienced by working-class, Students of Color, and especially first-generation college students. Using a participatory action research approach, this study shows how an inclusive parental engagement framework can push research forward in understanding the experiences of an educational leader and Latina/o parents. As they collaborate to co-develop strategies to support college-going practices within an elementary school, parental engagement is key. Data collected from two focus group interviews were analyzed for salient themes and findings pertaining to parental engagement and practices supporting higher educational attainment for Latina/o students. These findings indicate Latina/o parents experience an increase of knowledge regarding higher educational opportunities for their children. Furthermore, when parents gained important knowledge about postsecondary education, this resulted in additional collaborative efforts. For example, the collaborative development of a

survey instrument aimed to determine the varying levels of college knowledge needs experienced by parents of elementary school aged children. The objective is to critically understand the intent of developing and implementing college-going practices by an (1) educational administrator and Latina/o parents within an elementary school.

Keywords: parent engagement, parent involvement, Latina/o parents

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my maternal grandparents who immigrated to this country from Mexico seeking a better life for their family. They paved the way for my mother who along with my father raised me with a strong sense of faith, a dedication to family, and the determination to make a difference in this world.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of higher education has become a highly desirable aspiration for many children in the United States, yet majority of these children are not provided the opportunity to make this a reality. Research reveal Student of Color and of lower socio-economic status are largely under-represented in the institutions of postsecondary education (Camacho Liu, 2011; Choy, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2001). In determining key factors to access college, the patterns and quality of social relationships parents engaged with their children's schools were especially critical (Sil, 2007). Research consistently note strong associations between the participation and engagement of parents in schools and their children's academic performance, yield an increased probability of the children's access to college (Auerbach, 2002; Choy, 2001; McDonough, 1994, 1997).

Traditional ideas of parent involvement have been historically defined and determined by schools. The majority of these ideas and explanations have been constructed from an orientation defined by middle class White parents who perform specific activities that support the school. These traditional definitions of parent involvement practiced in schools (Ascher, 1988; Shirley, 1997; Epstein, 1995; Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009) are defined by parents participating in councils and committees, volunteering in school activities, communicating about

their children's academic progress or initiating activities at home to support their children's learning such as reading to their children or helping with homework. These ideas of parent involvement are "limited and constrained avenues for parent participation as passive listeners, clients, or fundraisers" (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013). This majoritarian, narrow view of parent involvement effectively excludes the consideration of various actions by historically marginalized Parents of Color. Scholars (Pérez-Carreón, Drake, & Barton, 2005; Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Soyoung, 2005) note that the value for a formal education or the ideas of engagement or participation often differ for Parents of Color and are heavily unrecognized in traditional approaches.

Holistic parental engagement emphasizes a more active and powerful role for parents in the home, the school, and the community. The relational approach to parental engagement importantly contrasts the traditional ideas and values of parent involvement by engaging parents around their own interests, values, and respecting said contributions (López, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001; Olivos, 2006; Pushor, 2014; Warren et al., 2009). These traditional understanding and definition of parental engagement and involvement are limited. Consequently, a more inclusive definition of parental engagement emphasizes relationships over activities, and families as leaders and social change agents (Ishimaru, 2014; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012; Warren et al., 2009). Scholars (Pérez-Carreón et al., 2005; López et al., 2001; Shirley, 1997) also note parental and family engagement can be effectively broadened notions of family as well as a

broader set of descriptive behaviors related to student learning and development. Pérez-Carreón, Drake and Barton (2005) note, “. . . parental involvement or engagement needs to be understood through parents’ *presence* in their children’s schooling, regardless of whether that presence is in a formal school space or in more personal, informal spaces, including spaces created by the parents themselves” (p. 466). Using a more expansive lens to define parental engagement engages and acknowledged actions by Latina/o and other marginalized Parents of Color as noteworthy and beneficial. Despite resistance, institutional barriers and fear of school personnel, De Gaetano (2007) and Jasis and Ordoñez-Jasis (2004) noted Latina/o parent groups’ have demonstrated the ability to actively forge and maintain effective partnerships with schools, and its practices.

Paulo Freire (1993) stated, “It is impossible to democratize schools without opening them to the real participation of parents and the community in determining the school’s destiny” (p. 41). As an educational leader while participating in a college visit with fifth grade students, their parents, and family members, I became distinctly aware parents and family members desired to gain information regarding college access for their children. During the college visit, participating students, their parents, and family members were afforded opportunities to interact with other parents and students, build relationships with teachers and school staff, while participating in a shared learning experience outside of the formal school context. As a result of this college visit, parents

began to voice their concerns regarding the lack of college access knowledge and information experienced at the elementary school level. Parents inquired about more opportunities and resources in order to advocate for their children and access to college. As a result of this college visit, it became evident the college knowledge gap for the Latina/o elementary school student population and their families.

The Latina/o population currently makes up more than 16 percent of the entire U.S. population and is the largest and fastest “minority” group in the country. Yet, Latina/os have the lowest educational attainment rate compared to other racial and ethnic groups (Camacho Liu, 2011; Martinez Jr. & Castellanos, 2017; Torrez, 2004). In California, Latina/os make up at least 20 percent of college student population. However, they also represent the lowest educational attainment rate with only 15.5 percent adults having a college degree compared to 50 percent of whites (Camacho Liu, 2011). Latina/o students face unique obstacles in accessing and completing formal education. For example, many Latina/o students are first generation college-goers. As the first in their family to attend college, these students often find it difficult to fully engage and transition into college life which can lead to many dropping out nor completing a degree (Camacho Liu, 2011). Therefore, it becomes especially critical to provide specific and intentional support for Latina/os to understand how to navigate postsecondary education and reach their aspirations. Furthermore, acknowledging parents are experts of understanding their own children,

embracing unique cultures, communities, needs and interests, parents and families should be engaged in the decision-making in shaping the educational agenda for their children (Ishimaru, Torres, Salvador, Lott, Cameron Williams, & Tran, 2016).

This study aims to show how an inclusive parent engagement framework may enhance our understanding of the experience between an educational administration and Latina/o parents as they collaboratively co-develop and implement strategies to support a college-going culture within a suburban elementary school setting. Traditionally, a college-going culture are developed and fully deployed within the high school level. As such, the college-going culture is defined as a school environment where all students are prepared to make informed postsecondary decisions by receiving structural, motivational, and experiential college preparatory opportunities (Jarsky, et al., 2009). Education scholars contend that a college-going culture can help negate the educational limitations experienced by low-income, first-generation Students of Color. Parents and students expect the opportunity to gain college information as early as possible in order to help families navigate college preparation and access.

Latina/o parents and their children hold high college and career aspirations (Martinez Jr. & Castellanos, 2017; Torrez, 2004). Gutman and Akerman (2008) found parents of ethnic minority students, especially immigrant parents, held higher aspirations for their children than other racial/ethnic groups. Scholars (Akos, Lambie, Milsom, & Gilbert, 2007; Trusty & Niles, 2004) found

students who hold greater expectations for the future are likely to attain greater levels of educational and occupational success. Martinez Jr. and Castellanos (2017) noted the increased exposure to college-going culture during students' middle school years enhanced their knowledge about higher education and the opportunities available to them. Whereas, Torrez (2014) found that "the more familiar the parents were with the four-year college and university environment, the more successful the academic preparation of their student for college" (p. 57).

As one elementary school parent stated, "It's too late to get this information in middle and high school years. We need to know while our children are in elementary school." A collaborative partnership between Latina/o parents, families, and the elementary school can increase college knowledge while supporting their parental advocacy and strengthening students' college and career aspirations.

Problem Statement

Low-income students and Students of Color are more likely than other counterparts to attend schools that are high-poverty, Program Improvement schools, overcrowded, experience serious shortages of qualified teachers, and do not have the capacity to offer college preparatory courses to all students (Rogers, et al., 2006). As a result, low-income Students of Color remain heavily

underrepresented in institutions of higher learning across the United States (Camacho Liu, 2011; Choy, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

To counter such deficit schooling contexts, scholars have advocated and developed the notion of a school-wide college-going culture (Jarsky, McDonough, & Nuñez, 2009). Rooted in the experiences of white wealthy students in private schools (McDonough, 1997), a college culture is defined as a school environment where all students are prepared to make informed postsecondary decisions by receiving structural, motivational, and experiential college preparatory opportunities. Education scholars contend that a college-going culture can help negate the educational limitations experienced by low-income, first-generation Students of Color. Nonetheless, the amount and type of resources available to a school influences the ability of K-12 educators to implement college-going culture efforts effectively (Tierney, Corwin, & Colyar, 2005). As such, students who attend low-SES schools have access to a limited college-going culture and are less likely to result in college attendance (Palardy, 2014).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to build on research to further understand the experiences of an educational leader and Latina/o parents as they collaboratively co-develop and implement strategies to support a college-going culture in a suburban elementary school. While Delgado Bernal & Alemán (2016) proposed

a school-university partnership, as faculty they encountered various levels of resistance from educational leaders at the school site. Whereas in this case, the leadership team and parents are guided by asset-based ideologies. Expanding this body of work may enable researchers, practitioners, parents, and students to gain a solid understanding of their equitable measures to support college access for Latina/o communities.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- (1) How do Latina/o parents engage with their elementary school-aged children in college-going discussions outside of formal school settings?
- (2) What college knowledge do Latina/o parents expect and/or need from educators at the elementary school level to navigate college access?
- (3) How may a participatory action research project co-develop between a university researcher and parent-researchers?

Significance of the Study

This significance of this study is multi-fold. First, this study aims to inform the field of education regarding organizational processes to support a collaborative college-going culture between educational leaders and parents. Second, this research will help identify and understand various levels of resistance that may arise when an educational leader attempts to co-develop a

college-going culture as a premise to change the overall culture of a school campus. Third, the researcher/educator will unapologetically focus on an elementary school site where its population is majority Latina/o students, parents, and families. The centralization on the Latina/o experiences continues to be warranted within the field of education. Lastly, other college-going practices will be simultaneously implemented during the course of the study, which will benefit students, parents, and educational agents at this site.

Previous scholarship on college-going culture note the need to develop school-wide practices in under-resourced urban schools and detail what elements are needed to have a successful college-going culture (Jarsky, et al., 2009; Tierney, Corwin, & Colyar, 2005). However, these studies fail to explain *how* to develop and implement a college-going culture. Further, the college-going practices recommended and implemented by researchers are often not sustained once the researcher exits the school site. Delgado Bernal and Alemán (2016) are the first to detail the processes in developing a college-going culture as faculty outside of the school site. Thus, this study examines the experiences of an educational leader and Latina/o parents within the school site as they co-develop college-going practices. These experiences also challenge deficit ideologies that other educators and parents may have of majority low-income Students of Color that attend this school site. By implementing this study, the researcher will follow a participatory action research project with Latina/o parents to co-develop and implement college-going practices within an elementary school

site. Ultimately, this research has the potential to propose feasible methods to support change at other school sites, but also holds immediate benefits for current families by connecting families' college aspirations held by students and parents with advanced knowledge preparation beginning at the elementary school sector.

Conceptual Frameworks

This study draws from the conceptual framework of Luis Moll's (1992) funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge refer to the "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992, p. 133). Funds of knowledge centralize an asset-based perspective which challenge a majoritarian perception that Latina/o families lack initiation, involvement, and engagement in their child's education. A funds of knowledge approach note these families hold "ample cultural and cognitive resources with great potential utility" (Moll et al, p. 134). Meaning, funds of knowledge acknowledges Latina/o children learn critical strategies outside of their formal schooling space. Hence, schooling is not the only space where children actively learn. The critical strategies learned in their homes, communities, and the successful utilization of these learned strategies help students and parents navigate challenges and obstacles that may "impede their academic achievement and college participation" (Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 624). A funds

of knowledge framework is critically important for this study as the focus is to note the strengths Latina/o parents and students hold as they strengthen their college-going aspirations and acquire institutionalized knowledge to attain their goals.

A second conceptual framework informing this study is Chicana Feminist Pedagogies (Elenes, Delgado Bernal, Gonzalez, Trinidad, & Villenas, 2000). A Chicana Feminist Pedagogical lens refer to culturally relevant ways of organizing teaching and learning among informal spaces such as the home. These methods embrace Chicana and *Mexicana* ways of knowing and extend beyond formal or traditional schooling practices (Elenes, Delgado Bernal, Gonzalez, Trinidad, & Villenas, 2000). Latina/o families transfer community and familial knowledge to their children through the use of legends, *corridos*, *dichos*, storytelling, and behavior. According to Delgado Bernal (2001), these pedagogies of the home extend the existing discourse on critical pedagogies by putting culturally responsive and culturally inclusive knowledge and language at the forefront of our understanding of the home space and local communities.

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

Employing a participatory action research methodology acknowledges all people have valuable knowledge, histories, and stories about their lives and experiences. They carry important connections and responsibilities to various communities, spaces, and institutions (Adelman, 1993; Torre, 2009). Those who

are impacted by the research “might be the most useful in effecting change” (Torre, 2009). An assumption of this study is that parent participants will answer focus group questions honestly and factually. Therefore, identities will be concealed and confidentiality will be preserved. Responses are confidential and will be kept secured as required by Institutional Review Board approval. An additional assumption is the participants want to participate in said study.

A limitation of the study is related to the researcher’s experience as an educational leader. In order to address this limitation, an effort to acknowledge personal preconceived ideas with regard to the study and to monitor biases that may be made through ongoing self-reflection. These subjective and objective observations will be documented in a researcher memoing journal. These will be used to guide the delineation of critical findings in this study.

One delimitation of this study is one where this does not include the perspectives or experiences of students, teachers, or other staff personnel at the school. Further, this study does not address professional development opportunities to support the development of college knowledge or college readiness for teachers. This study focuses on the perspectives and experiences of Latina/o parents of elementary school-aged children from one elementary school in southern California. The parents of students in this age group voiced a need to learn about access to college after participating in a visit to a local university. While the children are in elementary school, youth and parents hold college aspirations. Thus, this study is to help answer their questions and

institutional commitment to address their needs. The unapologetic focus on Latina/o parents is a direct result of previous research on Students of Color and lower socioeconomic status. Noting Latina/o students continue to be historically under-represented in the institutions of higher education remind us of the critical need to further understand these experiences (Camacho Liu, 2011; Choy, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Therefore, highlighting the need to develop college-going culture and practices at the elementary school level amplify the need to increase college knowledge of Latina/o parents as early as possible (Torrez, 2004).

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study the following terms have been identified as critical to this study and are operationalized as follows:

Asset-based is an approach that focuses on strengths and potential involving accessing resources, skills, and experiences held by individuals and communities (Cramer & Wasiak, 2006; Green & Haines, 2011).

College knowledge is the explicit and implicit knowledge required for college success; essentially knowing how to “do” college. For example, knowledge of college requirements, placement test policies, and tuition costs (Conley, 2005), as well as understanding the structure of college and the ability to recognize the systemic requirements and normative practices (Sommerfeld, 2011).

Elementary school is traditionally defined as the first six formal years of schooling, including kindergarten.

Family refers to the parents or legal guardians of the student; care-takers of the student and they may be biological parents, step-parents, grandparents, other relatives, foster parents or guardians.

First-generation college student is a student who enrolls in postsecondary education whose parents do not have postsecondary education experience or never earned a bachelor's degree (U.S. Department of Education., 1998).

Latina/o for this study the ethnonym Latina/o to refers to a "person of Dominican, Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race" (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, & Albert, 2011).

Low-income refers to an individual whose family's taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level; for example, the income for a family of four would not exceed \$37, 650 (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

Parent involvement is the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities (Jeynes, 2012).

Parental engagement refers to parental support, parent-child interactions and relationships, parental attitudes, perspectives, and values relating to academic achievement, and parental educational goals and priorities for their students (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Epstein, et al., 2009; Jeynes, 2005).

Student of Color is defined as African American, Latina/o, Native American, or Asian American student in any schooling settings, such as undergraduate program of study (Zanolini Morrison, 2010).

Summary

Low-income Students of Color remain underrepresented in institutions of higher learning. This study expects to challenge deficit notions of Latina/o students, parents, and the discourse surrounding parental involvement and engagement practiced by Latina/o parents and families. This study aims to present further understanding of collective experiences of an educational leader and Latina/o parents within an organization as they collaboratively co-develop and implement strategies to support college-going practices in an elementary school. Drawing from pedagogies of the home to extend the academic discourse by centralizing cultural knowledge and language at the forefront of lived experiences to better understand how home space and local communities support Latina/o parents and students.

In Chapter two, the literature review presents a depiction of Latina/o parent involvement and parental engagement. The literary conclusions support a warranted need to further understand how Latina/o parents and families engage in the educational process of elementary school-aged children. Additionally, Chapter two sets the context for the need to acknowledge and further understand the commitment to a formal education as already evidenced by Latina/o parents

and families as they proactively support the college aspirations already held by their children and families.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Paolo Freire (1993) shares, “It is impossible to democratize schools without opening them to the real participation of parents and the community in determining the school’s destiny” (p. 41). This is the premise of this study. Without acknowledging how Latina/o parents are actively engaged in the democratization of schooling practices to support their children’s college access, we miss a warranted opportunity. Pérez-Carreón, Drake & Barton (2005) also note “. . . parental involvement or engagement needs to be understood through parents’ *presence* in their children’s schooling, regardless of whether that presence is in a formal school space or in more personal, informal spaces, including spaces created by the parents themselves” (p. 466). This aligns with the premise that family and household practices can contribute to the formal educational experiences of students through the acknowledgement of their funds of knowledge (González, Moll, Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales, & Amanti, 1995). This chapter will note critical scholarship to help us understand the current Latina/o student population and the discourse surrounding parental involvement and engagement particularly among Families of Color.

Educational research indicates parents and educators tend to agree that involving parents is beneficial; however, it is also clear that parents and

educators hold differing views about the objective of engaging parents. Nevertheless, the traditional description of parent involvement negates the value of engagement provided by Parents of Color. Further, a notable difference exists between involving parents in schooling practices and engaging parents in academic learning. This chapter operationalizes parent involvement and parental engagement to explain an inherent difference between involvement and engagement. Additionally, this chapter will describe how Parents of Color support their children as they navigate the U.S. school system, with a particular focus on Latina/o parents.

Latina/o Student Population

The Latino population continues to grow and has become the largest minority group in the United States. According to Fry and Lopez (2012), Latino children make up almost one in five (23.9%) students in PreK-12 public schools. Additionally, in 2012 Latina/o students age 18 to 24 years were the largest minority group enrolled in college with 56% starting in four-year colleges and universities (Fry & Lopez, 2012; Fry & Taylor, 2014). In particular, Latina/o students make up the second largest ethnic/racial group enrolled in postsecondary institutions in California, and the third largest in the entire country (Carnevale, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 1997a, 1997b). With the rapid growth and increased participation of Latina/o students in P-20 educational system, there is an incredible opportunity for educational institutions to prepare to

meet the needs of this community and society. In the 2009 National Survey of Latinos, nearly all Latinos acknowledged the importance of a college degree for getting ahead in life (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). However, the Latino community continues to experience some of the lowest levels of educational attainment. As Latina/o students negotiate the P-20 educational system there are certain factors adversely affecting them. Gándara and Contreras (2009) identify this as the “Latino educational crisis.” Yet despite the challenges and barriers faced by Latina/os, several students have managed to graduate and reach higher levels of education.

Research consistently report how parent involvement influences children’s educational experiences and pathways in different, yet significant ways (Ceja, 2004; Gándara, 1995). However, the traditional approach of parent involvement has been aligned to the behaviors and values of middle and upper class white families which too often neglect or overlook the involvement of diverse families in school (Hidalgo, Siu & Epstein, 2004). The limitation of this traditionally-sanctioned approach to parent involvement, Latina/o parents are characterized as unsupportive of their children’s education (Olivos, 2006). While numerous reasons may restrain or prevent Latina/o parents from engaging traditional participation in schools, there is a growing body of literature re-conceptualizing a critical approach to parental engagement (Auerbach, 2007; Olivos, et al., 2011; Warren & Mapp, 2011). However, it is necessary to first understand the

difference between parent involvement and parent engagement according to the literature.

There needs to be an understanding of the difference between parent involvement and parental engagement as well as recognizing the conception of “education” and “support” in the case of Latina/o parents. The terms *parent involvement* and *parent engagement* are widely used in research and schools and are often used interchangeably. For instance, Pérez-Carreón, Drake, and Barton (2005) note, “. . . parental involvement or engagement needs to be understood through parents’ *presence* in their children’s schooling, regardless of whether that presence is in a formal school space or in more personal, informal spaces, including spaces created by the parents themselves” (p. 466).

In their choice of terms, Pérez-Carreón and colleagues (2005) exemplify that parental involvement and engagement are often tangled. Below, the two concepts are further explored.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is used widely in schools and in research but with many different interpretations. One definition of *involve* is “to enfold or envelop which implies doing to” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2018). The United Code of Law (USCS 7801 (32) defines parent involvement as “the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication, related to student learning and other school activities” (as cited in Jeynes, 2012).

Muller (1995) indicates that parent involvement takes place in the home, the community, and the school. The dominant discourse surrounding parental involvement focuses on specific activities that parents enact within the schooling space (Epstein & Becker, 1982; Epstein & Dauber, 1989; Epstein, et al., 2002). Schools view parent involvement in a more formal manner such as: 1) tutoring children at home; 2) participating in school fundraising; 3) volunteering as a chaperone; and 4) assisting with Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) activities (Epstein, 1995). Waterman (2008) referred to parent involvement as a “mutual capacity and interest on the part of parents as well as the school staff” (p. 146).

This image of an involved parent has been constructed from the actions of parents who are middle- upper-class and predominately White families. Olivos (2006) described a limited view of parental involvement as a “diluted laundry list of activities that ‘experts’ feel good parents ‘do’ to blindly support the schools’ agendas” (p. 13). Similar to Olivos (2006), López (2001) described traditional parental involvement as transparent and regulated actions that are “a scripted role to be performed around school-centered activities” (p. 417). According to Ferlazzo (2011), schools striving for parent involvement lead “with their mouths” by identifying projects, needs, and goals and then telling parents how they can contribute. Nevertheless, scholars at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL, 2002) found that students with involved parents, regardless of income or background, were more likely to do well in school, enroll in higher level courses, attend school regularly, graduate from high school and continue on to

post-secondary education. Thus, school-family connections built on relationships, listening, welcoming, and shared decision-making practices can produce multiple benefits for students (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002).

Parent Engagement

The basic definition of *engage* is “to come together and interlock,” which implies “doing with” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2018). Scholars (Ishimaru, 2014; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012; Warren et al., 2009) emphasized a more inclusive definition of engagement, one towards an emphasis on relationship-building over activities, and the important role of parents and families as leaders and social change agents. When applied to school settings, the relationship between families and the school is the foundation for meaningful family engagement (Constantino, 2008). Parental engagement occurs when there is an ongoing, reciprocal, strengths-based partnership between families and schools. This foundational rapport ignites authentic efforts to increase the capacity of individual parents to support their children (Halgunseth, Peterson, Stark, & Moodie, 2009; Ishimaru, 2016).

In a three-year longitudinal study Calabrese Barton and Drake (2002) examined parental engagement in a mid-sized southwestern city, high-poverty urban elementary schools undertaking science education reform. To examine roles, relationships, activities, and beliefs that defined parental engagement, the researchers utilized case study qualitative methods. These included biweekly

conversation groups with a set of 20 parents, in-depth interviews and observations with parents, school leaders, teachers, and community leaders. While also engaging in participant observations of key parents and teachers involved in traditional and nontraditional parental involvement activities (Calabrese Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & George, 2004). The key conclusions noted parental engagement was a desire, an expression, and an attempt by parents to have an impact on the educational process in schools for their children (Calabrese Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & George, 2004). One participant in the study described her engagement in school as “a presence” in “becoming a part of the fabric of the school” (Calabrese Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & George, 2004, p. 7). This is especially critical when we assess how parents feel engaged and welcomed in school processes.

In another study on parental engagement, Harris and Goodall (2008) analyzed data from 314 respondents from 20 schools in English over a year-long study. The objective was to understand the performance, behavior, and attendance of parents engaged in school practices. In general, parents, teachers and students believe parent engagement was important. However, each group held very different definitions of engagement. Parents considered parental engagement as offering support to their students while they equated involvement with being a caring and responsible parent. Whereas, teachers considered parental engagement as a means to improve student behavior and support for the school site. Lastly, students considered parental engagement mostly as

moral support, parental interest in their academic progress and parents valuing education, overall. Other findings indicated parental interest in their children's education positively influenced student behavior (Harris & Goodall, 2008). In addition, school staff saw a direct connection between student behavior and improved learning as a result of parent engagement (Harris & Goodall, 2008).

Ishimaru (2014) suggests a collaborative model that “engages parents as educational leaders, focuses on shared systemic goals, strategically builds capacity and relationships, and addresses educational change as political process” can have a greater impact than just for their own individual children (p. 188). These collective efforts of parental engagement may be more culturally-responsive for historically marginalized, Communities of Color (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012; Warren et al., 2009). In a single case ethnographic exploratory study, Ishimaru (2014) interviewed and observed 44 educators, parents, community organizers, and community members involved in a district collaboration. A collection of documents referencing the collaboration, such as newspaper articles, meeting agendas, and minutes, were part of the evaluation of parent engagement. Her study was conducted in the Salem-Keizer Public School District which experienced several demographic shifts: (a) an increase in its Latina/o population; (b) experiencing the largest English language learner (ELL) population in the state of Oregon; (c) and more than half the student population qualified for federal free and reduced-price lunch (Salem-Keizer Public Schools, 2009). This study found that in this parental engagement

collaborative model, Parents of Color were recognized as educational leaders who possess expertise on their children and local community. Additional findings emphasized a shared responsibility toward goals and objectives, building capacity and relationships between parents, families, community members, and educators in order to address change as an adaptive challenge (Ishimaru, 2014). As one parent shared, parent engagement is “not about being against the schools; it’s about being with them” (Ishimaru, 2014, p. 201).

The Influence of Parent Involvement and Parental Engagement on Student Achievement

The influence of parental involvement and parental engagement on the educational outcomes of children and youth have been topics of interest for a long time. Empirical studies demonstrated a positive relationship between parent involvement and student outcomes (Barnard, 2004; Durand, 2011; Lee & Bowen, 2006; LeFevre & Shaw, 2011). Parent involvement in a child’s education is scientifically proven to make a difference in the child’s social and academic achievements (Epstein, 1991; Fehrman, Keith, & Reimers, 1987; Lareau, 1989; Muller, 1993a; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). Recent work has described the attitudes and behaviors held by parents directly impacting their children’s learning and school success (Birenbaum-Carmeli, 1999; Bogenschneider, 1999; Catsambis, 2001; Fan & Chan, 2001; Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems & Holbein, 2005; Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 2001; Keith, et al., 1986, 1993; Kohl, Lengua & McMahon, 2000; Muller, 1995; Overstreet et al., 2004; Snodgrass, 1991; Spera, 2005; Taylor, Hinton & Wilson, 1995). Parental support of student learning in

school and at home are key factors that influence student achievement. It is the quality and nature of parent involvement and parental engagement that make a difference in student achievement. However, determining the quality and nature of parent involvement and parental engagement is established by the perceptions held by parents, students, and school personnel. It is important to note that the terms involvement and engagement are often used interchangeably when referencing the influence parents have on their children's education and achievement. For instance, Catsambis (2001) analyzed data from the 1988 National Educational Longitudinal Study to examine connections between parental involvement practices and educational outcomes of high school seniors. The study concluded parents' high expectations for academic achievement and college attendance, consistent encouragement, and actions that enhance learning opportunities were associated with seniors' enrollment in academic programs and success in rigorous coursework. These successes were in core academic subjects regardless of the students' socioeconomic or race/ethnic background (Catsambis, 2001). In the 2002 National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools, Catsambis (1998) noted that family discussions on going to college and helping their children prepare for college were found to be effective forms of parental engagement.

In another study, Gonzalez-DeHass et al. (2005) investigated the relationship between parent involvement and student motivation. Here, parent involvement was defined as "parenting behaviors directed towards children's

education.” These behaviors included: (1) participation in parent-teacher conferences; (2) participation in school activities; (3) providing help with homework; (4) assisting in the selection of coursework; (5) keeping informed of students’ academic progress; and (6) imparting parental values or the level of parental control and/or support offered in the home environment (Gonzalez-DeHass et al., p. 107-108). The researchers synthesized the results from the literature which focused on parental involvement and student motivation. Their investigation revealed parental involvement boosted students’ perceived control and competence while offering a sense of security and connectedness. These factors helped students internalize educational values (Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005). The researchers noted when parents were involved, students had higher grade-point averages and put forth more effort and attention across the four main subject areas: math, English, social studies, and science (Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005).

Kohl, Lengua, and McMahon (2000) examined the relationship between family, demographic risk-factors, and parent involvement in school. They developed a multidimensional model of parent involvement to determine how certain risk factors—parental education level, maternal depression, single parent status, and ethnic/racial minority status—were associated with parent involvement in school. Participants in this study were parents, children and teachers who were selected from different areas across the country in order to represent a cross-section of the American population. Schools were identified in

each area based upon measures of poverty, low parental education levels and location in high-crime areas. The model tested six components of parent involvement: “(a) Parent-Teacher contact, (b) Parent Involvement in School, (c) Quality of Parent-Teacher Relationship, (d) Teacher’s Perception of Parent’s Value of Education (Teacher’s Perception of Parent), (e) Parent Involvement at Home, and (f) Parent Endorsement of School” (Kohl et al., p. 512). This study found diverse patterns of relationships between the family, demographic risk factors, and the six parent involvement dimensions. The results from this study revealed that the three risk factors—parental education, maternal depression, and single-parent status—were significantly and differentially related to the six dimensions of parent involvement.

Parental education levels were related to parent-teacher contact, parent involvement in school, the teacher’s perception of the parent’s value of education, and parent involvement at home. These findings suggest low parental education level was associated with lower levels of active involvement, possibly due to life or school experiences causing parents to feel less able to be actively involved in school. These also propose parents feeling they do not possess the skills to help their children, or that they should not interfere with the school’s authoritative decision-making processes.

Maternal depression was also found to be a detrimental factor impacting engagement levels. Maternal depression impacted parent involvement at school, the quality of the parent-teacher relationship, the teacher’s perception of the

parent's value of education, parent involvement at home, and parent endorsement of school. These results suggest that participants with depression are less likely to demonstrate parent involvement possibly caused by lack of energy, motivation, or negative feelings about their personal lives (Downey & Coyne, 1990).

Single-parent status also impacted parent involvement, the quality of the parent-teacher relationship, and teacher's perception of the parent's value of education. These results suggest single-parents may be less likely to be involved at school due to fewer resources in terms of childcare or free time and institutional misperception of their willingness to engage. Therefore, teachers may be more likely to perceive these parents are less involved and less invested in their children's education.

Kohl, Weissberg, Reynolds, & Kaspro (1994) found the quality of parent involvement to be more strongly associated with the child's academic performance and social competence rather than the amount of parent-teacher contact. It is the parent-teacher relationship in which both feel they are working toward the same goals and can speak openly and honestly that should benefit the child's progress. Similarly, Muller (1995) investigated parent involvement as an intervention in the relationship between maternal employment status and mathematics achievement of eighth graders. Data from the 1988 National Educational Longitudinal Study provided a comprehensive sample of 13,881 American youth. Muller (1995) found a positive correlation between the mother

talking and pre-planning high school program with her child and the child's eighth grade mathematics test results. Furthermore, regulatory forms of involvement in the home, especially restricting television and amount of unsupervised time after school, were notable predictors of test score gains (Muller, 1995). The amount of time parents talk with their children about everyday school activities was the best indicator of parent involvement.

Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) reinforced the importance of learning at home as an influential parental role on educational achievement. Whereas, the longitudinal studies conducted by Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, and Taggart (2004) support the connection between parental engagement and academic learning in school. Parental support of student learning while at school and while at home are factors influencing student achievement. However, it is the perceptions of parents, students, and school staff that determine the quality and nature of parental engagement which then influence the level of student achievement and educational outcomes (Harris & Goodall, 2008). Recent research on parental engagement has started to identify and problematize the epistemologies and structures that created and perpetuated a homogenized and oversimplified understanding of parental involvement (Fernández & Paredes Scribner, 2018). Challenging a normative lens, rooted in affluent white parent engagement is especially helpful. By employing a more expansive lens of parental engagement will enable researchers to note actions by Latina/o parents as noteworthy and beneficial.

Parents of Color Involvement and Engagement

There are contradictory understandings among parents and schools of what parent involvement or parental engagement looks like, especially for Parents of Color. The contradictions are exacerbated by cultural differences and language barriers, which influence misconceptions about families' participation in their children's formal education (Halgunseth, Peterson, Stark, & Moodie, 2009). While mainstream parent involvement practices are based upon homogeneous white middle-class groups, they do not take into account the non-traditional practices of historically underrepresented groups.

For immigrant parents, for example, the lack of mainstream practices of parent involvement have been traditionally interpreted as a lack of interest or concern for their children's education (Payne, 2008; Stone, 1998). Conversely, studies indicate that minority parents care about their children's achievement and academic success, and want to be involved in their children's schooling (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992, 1994; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, & Quiroz, 2001; Zarate, 2007), yet they are hindered by structural constraints and motivational barriers (Shah, 2009). Additionally, there is the notion that low-income Latina/o parents are not actively involved in their children's education (Chavez-Reyes, 2010; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992, 1994). While institutional challenges may exist for Parents of Color which prevent them from engaging in the dominant forms of parental engagement, they may be actively engaged in other forms of parental engagement such as providing *consejos* and *educación*

as life education, which encompasses social and ethical education (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldberg, 1995; Zarate, 2007). Delgado-Gaitan (1992) noted Mexican-American families value education for their children, but face socioeconomic barriers that need to be addressed and overcome in their pursuit of higher education. Empirical studies also suggest parent involvement has a positive impact on the academic achievement of minority students by offering academic advice, expressing interest in academic outcomes, and assisting in the completion of academic work (Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor, & Bámaca, 2006; Fuligni, 1997; Jeynes, 2003; Plunkett & Bámaca-Gómez, 2003; Wentzel, 1997, 1998). Integrating parent participation in the educational process of their children has a strong correlation with student's academic success (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Durand, 2011; Moll & González, 1997). According to Delgado-Gaitan (1992), when parents attend school activities and workshops, parents develop a support system and learn from each other how to support the academic progress of their children. In a study conducted by Durand (2011), the social networks formed by Latina/o parents had a positive impact on children's literacy skills in kindergarten.

In a ground-breaking study which reframed the parental role, Delgado-Gaitan (1992) highlighted the influence of social networks within Latina/o families. Over a nine-month timeframe, data were collected through ethnographic observations and interviews from six Mexican-American families who lived in a Latina/o neighborhood in Carpinteria, a city near Santa Barbara, California. Data characterized families as working class, Mexican immigrants, spoke

predominately Spanish, and had a strong desire for their children to succeed in school (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992). The social networks formed through parent engagement helped familiarize parents with the educational system, which provided a level of involvement, family connectedness, and a trust and safety of families' cultural ethnic ties (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992).

Moll and González (1997) also contributed to this scholarship by highlighting the assets that Latina/o families contribute to their children's education. They drew from ethnographic and qualitative methods to work as participant-researchers in a collaborative research project involving elementary school teacher-researchers. The researchers explored the interconnections between households, labs, and classroom for the purpose of benefitting pedagogy. This study exposed the inaccurate perception that working-class, language minority households lack worthwhile knowledge and experiences to become engaged in their children's education. Instead these households and communities held valuable knowledge and experiences that fostered children's educational development (Moll & González, 1997). The teacher-researchers reformulated their concept of culture to be more practice-oriented. This led to the development of strategies to recognize the knowledge that children bring to school. Also gained from this study was the importance of social capital from outside the school, which in combination with other resources can influence the structure and outcomes of education as previously noted by Coleman (1987, 1988).

Social capital is found in the relationships among individuals, and the resources said relationship is connected and used by others. The social capital of families, peer groups, and communities are important in shaping the educational outcomes for students, primarily by encouraging student to stay in school versus dropping out (Cammarota, Moll, Gonzalez, & Cannella, 2012; Moll & González, 1997). The social networks that develop among Latina/o students serve to help others “learn the ropes” by sharing information about homework, college recruitment and preparation, teachers, and courses to enroll in order to effectively navigate the educational system (Cammarota et al., 2012).

The notion that students access various support from social systems is further reinforced when academically high-performing students report a core source of support come from their family. For example, Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor and Bámaca (2006) explored the simultaneous influence of academic support on Latina/o adolescents’ academic motivation linked to academic outcomes. There were 310 Latina/o adolescents (154 boys, 156 girls) from five Midwestern high schools in ninth and tenth grade (Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor, & Bámaca, 2006). Survey data assessed generational status, parents’ educational attainment, and measured perceived academic support and academic motivation. The findings indicated parental academic support was positively related to academic motivation (Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor, & Bámaca, 2006).

In a more recent study, Durand (2011) used a national representative sample of Latina/o kindergarten children and parents to examine the relationship

between Latina/o parent involvement and children's early literacy skills and ecological factors associated with parents' school involvement and engagement. Durand's (2011) study included 2,051 Latina/o children who were first-time kindergarteners attending public school in 1999. This sample was extracted from data collected from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 1998-1999 (ECLS-K). However, the sample was biased toward more fluent English-language speakers. Using an adaptive design, a multilevel computer-assisted reading assessment was administered in two developmental stages. This study found increased contact and communication with schools and teachers increased parents' knowledge and understanding of the content and expectations of the school curriculum. This understanding shaped parental support for childrens' learning while at home. Durand (2011) reinforced the notion that social capital represents the strongest factor associated with parents' involvement; it argued that an alliance with other parents helped parents gain access to information and additional resources.

Deficit Views of Latina/o Parental Involvement

While Latina/o families hold funds of knowledge and assets in their navigational strategies, a limited and deficit view of parent involvement has ignored and/or discounted authentic engagement by Parents of Color (Fernández & Paredes Scribner, 2018). Negative views of Mexican parents have translated into the perceived lack of parent of involvement at many schools (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). Some teachers believe Mexican parents do not value

education and lack the necessary skills to support their children's formal education (Valencia & Black, 2002). Further, there are other scholars who believe immigrant parents are too busy to be involved in their children's education (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). However, Mexican immigrant parents place a high value on their children's education and their success in school (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; González et al., 1993; López, 2001; Valdés, 1996).

As an attempt to improve parental involvement, some schools offer remediation programs to address the perceived lack of skills and knowledge that Latina/o immigrant parents may hold (Rioux & Berla, 1993; Valdés, 1996; Villenas, 2001). However, teachers place an exclusive value on English and fail to see the value of bilingualism, so they teach immigrant parents how to support literacy development of their children as a way to link school success (Waterman, 2008). The deficit views held by educators and schooling institutions result in deficit explanation of low parent involvement despite parents' high value and regard for education (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Diaz Soto, 1997; Rioux & Berla, 1993; Valencia & Black, 2002). Other researchers explain the lack of parent involvement is a direct result of an insufficient understanding between Mexican parents and U.S. schools (Brilliant, 2001; González et al., 1993; López, 2001; Valdés, 1996). Flaugher (2006) suggested that there are limited opportunities for culturally-diverse families to engage in the decision-making process regarding the education of their children. Research on culturally-diverse families indicate feelings of alienation and reservation for participating in school leadership

councils were evident among Parents of Color (Schaller, Rocha, & Barshinger, 2007; Sohn & Wang, 2006). Schools and school leaders have created barriers preventing Latina/o parents to become involved. For example, Zarate (2007) found that limited interactions between schools and parents due to minimal language accommodations did not allow for personalized, frequent, and timely information about their child's progress. Further, school event schedules were often in conflict with the time constraints and work demands of working Latina/o parents. School policies and security measures also discouraged parents from visiting the school and classrooms without a pre-set appointment. These institutional barriers exacerbate the lack of parent engagement and involvement.

Latina/o Parental Commitment to Education

Despite negative perceptions, Latina/o parents place a high value on education and academic progress. Delgado-Gaitan (1992) noted that Latina/o parents shared a great deal with their children in regards to their aspirations, motivations, physical resources, and face-to-face interactions. These forms of engagement are, in fact, organized to encourage and establish a total learning environment. Although their low socioeconomic conditions limit material resources, Latina/o parents still provided parental discipline, scheduled time for school work and bedtime, and arranged a stable and familiar routine (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992). In studying how Latina/o parents conveyed their value of education to their children, Delgado-Gaitan (1992) found that parents emphasized the concept of an educated person as much broader than merely

“being able to complete a school program” (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992). The study established that economic and social resources were important factors that shaped the home learning environment. In particular, parents created safe, comfortable, and stable environment that encouraged children’s positive outlook about schooling.

Waterman’s (2008) study revealed mother participants in the study explained their strong commitment to education, the importance of their role in their children’s education, and presented the participants’ definition of parental involvement. These participants described parental involvement as talking with their children and instilling importance of valuing a formal education. Their role was helping their children “be good people—good human beings” (Waterman, p. 153). To the participating participants “being good people” meant a commitment to work hard, value self and others, help others and to behave. Latina participants shared their committed to their children’s education and expressed that they wanted their children to be successful in school, attend college, and to achieve some form of “professional work” (Waterman, 2008). Although the majority of these participants were rooted and concerned with poverty, the value of education was instilled by all of the participants in the study. Education was seen as a navigational tool to break intergenerational poverty. Here, there was a great emphasis on engaging in school practices to support their children’s future.

Obstacles of Latina/o Parents’ Engagement and Involvement

A critical challenge facing schools is the need to actively involve Latina/o

parents in the schooling process. While parent involvement has shown to improve the academic achievement among Latina/o youth, parents face various obstacles in their attempt to become involved in their children's education (Torrez, 2004). Olivos (2004) mentions the conflicts between Latina/o parents and public schools are deeply embedded within the institutional culture due to differing views and values of education which further create obstacles for authentic Latina/o parental engagement. Limited resources for Latina/o families present unique barriers to increase involvement where more affluent families may not experience these challenges. Families with a lower socioeconomic status often experience constrained living spaces and limited material resources which often result in a barrier for Latina/o parents (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992). Waterman (2008) attributed a lack of resources, such as books in the home, and time for parents and children to read together as evident dimensions of poverty. Additionally, Latina/o families and other ethnically diverse families live in lower socioeconomic conditions and are often faced with sustained isolation from the school culture. These forms of separation and disconnect result in miscommunication between families and the school (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992). Furthermore, lower socioeconomic families have an increased likelihood of working inflexible jobs, lack of access to consistent transportation, experience a lack of child care options, and have lower educational attainment levels (Alexander, Cox, Behnke, & Larzelere, 2017).

Previous research studies have established *language* as a dominant

barrier hindering both school and parents (Aspiazu, Bauer, & Spillet, 1998; Diaz Soto, 1997; Faltis, 2006; Goldenberg, 1993; Olivos, 2004; Zarate, 2007). For Latina/o families have limited English proficiency, language poses as a major barrier to parents' communication and school involvement practices (Al-Hassan & Gardner, 2002; Faltis, 2006; Manzo, 2016; Wong & Hughes, 2006;). In particular, Alexander, Cox, Behnke, and Larzelere (2017) noted Latina/o parents who were not able to speak English were less likely to attend parent-teacher conferences or other school-related events. Durand's (2011) study along with other studies (Olivos, 2004; Peña, 2000; Wong & Hughes, 2006) noted the negative relationship between speaking mono-lingual Spanish as a primary language and engaging in school-based activities among Latina/o families. Waterman's (2008) study revealed that *language* was a barrier, especially for the participants, to fully engage and support their children's education. The parents in Zarate's (2007) study reported that communication with schools were "impersonal, infrequent, and without adequate notice" and occurred when a problem arose (p. 10).

Waterman (2008) also found that Latina participants indicated learning English was a mechanism to support their children's education, resulting in participants enrolling in ESL classes, which also provided them with knowledge of new parent involvement skills along with English language skills. While participants maintained differing levels of skill and knowledge, they were highly motivated to be involved in their children's education. Recent research also

supports that parents overcome language barriers to increase their school involvement. For instance, Manzo (2016) found that although Latina immigrant participants were not able to understand the English language, they engaged in practices that allowed their children to complete assignments and maintain their bilingual skills. For example, one mother would have her child translate the assignment into Spanish. Then she would explain the concept in Spanish and the child would work through the assignment in Spanish and finally the child would complete the assignment in English. This reinforces the importance of bilingualism while supporting academic benefits for the student.

Furthermore, Latina/o immigrant parents want their children to do well in school, this has been consistent in empirical research. However, Olivos (2004) indicates that a perceived lack of parent involvement by Latino parents results from cultural and language differences. Faltis (2006) explains Latina/o parents view the teachers' responsibility is to cultivate academic learning in the classroom setting, while parents are responsible to support home learning. Faltis (2006) advocates for a more inclusive parent engagement model which allows for the development of relationships by creating welcoming spaces for parents as well as learning about students' home culture.

Additional difficulties arise for immigrant parents when navigating a new system of formal education and simultaneously feeling alone in the educational community. These result in parents' hesitancy to become involved in the school environment (Pew Hispanic Center, 2004; Ramirez, 2003). Additional studies

have found a lack of parent involvement between Mexican parents and U.S. schools as the result of an insufficient understanding of the U. S. schooling system (Brilliant, 2001; González et al., 1993; López, 2001; Valdés, 1996). Mother participants in Waterman's (2008) study indicated their unfamiliarity with U.S. schools along with a foreign curricular content and practices limited their ability to support their children's education. In particular, De Gaetano (2007) found a dramatic difference between U.S. school expectations of parents in contrast to their native countries' school expectations of parents.

Nevertheless, Manzo (2016) found that although the majority of the Latina/o parents in her study were not familiar with the U.S. school system, they desired to be involved in their children's education. Findings from her study indicate parents became involved in their children's education by engaging in three main practices: 1) helping with homework; 2) providing personal *consejos*; and 3) mentoring other parents. In doing so, they were able to help their children with homework, encourage their children to continue their formal education, and advise other parents when problems arose. Similarly, Waterman (2008) found that while many immigrant participants were unfamiliar with the U.S. schooling system, they held a strong commitment to ensure their children homework assignments were complete to help achieve academic success.

The stories presented by the participants in Waterman's (2008) and Manzo's (2016) studies demonstrate unique elements of parental involvement in their children's education process. A broader definition of parental involvement

emerged from Waterman's (2008) study of Mexican participants align to other studies to present new elements of parental engagement and involvement. These include: (1) holding high value on their children's character and social skills (Valdés, 1996; Villenas, 2001); (2) view formal schooling an essential component of being "well educated" by attending school; and (3) being respectful and cooperative in school settings. These studies also revealed that the participants valued collaboration with the school, teachers, and administration not only for the benefit of their children but for school success overall. It is important to note that parents' engagement present unique practices that emerged from life lessons and contributed positively to their children's education. Funds of knowledge validates these practices, and the knowledge produced and acquired in living their lives presents opportunities to develop new ways of engagement (Moll, et al., 2013). Given the need to understand how Latina/o families engage in their children's education, which counters the deficit notion that Latina/o parent lack engagement or value (Payne, 2008; Stone, 1998), the following section examines culturally-relevant forms of Latina/o parental engagement.

Parental Engagement for Latina/o Parents

Latina/o parents hold education as an important value and have optimistic educational aspirations for their children. Research notes Latina/o parental teaching and learning as cultural strengths. These studies also highlight children draw from their linguistic and cultural knowledge to function in schools and society (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1992, 1994; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco,

1995; Trueba, 1998, 1991). Latina/o parents play a critical role in the academic success and resilience of their children (Gándara, 1995; López, 2001; López and Vásquez, 2006). Parent commitment to education is often illustrated in non-traditional forms of parent involvement. These expand and broaden teaching and learning to include the home and community. Thus, the Latina/o “ways of knowing and extend beyond formal schooling” (Elenes, Delgado Bernal, González, Trinidad & Villenas, 2000) take an entire new meaning when they are practiced to support their children’s educational outcomes.

The mother-child relationship is especially seen as critical in the Latina/o family. Participants are considered “experts in child development” and “teacher” in the household who transmit cultural knowledge, morals, and instill the concept of *educación*” (Cortez, et al., 2014, p. 877). *Educación* as discussed in Latina/o families encompasses social and ethical forms of education in addition to formal schooling practices (Reese et al., 1995; Zarate, 2007). In establishing the notion of subtractive schooling, Valenzuela (1999) was the first scholar to highlight the disconnectedness between U.S. schooling and familial *educación*. Valenzuela (1999) noted that *educación* provides “instructions on how one should live in the world...with its emphasis on respect, responsibility, and sociality” (p. 21). Villenas and Moreno (2001) were also among the first scholars to propose the notion of Latina participants as the teachers of the household; responsible for instilling in their children the concept of *educación*. This concept of *educación* or life education for Latina/o families is more than just formal schooling; it implies

that children will continue to use the values passed down from previous generations, noted as ancestral knowledge (Guzman-Martinez, 2012; Zarate, 2007).

Delgado Bernal (2001) refers to the communication, practices, and learning that occur in the home and community as “pedagogies of the home.” Pedagogies of the home place cultural knowledge and language at the forefront of their daily practices which help to better understand lessons from the home space and local communities. This cultural knowledge base helps students survive and succeed within and through an educational system that often excludes and silences them (Delgado Bernal, 2001). In an early study DiMaggio (1982) suggested that exposure to particular cultural experiences influenced the development of knowledge required for low-income and minority parents. These help their children reach their college aspirations which aligns with pedagogies of the home. Pedagogies of the home include *consejos* or advice-giving narratives (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Lopez, 2001), emotional support, and parent-child discussions (Auerbach, 2007; Barnard, 2004; López, 2001), as well as counternarratives which are used to challenge family practices viewed as problematic or oppressive (Villenas, 2001).

One perspective of positive Latina/o parent engagement is the use of *consejos*, a culturally relevant practice of giving personal advice and intergenerational wisdom among Latina/o families. *Consejos* convey cultural values, optimism and hope, inspire and motivate, guide appropriate behavior and

provide children with the tools needed to be resilient (Moreno & Valencia, 2011; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). The values, work ethic, and teachings learned through *consejos* are often transferred to new environments and circumstances. In effect these represent broader life-lessons that transmit age-appropriate sociocultural teachings and values through family conversations and interactions (Alfaro, O'Reilly-Díaz, & López, 2014). As such, Latina/o parents draw from their personal experiences to influence the educational aspirations and encourage the academic success of their children by offering *consejos* about optimism, determination, disposition and motivation.

In a more recent study conducted by Alfaro, O'Reilly-Díaz and López (2014), they identified and categorized various types of *consejos* that emerged within a particular household. In their case study, the researchers provide an in-depth description of how *consejos* were manifested, understood, and internalized by an academically successful a Latino law student. The participant's narrative suggested that *consejos* served different purposes but are closely connected and build on each other (Alfaro et al., 2014). *Consejos* extend beyond giving verbal advice, but were "manifested in family stories and narratives, personified through examples, and experientially lived through work exposure" (Alfaro et al., 2014, p. 13). *Consejos*, then, were categorized as: optimistic, teach determination, disposition, and motivation. In other words, *consejos* represented forms of parental engagement that are not traditionally acknowledged by school leaders.

Optimism was apparent in the sense of hope and purpose, which were

helpful as educational challenges were faced in the underfunded, under-resourced, urban schools. Parents demonstrated a sense of optimism even when faced with their own economic hardships. They were aware of the injustices they faced as immigrants, however “a better life” was forthcoming through the opportunity of advancing with educational opportunities offered in U.S. These educational opportunities were often compared to their limited opportunities experienced in their home country (Alfaro et al., 2014, p. 13). As such, these *consejos* were translated into actual survival strategies and coping mechanisms as both parents and children navigated new educational terrain.

Determination represented the value of hard work and perseverance. This entailed listening to and watching parents struggle in their daily work. Identifying their daily and laborious struggles presented possible consequences that would beset the future without a formal education. In an earlier study by López (2001), parents’ determination was exhibited through their hard work and perseverance while teaching their children about “work as a lesson in life, work to teach children the value of school, and work to learn life skills (p.428). While parents in this study were not familiar with the U.S. school system, their disposition conveyed appreciation for educational success and high expectations for their children’s education. A connection between a better life and education were conveyed through parental advice “try to learn as much as you can”, do well in school, behave and to work hard (Alfaro et al., 2014 p. 14). This notion of disposition through *consejos* also challenges the deficit framing of Latina/o

parents being unable to navigate a new education system, noted in the section above.

Finally, in alignment with studies noted earlier, Alfaro et al. (2014) found that parents engaged and provided *consejos* to encourage and motivate their children to do their best in school. These forms of *consejos* instilled a particular attitude and resilience within which was critically important when faced with difficult or challenging times. Recognizing that the opportunities available were a direct result of hard work, dedication, and sacrifice provided by others, including parents.

Summary

Parents of all income levels and ethnicities want the best outcomes for their children, even if they are not able to be visibly present at school settings. The literature clearly indicates the importance of strong partnerships between parents and schools. Positive family-program connections have been linked to greater academic motivation, grade promotion, and socio-emotional skill development across all children, including those from diverse racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds (Christenson, 2000; Mantzicopoulos, 2003; McWayne et al., 2004). While any form of parent and family involvement is helpful to support students; most research indicates that parent and family engagement can produce better results for students, families, schools, and communities (Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009). However, the lack of actively

involving Latina/o parents has plagued schools for too long. This is primarily caused by limited and deficit views schools hold of Latina/o parent involvement. Research has shown that cultural differences and languages other than English often limit parents from being welcomed or becoming engaged with schools. Parents of Color that differ from the dominant, affluent white culture are often ignored, denigrated, or treated superficially (De Gaetano, 2007).

The traditional scholarly definition of parent involvement does not lend itself to an inclusive school culture, nor does it build authentic and meaningful relationships with families. Zentella (2005) states schools must learn about, and embrace, culturally relevant practices about parent involvement. Engaging in this critical practice will result in the appreciation of the richness Latina/o families bring forth and the power of their language and cultural narratives. As Delgado Bernal and Alemán (2017) note, policies, practices and perceptions of society and educational professionals further exclude and marginalize the lives and knowledge of Latina/o students and their parents. This reflects the disconnect between formal education and the lived experiences and historicity of communities. These lead to further exclusion and marginalization of Latina/o parents and students. Thus not seeing Latina/o students as college bound is equivalent to school assuming Latina/o parents do not care for their children's education: deficit thinking.

Latina/o parents and students hold onto their historicity and strengths as funds of their own knowledge. Understanding and capitalizing on the cultural

practice such as *consejos* is of particular significance for schools, because this may be the primary method in which Latina/o families are involved in their children's schooling.

Latina/o parents communicate and express their high expectations of their children and hold strong desire for their children to not only graduate from high school but continue onto postsecondary education (Torrez, 2004). Therefore, to increase the college-going rates of Latina/o students, communication about college preparation between Latina/o parents and the school is necessary. Latina/o parents can be a critical advocate in guiding their children through a high school curriculum that will ensure their eligibility and competitiveness for college entrance (Torrez, 2004). Schools ought to engage in culturally-relevant practices that move away from the traditional ways of white, middle class communities in order to successfully partner with Latina/o parents. This rapport will prepare Latina/o children for higher education (Auerbach, 2004a; Cline & Necochea, 2001; De Gaetano, 2007; Downs, Martin, Martinez, S., Solorio, & Martinez, H., 2008; Kwek, 2015).

In Chapter three, the proposed research methodology for this study is presented. Chapter three begins with a description of the qualitative research design employed for this study. A description of the research setting in which this study took place is followed by the process for recruiting participants. A focal characteristic for eligibility relied on those parents who have at least one child currently enrolled in an elementary school. Focus group interview sessions with

Latina/o parents of elementary school-aged children is the primary source of data collection. As the researcher-participant, reflections were noted in a journal as memos to help guide data analysis from the focus group sessions. In addition, a description of data collection methods and data analyses strategies as to validate this study are presented. Lastly, the researcher's positionality within the study are discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Overview

In Chapter three the research methodology utilized for this study are detailed. As an educational leader and a group of Latina/o parents of elementary school-aged children co-develop a college-going partnership to support students and their future postsecondary educational aspirations are discussed. This study employed qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of the involvement and engagement practices by Latina/o parents. These experiences related to schooling and college-going aspirations, including parent awareness of and preparation for the post-secondary educational opportunities in pre-preparation for their elementary school-aged children.

This study positioned itself to further understand involvement and engagement practices by Latina/o parents that were specific to schooling and postsecondary options. These engagement steps were to collaboratively co-develop an instrument to determine the college knowledge needs of Latina/o parents of elementary school children. The purpose is to support a college-going partnership between the home and the elementary school. The main data sources that informed this study were two focus group interview sessions with ten (10) Latina/o parents of elementary school-aged children.

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Research Design

A qualitative methodology was most appropriate for the context of this study. More specifically, a participatory action research qualitative design was identified as the most appropriate and aligned design. The primary goal in designing a participatory action research qualitative study was to facilitate opportunities for Latina/o parents to share their stories, have their voices heard, and advance a collaborative effort to effect change with the college-going practices of an elementary school.

Creswell (2013) and Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state that qualitative researchers observe particular settings and cases, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Glesne (2016) further notes that qualitative researchers seek to make sense of actions and narratives, and the ways they intersect; therefore, it is essential to learn to listen and interpret the words of others and retell their accounts as a qualitative researcher.

The purpose of all action research is to impart social change with a specific action or actions as the ultimate goal (Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Koch & Kralik, 2006; McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). Action research involves an action researcher and members of a community or organization who desire to make change or improve their current situation. Gillis and Jackson (2002) defined participatory action research (PAR) as a “systematic collection and analysis of data for the purpose of taking action and making change by generating practical knowledge” (p. 264). PAR has also been defined as a “philosophical approach to research that recognizes the need for persons being studied to participate in the design and conduct all phases of any research that affects them” (Vollman, Anderson, & McFarlane, 2004, p. 129). Vollman et al. (2004) specified the purpose of PAR is to foster capacity, community development, empowerment, access, social justice, and participation. From a feminist perspective, Maguire (1987) defined PAR as combining the activities of social investigation, education, and action in a collective process. According to Maguire (1987), participatory

action research involves three types of change, including: (1) the development of critical consciousness of the researcher and the participants; (2) improvement in the lives of those participating in the research process; and (3) transformation of societal structures and relationships. The process of involving Latina/o parents of elementary school-aged children in the action research cycle provided an opportunity for the parent participants to engage as parent-researchers alongside the researcher, as they co-developed a parent survey instrument. The administration of the survey instrument would permit the researcher and parent researchers to gather data from parents of elementary school children and their college knowledge.

Within this participatory action research study, my role as a researcher is a prominent part in this study, especially as an insider-researcher. As a researcher practitioner, I acknowledge my own intent to make a difference in the research setting. Creswell (2013) suggests that the researcher is a key instrument in the qualitative process because of their engagement in multiple aspects of the process. Accordingly, one unique aspect of conducting insider action research is that one initiates research in a setting where relationships have already been established (Herr & Anderson, 2015). This rapport is especially critical when engaging participants that have often been marginalized or ignored in research studies, as is the case for many monolingual-Spanish speaking Latina/o parents.

Research Setting

The selection of the research setting is an important element to this study. One of the objectives of participatory action research is to contextualize the study in a setting that is attempting to impact the lives of those participating in the research process with the intentionality to transform societal structures and relationships. The research setting was selected primarily because of a previous college-going PAR project developed and implemented at the school with students, families, and staff in conjunction with California State University, San Bernardino. This study is an extension of an initial PAR project, which has necessitated the continuance to conduct collaborative research on the college-going issue affecting this particular school community.

The participating research setting is an elementary school site located in southern California with a majority Latina/o population. Four institutions of higher learning exist within proximity to the research setting. This is important to my study because these institutions of higher learning serve as potential postsecondary campuses for students, as well as institutional access for parents.

The participating elementary school is situated within a section of the city where a majority of single-family residences are placed. This area also includes a new gated home development for single-families. Additionally, a community center and city parks are within close proximity to the school site. This elementary school serves a student population of approximately 550 students in grades transitional kindergarten (TK) through fifth grade. School enrollment is

predominantly Latina/o student population, with 98% of students participating in the free and reduced meal program, which is proxy for family income.

Additionally, 55% of the students are English Learners (EL) with Spanish being the predominant language spoken at home. School district bus transportation is provided to approximately 150 students who live more than two and a half miles away from school. Previously this elementary school was identified as a Program Improvement school under No Child Left Behind. Due the high percentage of students who qualify for the free or reduced meal program, the school receives federal Title 1 funding as well as other state categorical funds for English Learners and low-income students. The school also has three active parent groups which include the School Site Council (SSC), English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) and a Parent-Teacher Association/Organization (PTA/PTO).

Research Sample

My study is researcher-initiated participatory action research study employing a purposeful sample design. As a result, from interactions and conversations with parents and families of elementary school students during a college campus visit, parents on this trip were identified as participants for the study. While on this college trip, parents and families identified a need to further develop their knowledge about college preparation even while their children are at the elementary school level. Purposeful sampling narrowed the population to

select information-rich cases that would enable researcher to gain a deeper understanding by prioritizing the research questions (Patton, 2002). This sampling selection design was based on the relevancy of the participants' experiences regarding the topic of the study and their ability to support the researcher to obtain rich and valuable information to understand the issue in query (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Along with knowledge and experience, other considerations included the availability and willingness to participate, the ability to share experiences and opinions, and their ability to contribute and expand the researcher's understanding of the topic (Bernard, 2002; Spradley, 1979).

A small number of Latina/o parents whose children are currently enrolled at an elementary school site in southern California and were willing to share their experiences to co-develop college-going practices at the elementary school level were selected to participate. Patton (2002) noted that qualitative inquiry focused on relatively small samples –intentionally- to allow for the discovery and understanding of a particular phenomenon. The emphasis was on in-depth understanding rather than generalizability to “learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (Patton, 2002, p.46). Parent participants and the researcher/educational leader worked together to develop knowledge and understanding “as a catalyst for change” (Bray, Lee, Smith, & Yorks, 2000, p. 3). The potential participants who met the predetermined criterion were provided with information about the study and an invitation to

participate. Further, potential participants were asked about their willingness to participate and were informed about the risk that confidentiality was not absolute. Particularly as participants would learn about other members and their personal stories or other information during the two focus group sessions, as well as during the follow up session initiated by the parent participants. Finally, verbal and written consent were obtained in the chosen primary language of each individual participant.

Data Collection

This study aimed to show how a more inclusive parental engagement framework can help strengthen our understanding of Latina/o parents of elementary school-aged students as they collaboratively co-developed an instrument to assess the college knowledge needs. Latina/o parents were recruited with the intent to co-develop strategies to support college-going practices within a suburban elementary school. Therefore, the key data sources utilized to inform this study were two focus group interview sessions. As a researcher participant, observations and reflections were recorded in memos. These memos document reflective notes about what was being learned from the data collection which aided data analyses. Memos were noted in a personal journal which was kept in a locked filing cabinet when it was not being used.

For the purpose of this study, recruitment focused on Latina/o parents of children enrolled at the participating elementary school and/or who had

participated in a previous university campus visit with their elementary school-aged student. Data for this study was obtained from two focus group interview sessions with ten (10) Latina/o parents of currently enrolled elementary school-aged children. Initially, seven participants were recruited including a former parent leader at the school. Using the existing social networks, parent leaders contacted other potential participants and were able to recruit three additional participants.

Focus group interview sessions have potential advantages over individual interviews (Johnson, 2002). The use of focus group interview sessions helped the researcher gain a better understanding of the parenting practices of Latina/o parents that related to schooling and college-going aspirations which elicited multiple perspectives in the process (Glesne, 2016). The flexible and cumulative format in which the data were created were particularly useful in this action research. Given multiple perspectives were expressed based on the similar experiences of the participants, salient theme coding and analyses were especially critical (Glesne, 2016). Focus group interview sessions also provided a degree of security to persons who may have felt threatened by an individual one-on-one interview process. Additionally, the interaction between participants served as a catalyst for participants who might have otherwise failed to share certain perspectives during an individual interview (Fontana & Frey, 2005). As the researcher, it was necessary to take into account the planning required to design focus group interview sessions: location, participants, duration of sessions

and number of questions. The focus group sessions were held on two consecutive weekends at the research site to accommodate the participants. Each session lasted for approximately 70 minutes and were audio recorded for translation and transcription purposes. The focus group sessions were held in Spanish as this was the primary language spoken by the mother participants. It was necessary to employ a Spanish bilingual interpreter-translator due the English monolingual researcher.

Prior to conducting the first focus group interview session, researcher met with the ten parent participants along with a Spanish bilingual interpreter-translator to review all the details of the study and to obtain verbal and written informed consent. It was critical to take the time to inform participants of the details of the study and the time commitment required on their part. This also provided the opportunity for parent participants to ask any questions or express concerns they had about the study in a language they were comfortable with. Therefore, the initial information time and focus group sessions were conducted in Spanish with a bilingual interpreter-translator. Additionally, details about the purpose of the study and the different layers of confidentiality associated with the study were presented. It was very important to foster and maintain a collaborative relationship with parent participants in the context of this participatory action study.

With IRB approval, written and verbal consent from the ten parent participants, the two focus group interview sessions were audio recorded and

transcribed verbatim. The initial focus group interview session focused on parenting practices related to schooling and college-going aspirations. Given the focus on Latina/o community, it was important to establish a welcoming environment and good rapport with the parents to conduct research that resists a colonist methodology (Delgado Gaitán, 1993; Figueroa & Sánchez, 2005; Freire, 2002; Nora & Crisp, 2009). The colonist methods of inquiry are those where the researcher extracts data from the community but does not give anything in return (Pizarro, 1998). Therefore, this participatory action research is critical to understanding the parenting practices of Latina/o parents related to schooling and college-going aspirations in order to collaboratively develop and implement college-going practices at the elementary school level.

When working with parents, it was important to communicate in the language they were most comfortable speaking; therefore, the focus group interview sessions were conducted in Spanish which is the primary language of the parent participants. Due to the monolingual English-speaking researcher, it was necessary to employ one off campus Spanish bilingual interpreter-translator to assist with the two focus group interview sessions. The interpreter-translator has over 30 years of experience as a professional interpreter and translator for parents and educators. A signed confidentiality agreement with the Spanish bilingual interpreter-translator was secured prior to the commencement of the focus group interview sessions. This was also articulated to the parent participants.

The assistance of a professional Spanish bilingual interpreter-translator was required for this research, and the interpreter-translator was present during the two focus group interview sessions. The two focus group interview sessions were completed in the participants' native language (Spanish). The researcher presented the research questions which were interpreted for the participants. Interpretation was provided by the bilingual interpreter-translator during the focus group sessions for the researcher. The bilingual translator transcribed verbatim the focus groups interview sessions from the audio recordings, and then translated the translated the Spanish transcripts into the study language (English).

In the context of this study, interpretation and translation were the transfer of meaning from the native language of the participants to the language of the study (Esposito, 2001). Interpretation was the transfer of meaning via the spoken word; while translation transferred meaning from the written transcripts. It was critical to employ an interpreter-translator who understood the culture and language of the participants to "reduce potential threats to the validity of the data" (Choi, Kushner, Mill, & Lai, 2012, p. 654). The researcher and the interpreter-translator worked closely and communicated frequently during the translation process. Frequent communication between the interpreter-translator supported the researcher with interpreting the research findings (Temple & Edwards, 2002), as noted in previous studies (Esposito, 2001; Larkin, Dierckx de Casterlé, & Schotsmans, 2007; Regmi, Naidoo, & Pilkington, 2010).

Herr and Anderson (2015) emphasize the importance of keeping a research journal in which action researchers “monitor their own change process and consequent changes in the dynamics of the setting” (p.69). The researcher-participant’s memo journal served as a place to record “reflective and reflexive thoughts and emotional journey through inquiry” (Glesne, 2016, p.78). My researcher-participant memo journal was used to record reflective notes about what I was learning from the data collected as well as observations from the focus group interview sessions. Therefore, it became a place for ideas, thoughts, reflections, questions and notes about patterns that seemed to be emerging from the data that was collected. The memos recorded in the research journal were not written in a manner to be shared; therefore, to protect research participants, it was incumbent upon the researcher to keep the journal secure when it was not in use.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study was based upon the work of Creswell (2013), Herr and Anderson (2015) and Saldaña (2016). Engaging in the analysis of the data as a simultaneous process through the data collection phase allowed an engagement in analysis while the data was fresh. Creswell (2007) suggested a logical data analysis cycle with managing the data in preparation for analysis, reading through the entire database which allowed for immersion in the data leading to the consequent steps of describing, classifying, and interpreting the

data. Saldaña (2016) supported the analysis process by coding the data within context into salient categorical groups. Saldaña (2016) explained that a code in qualitative data analysis is a researcher-generated construct that represents and captures a datum's primary content and essence. A thorough read-through the transcriptions from the two focus group interview sessions were pivotal to data analyses. Data were analyzed for significant statements, sentences or quotes that provided an insight to how the participants experienced the phenomenon were identified (Creswell, 2013). At the onset of the data analysis process, I began to create memos about initial thoughts on the data findings. Then from the data collected, the coding process began using hand coding and NVivo software. These steps helped organize the data to reveal patterns and themes in order to make sense of it and bring meaning to the data collected. The significant statements, sentences or quotes from the participants were manually color-coded into clusters of meaning. From the clusters of meaning, salient themes were developed.

Utilizing an inductive approach to data analysis allowed the data to drive the coding choices. In Vivo coding was appropriate for this qualitative study as the meaning of in vivo is "in that which is alive" (Saldana, 2016, p. 105). Consequently, making In Vivo coding applicable for action and practitioner research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014; Fox, Martin, & Green, 2007; Stringer, 2014) since the primary goal of this action research was to adhere to the "verbatim principle" of using terms and concepts drawn from the direct language of the

participants (Saldaña, 2016). Stringer (2014) also noted that the researcher's use of In Vivo coding was more likely to capture meaning inherent in the experiences of people.

Employing researcher's memos as an analytical tool for data analysis were also important. Strauss and Corbin (1998) note that memos are written expressly for the researcher, allowing the researcher to record ideas, and preliminary inclination of findings. Charmaz (2006) advises for the researcher to approach memo writing in a manner that works best for the researcher. Therefore, a personal memo journal was kept, which was secured when not in use. Birks, Chapman and Francis (2008) explain memos as "mapping research activities, extracting meaning from the data, maintaining momentum and opening communication" (p.70). Researcher memos, along with the focus group transcripts from the two sessions, helped move from concrete words and phrases to conceptual salient themes.

Trustworthiness

As an insider-researcher and participant, it was critical to establish the trustworthiness of this participatory action research qualitative study. To accomplish this, techniques such as triangulation, disciplined subjectivity, thick description, and member-checking were employed (Efrat Efron & Ravid, 2013). Triangulation is the practice of relying on the use of multiple sources of data or obtaining varied perspectives (Creswell, 2013; Efrat Efron & Ravid, 2013; Herr &

Anderson, 2015). In this participatory action research study, data were triangulated from the two focus group interview sessions, observations, discussions and memos recorded in the researcher journal. According to Efrat Efron and Ravid (2013), disciplined subjectivity invites the researcher to acknowledge their personal preconceived ideas with regard to the study and to monitor their biases. Trustworthiness of the study requires reflexivity or ongoing self-reflection, which was documented in the personal memo journal maintained by the researcher-participant. Efrat Efron and Ravid (2013) define thick description as a “detailed and rich account of the research context and a presentation of the participants’ perspectives in their own words” (p.71). Thick descriptions derived from observations and allow readers to better understand interpretation of the data. Lastly, member-checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) allows the researcher to present participants’ perspectives honestly and accurately. This was accomplished by sharing the transcriptions from the two focus group interview sessions and preliminary findings with parent participants.

During the data analysis member-checking was employed as a way to validate findings. Member-checking is process in which the participants are consulted during the data analysis which adds to the trustworthiness of the study’s findings (Saldana, 2016). Therefore, member-checks to gain an understanding and approval from the participants if data was interpreted correctly according to their contribution to the study. Member-checking also provided peer support by promoting discussion around coding dilemmas and analysis (Saldana,

2016). These discussions provided opportunities to share the researcher's thinking process and to clarify ideas as well as gain new insights about the data collection and interpretation.

Positionality of the Researcher

As a researcher practitioner, my role as a researcher becomes complex as it intersects with my personal and professional life experiences coupled with the expectations as the researcher. I hold the experience of working as an educational leader for over for 12 years. As an educational leader, I actively participate in the decision-making process that supports teaching and learning as well as interact with the stakeholders of the school, including students, parents, teachers, support staff and community members. I have an understanding of the internal workings of school districts and of schools based upon my experiences as a classroom teacher and as an educational leader.

Glesne (2016) warns about conducting research in one's own backyard; however, action research can work in this setting given the vested interest in creating change by participants and lead researcher. In particular, Glesne (2016) contends: "The problems and strengths associated with action research suggest that the concept of practitioners as researchers (e.g., teachers, nurses, social workers) who, with others in their community, investigate their own 'backyard' carries much potential" (p. 26). All potential participants must be protected from harm and will be informed of the study. Their participation is voluntary and will

require the completion of informed consent forms.

As the researcher participant inquiring into the origin of this study is complicated, because it involves both professional and personal perspectives. As an educational leader, I understand the importance of parent involvement and parent engagement; however, the deficit discourse within the elementary school setting regarding low income and Latina/o parents and families is especially troublesome. I acknowledge that my positionality has led me to an asset-based framework, which informs the conceptualization of this research study. In doing so, I prioritize the parent participants as epistemological experts who can inform the study by sharing how they support their children and what they can expect from the school.

The deficit discourse leads to my personal perspective and additional motivation for this study. My maternal grandparents immigrated to the United States from Mexico, both reaching a third-grade level of education, as monolingual Spanish speakers. Their involvement in my mother's schooling and that of her 11 siblings was minimal at best. My mother often shared that my grandmother would open her report card not understanding what was written and smile at her. On the other hand, my experience as a parent of children navigating the educational system was very different. Given the diverse experiences, minimal parental involvement should not be equated with a lack of care or concern for their child's well-being and education, because there are alternate forms of parent involvement and engagement which have too often

been ignored in academic scholarship. Thus, I acknowledge my positionality and understand it is in line with previous studies that use asset-based perspectives, which guide the methodology, design, and research questions of my study.

It is my personal belief that all parents and families want the best for their children, and positive relationships can be built between the home and school regardless of gender, race, immigrant status, language or socio-economic status. The aforementioned characteristics should not be barriers to meet the needs of students or limit their aspirations for post-secondary education.

In line with cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998), as a researcher, I acknowledge that the personal and professional beliefs and subjectivities held have an impact on the work as well as strengthen it. For instance, as the researcher I hold an understanding of the inner workings of the schools, this knowledge assisted me with gaining access. Also, I understand the critical importance of the participants' privacy and practiced accordingly. The parent focus group resulted from the group of parents who participated in a collaborative trip to a local university and/or other activities related to the aspirations Latina/o parents. Here they expressed the need to access post-secondary education information for their children. This aligns with my positionality and knowing that parents care about their children's education. At the same time, I aimed to centralize the lived experiences and knowledge of these parents because it was necessary to develop and maintain trusting and collaborative relationships with the study participants.

While my position as an educational leader may seem as one where I can intimidate parents, I have found that the majority of parents who I interact with are quick to share various concerns. In other words, I acknowledge that from an outsider perspective, it may seem that parents would be in a vulnerable position because of my “authoritative” role as an educational leader, but it has been my experience that parents are quick to advocate for their children to receive resources, regardless of my leadership position. For instance, another campus visit to a local university has not taken place, and parents continue to reference the need to make it happen. Therefore, I was prepared to enable parent participants to guide the research findings and enhance my understanding of parental engagement.

Summary

In the attempt to understand how Latina/o parents and an elementary school principal co-develop and implement college-going practices to support students and their aspirations for post-secondary educational attainment, all of this is driven by motivation. My motivation is summarized by the experience of my mother and her siblings and the pervasive deficit discourse educational professionals have disregarded and ignored Latina/o parents and their involvement in their children’s schooling. Engaging Latina/o parents as partners and co-creators in the process of educating their children is critical for college knowledge and access to post-secondary education. Utilizing a qualitative

design, specifically participatory action qualitative research, enables us to gain a deeper understanding of Latina/o parenting practices related to their involvement and engagement. Schooling practices and parent awareness of college knowledge and preparation for the post-secondary educational opportunities for their children are important to strengthen these, even while at the elementary school level. In particular, this study sought to understand Latina/o parental practices of elementary school-aged children related to schooling and post-secondary educational options. In order to collaboratively co-develop an instrument to support college-going practices between the home and the elementary school, a participatory action research design was warranted. It was critical to capture the voices of the Latina/o parents from the elementary school community and to engage with them in the process of participatory action research in order to disrupt the deficit discourse surrounding Latina/o parental involvement and ultimately effect change within the elementary school context.

In Chapter four, study findings are presented which as a result from the two focus group interview sessions and member-check processes. In the beginning, a brief demographic profile of each participant is presented to help readers understand the lives of the participants. Next, data are presented in sections aligned to the three guiding research questions. The first section examines the parental practices of how Latina/o parents engage with their elementary school-aged children in college-going discussions. The second section outlines the college knowledge that Latina/o parents hold. This section

also notes parents' expectations of educators at the elementary school level to help navigate college access for their children. The third section provides a description of how a university researcher and Latina/o parent co-researchers co-develop a participatory action research project.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Overview

This chapter presents the qualitative data from two focus group interview sessions with ten Latina/o parent participants. The purpose of the focus groups was to include the parent participants as co-researchers in the development of this participatory action research project. We determined what practices exist in Latina/o homes to support college access for their children, and what information is needed at the elementary school level to help parents navigate college access for their children. This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. *How do Latina/o parents engage with their elementary school-aged children in college-going discussions outside of the formal school setting?*
2. *What college knowledge do Latina/o parents expect and/or need from educators at the elementary school level to navigate college access?*
3. *How does a participatory action research project develop between a university researcher and parent co-researchers?*

The data presented in this chapter are organized into three sections that align and correspond with the three guiding research questions. The analysis for this chapter draws upon funds of knowledge (Moll et al, 1992) as a guiding conceptual framework. Funds of knowledge validate an asset-based inquiry into Latina/o parental engagement. This standpoint helps to identify the family and

household practices, specifically the *consejos*, that contribute to college-going discussions between Latina/o parents and their elementary school-aged children within the home. Before presenting the study findings, I provide a brief demographic profile of each participant to help the reader understand the lives of the parent participants.

Demographic Information of the Parent Participants

There were a total of ten participants, all participants, who participated in the first focus group session. Seven participants from the original ten also participated in the second focus group session. All parent participants were Latinas, had at least one child enrolled in the elementary school, and lived within the selected community. Below is a description of each parent who participated in this action research study. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms are used for all mother participants.

Alicia Gamboa has seven children, of which five children are adopted. The gender and age are as follows: three sons, ages 4, 8, and 8 and four daughters, ages 3, 5, 17, and 24. Alicia graduated from high school in the United States. She speaks both Spanish and English. Alicia is involved in the English Learners Advisory Council (ELAC) and the Parent-Teacher Association/Organization (PTA/PTO).

Regina García is married and has three children. Her oldest son, presently enrolled in graduate school, and two daughters, one in high school and

one in elementary school. Her son is studying to become a medical doctor and has received a scholarship and other financial support to provide for his postsecondary education. Her high school daughter is applying to both public and private universities, and has been accepted to at least one private university. Regina completed ninth grade in Mexico, earned her General Education Development (GED) certificate in California, and is currently attending a community college with a focus on English Language Development. Regina speaks both Spanish and English and knows many parents in the community given her involvement at the schools her children attend. Regina is dedicated to the schools and her children's education. She is involved in ELAC, PTA/PTO and Padres Unidos, and volunteers every morning in her daughter's classroom at the elementary school.

Rosemary González is a recent widow with two children: one son, currently attending the University of California, Riverside, and one daughter, age 10 in elementary school. Rosemary completed grade 12 in Mexico which she self-reports would be equivalent to the community college level in the United States. Rosemary primarily speaks Spanish and is employed at a local supermarket. When she is not scheduled for work, Rosemary attends the ELAC meetings with her mother who lives with her.

Isabel Huerta is a single parent with one daughter in elementary school. Isabel speaks Spanish and she attended school in both Mexico and the United

States; however, she did not complete high school. She volunteers for PTA/PTO sponsored activities and has volunteered in her daughter's classroom.

Ana Jiménez is married and has two children: one son, age 11 in middle school and one daughter, age 8 in elementary school. Ana graduated from high school in the United States and has some community college experience. Presently, she works for an insurance company and is earning her insurance salesperson certification. Ana speaks both Spanish and English. She is the former president of the PTA/PTO and continues to be actively involved with PTA/PTO sponsored activities. Along with her husband, she regularly participates in other school events at the elementary school and middle school where her children attend.

Marisol Lopez is married and has four children: two sons, ages 6 and 18, and two daughters, ages 21 and 25. Her oldest daughter works as a security officer and is enrolled in community college taking classes in Criminal Justice. Her 21-year-old daughter graduated from the police academy and currently works as a police officer in Los Angeles County. Her 18-year-old son is enrolled at the sheriff's academy. Marisol completed sixth grade in Mexico, and she speaks Spanish. She is a stay-at-home mom and volunteers daily in her son's elementary school classroom.

Jacqueline Vasquez is married has two children, one daughter in elementary school and one daughter in middle school. Jacqueline speaks Spanish. She attended school in both Mexico and the United States; however,

she did not complete high school. At the elementary school site, she participates with her daughter in the 100 Mile Club, a before school program with a challenge to run, jog, or walk 100 miles over the course of one school year. She also helps with PTA/PTO sponsored events such as book fairs, family nights, and the student store.

Cecilia Ramirez has two daughters, one in elementary school and one in middle school. Cecilia attended school in both Mexico and the United States; however, she did not complete high school. Cecilia speaks Spanish. She is involved with ELAC and regularly attends parent workshops held at the elementary school site.

Daniela Robles is married and has two children, one son in high school and one daughter in elementary school. Daniela immigrated to the United States with her sister when she was 15 years old. In Mexico she completed the ninth grade, which she self-reported was equivalent to attending college in the United States. She primarily speaks Spanish. Daniela is committed to her daughter's elementary school. She regularly participates in ELAC and PTA/PTO sponsored activities as well as volunteering for special classroom events.

Vivian Mora is a single parent with five children, two sons ages 16 and 12 and three daughters ages 20, 13, and 8. Her oldest daughter attends the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Her oldest son is in high school. She also has a daughter and son in middle school. Her youngest daughter is in elementary school. Vivian graduated from high school in the United States. She

speaks both Spanish and English and is employed outside of the home. Vivian is very well connected to the community and schools through her volunteer work. She regularly volunteers at her church parish and at the schools her children attend. She is involved with ELAC, Padres Unidos, Band Boosters and PTA/PTO. Through Vivian's personal connections, she was able to assist me with recruiting additional participants for this study.

Focus Group Data Collection

As a participant group, we met a total of three times. The two focus group sessions were held at the elementary school where the participant's children attend, which made transportation and participation easier and accessible for the parents. Coffee and *pan dulce* were provided for each session, which helped establish a familial setting in attempt to foster a feeling of comfort and safety for the parents.

Previous research acknowledges that parents are more likely to engage when they are able to communicate in their primary language (Auerbach, 2004a; Tierney, 2002). The two focus group sessions were conducted in Spanish to allow participants to feel comfortable to respond to the questions and to contribute to the discussions. Although several participants were bilingual, every mother spoke Spanish. Kwek (2015) recommended focusing on one language to lessen the need for translation and explanation after conducting her study with Latina/o parents in both English and Spanish. However, it was necessary for our

sessions to be interpreted for me to present the questions and participate in the discussion. A bilingual interpreter-translator was hired to support both focus group sessions and sat next to me to reduce any disruption to the flow of the conversation.

Our first focus group session lasted 60-minutes and began by having each mother introduce herself and share a bit about her elementary school-aged children. Additionally, because the session was audio recorded, each mother was asked to state her name prior to responding to the question and contributing to the discussion. This allowed for a clear recording which would be transcribed and translated into English at the conclusion of the session by the bilingual interpreter-translator.

This first session focused on answering the question: How do Latina/o parents engage with their elementary school-aged children in college-going discussions outside of the formal school setting? Participants sat quietly after the question was posed, and was interpreted in Spanish. Several participants appeared hesitant to respond. To break the awkwardness, as the researcher I began sharing a practice that my mother, a Latina, used with my siblings and I when we were in elementary school. I stated:

When my siblings and I would get home from school, we would sit at the dining room table while my mother would prepare a snack for us, usually a tortilla with butter or a quesadilla. She would ask us about our day. After our snack, we would begin our homework. Our television time was

always limited on school nights. This was part of our afterschool routine Monday through Thursday.

While my example was interpreted for the participants, several participants laughed and began nodding their heads in agreement. Then one by one each mother shared her story about how they engaged with her children with a focus on going to college. In the findings section, salient themes presented in the first focus group are detailed.

Our second focus group session lasted 90 minutes and was held one week later at the school site with seven of the original ten participants present. We began with each mother stating her name and sharing about her level of formal education completed. The participants were reminded to clearly state their name prior to responding to the question and contributing to the discussion, because the session was being audio recorded for transcription and translation into English at the conclusion of the session by the bilingual interpreter-translator.

At the conclusion of the second session, the participants began discussing the need to name their group as a way to establish a commitment to each other and to the purpose of the study. They mutually decided on the name, *Impulso Hispano*. After deciding on the name for their group, the participants began expressing their need to meet for a third time. I observed the participants' enthusiasm as they recognized their need to navigate the next steps they would take for themselves and for other parents. As one mother-participant stated, "We

will motivate others. We will answer or look for the answers.” A third session or *plática* was held six days later at the school site.

Data Analysis

In this participatory action study, the collection and analysis of the data from the focus group sessions are mutually dependent. The timely analysis of the discussion data was a vital component to the participatory action process. In particular, the collaborative co-development of a parent survey to be implemented with parents of elementary school-aged children in the near future. Focus group data collected was reviewed with the parent participants within a two-week data collection period. Using a collaborative approach to the data analysis was pivotal and led to the participants’ request for a third meeting session. Working as co-researchers, participants and I used the discussion data to begin formulating action steps to proactively take during the third session.

Both audio and digital recording devices were utilized to capture the two focus group sessions. During the focus group discussions, which were conducted in Spanish, memos of researcher observations and key words shared by participants were noted. A verbatim transcription service was employed, and the verbatim transcription along with the digital recording were provided to the bilingual interpreter-translator to enable for full translation into English. The bilingual interpreter-translator provided full English transcription from the two

focus group sessions. In addition, NVivo software was utilized to assist with thematic data analysis.

The data collected from the first focus group session was examined for patterns and themes related to college-going discussions between parents and their children. Data collected from the second focus session was examined for patterns and themes related to parental college knowledge. Member-checking was employed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) with the parent participants, which these provided an opportunity to correct and/or add information to their original responses. Further, the member-check processes also recognize the mechanism for participants to understand this study as a “collective endeavor” among participants and the researcher (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p.106).

To analyze the discussion data from the two focus group sessions, the researcher began listening to the audio recordings, while simultaneously reading the translated transcriptions. This provided a general sense of the discussion and to reflect on the meaning of the stories shared by the participants. At this point, researcher memos to capture initial thoughts of the data noted repeated words and phrases that captured college discussions and college knowledge. Using the NVivo software helped identify possible themes from the word frequency and text queries created from each focus group transcript.

The discussion data collected from the first focus group session was examined for patterns and themes related to college-going discussions between parents and their children outside of the formal school setting. From the second

focus group session, the discussion data was examined for the patterns and themes related to college preparation and college knowledge or “how to do college” (Sommerfeld, 2011).

Results of the Study

The findings data for this study are presented by discussing salient themes and contextualized by presenting direct quotations from the focus group discussions and researcher observation memos. The data are organized in alignment with the topics that evolved from the research questions and the resulting themes.

The findings from this study acknowledge that Latina/o parents of elementary school-aged children value education and have aspirations for a better future for their children. These expectations include aspirations for their children to attend and graduate from college, which is communicated through the use of *consejos* and *educación*. Figure 1 provides a visual representation for the types of *consejos* used by participants in this study. Every parent in this study encouraged their children to do well in school and emphasized the importance of K-12 schooling and its connection to college and long-term career goals. Personal stories about determination and overcoming challenges were shared by the majority of participants (n = six participants) to explain their desire for a better future for their families. Four participants use familial role models as a motivation for their children to see their future possibilities; specifically, that college is

accessible to them. Every mother voiced a sense of optimism for their children's future.

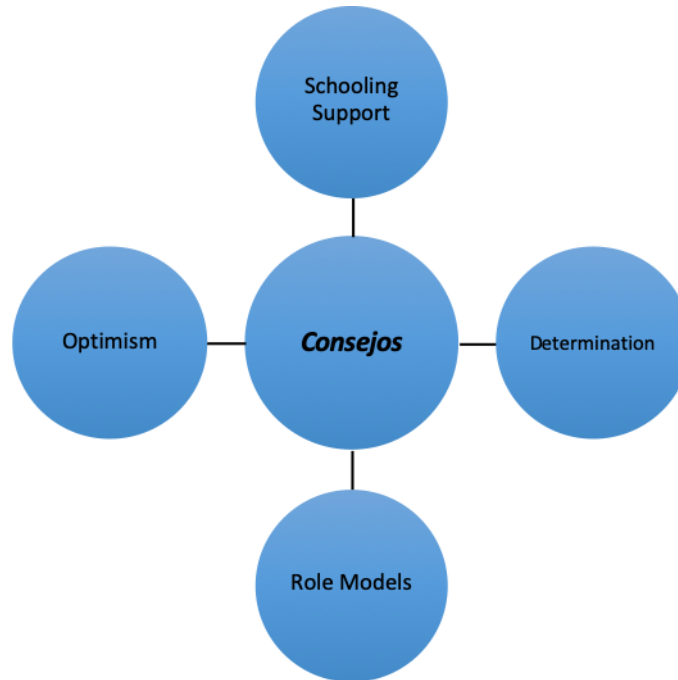


Figure 1: Types of *Consejos* Employed by Participants in this Study

Additional findings in this study reveal that participants need and want information about college preparation and college knowledge in order to advocate for their children's education and to support them on a pathway to college. Participants specifically identified information related to the following: (a) academic preparation for college; (b) college admission requirements; (c) college

tuition costs and related resources; and (d) understanding the difference between the community college and a four-year public/private university. As first-generation college families, findings from the second focus group session clearly demonstrated a need for explicit information and knowledge required for college success generally, but specifically for Latina/o first-generation college students. Participants in this study want to know how to “do” college (Sommerfeld, 2011), in order to advocate for their children and their children’s education.

As a result of the second focus group discussion, participants expressed a responsibility to inform and motivate other Latina/o parents of elementary school-aged children. Consequently, the participants named themselves, *Impulso Hispano*, and they organized a *plática* (meeting) for the group to review key themes related to college preparation and college knowledge. Their goal was to collaboratively co-develop with the educational leader a course of action for disseminating information about college preparation and college knowledge to be proactively shared with other parents at the elementary school.

College Aspirations and Latina/o Parenting Practices in the Home

Latina/o parents are fully committed and driven to ensure they are engaged in their children’s education. This key finding was evident throughout the first and second focus group session. Hence, this is illustrated in this study through pedagogies of the home, in particular, through the use of *consejos* and the concept of *educación*.

The communication and practices that occur within Latina/o homes and communities serve to support their children's schooling experience. This cultural knowledge base helps students survive, navigate, and succeed within an educational system that often excludes and silences them (Delgado Bernal, 2001). The commitment to the education of their children demonstrates the profound value of education that Latina/o parents hold. Data from the first focus group session resulted in four key themes that address the first research question: How do Latina/o parents engage with their elementary school-aged children in college-going discussions outside the formal school setting? The *consejos* used by the Latina/o parents, specifically the ten participants who participated in this study, revolved around four themes:

- (1) support for schooling;
- (2) determination;
- (3) role models; and
- (4) optimism

With respect to this study, *consejos* are influential narratives used by Latina/o families as teaching tools to convey feelings, perceptions, actions, and responses to the educational system (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994) along with influencing behavior and attitudes (Valdés, 1996). Furthermore, *consejos* are more than giving advice, they are “manifested in family stories and narratives and personified through examples” (Alfaro et al, 2014 p.13). For Latina/o families the

concept of *educación* provides instruction on how one should live in the world is instilled in their children with an emphasis on respect and responsibility.

Each household is an educational and learning environment, and the knowledge gained through the lived experiences of the adult family members and community is imparted to the younger generations and serves as a road map for their life-learning and future aspirations. The four themes presented through the *consejos* are defined and presented below.

Support for Schooling

The first theme of support for schooling resulted from the participants describing how they provide support to their children at home. They encourage them to work hard, study, and get good grades. Participants also emphasized the importance of completing homework and to try new things. For example, Mrs. Huerta began the discussion by sharing that her daughter wants to become a doctor and said, “*Yo le digo que tienen que seguir estudiando para poder lograrlo y enfocarse en sus tareas porque si no no va a poder llegar a donde ella quiere.*” (“I tell her that she needs to continue studying so that she can reach that goal, and she needs to focus on her school work, because if not, she will not be able to get where she wants to be.”) Similarly, Mrs. Vasquez tells her youngest daughter who wants to become a veterinarian, “*Le digo que estudie mucho para que pueda llegar a hacerlo.*” (“I tell her that to study a lot so that she can do it.”) These *consejos* illustrate the participants’ engagement with their daughters’

education. Their advice teaches their daughters the value of schooling and motivates them to work hard to achieve their career goals.

The following *consejo* shared by Mrs. García demonstrates support for schooling while expressing her optimistic expectation for a college education for her children. She shared how she and her husband encourage their three children:

Nosotros, mi esposo y yo, desde chiquitos, siempre les decíamos a nuestros hijos ‘Ustedes tienen que estudiar tienen que echarle ganas para que vayan a la Universidad.’ Recuerdo mi hijo, el grande, cuando yo le decía estaba en middle school empezaban a decir de eso. Porque antes, cuando él estaba en la primaria, no les hablaba mucho de universidad hasta que iban middle school. Yo le decía ‘tienes que ir a universidad.’ Pudo ir a la universidad, gracias a Dios. Nosotros decirle tienes que sacar buenas calificaciones y echarle ganas a la escuela y así pues eso es lo que nosotros les inculcamos también.’

(We, my husband and I, have always told our three children from the time they were very young. We would always tell them, ‘You have to study and try hard so that you can attend a university.’ When my oldest son was in elementary school, they didn’t talk much about college, not until middle school. I would tell him, ‘You have to go to college.’ He was able to go to the university. Thank God. We tell our youngest daughter she has to have good grades and try very hard. So that is what we instill in our children.)

Mrs. Robles also expressed the importance of getting good grades, “*Nosotros vamos a estar como madres ‘Tienes que ir a la Universidad, tienes que ir al colegio. Sube las calificaciones échale más ganas.’*” (“We as participants will always tell them, ‘You must go to university, you must go to college. You must raise your grades and try harder [in school].’”) In this *consejo*, Mrs. Robles is engaged with her children’s education as she teaches them about the connection between academic grades and attending college.

Every parent in this study was engaged in their children’s K-12 schooling, and they expressed the importance of K-12 education and its connection to college and long-term career goals. Through their conversations outside of the formal school setting, each parent supported their children’s education by encouraging them in aspects of schooling they believed were necessary for academic success: studying, working hard, getting good grades, and completing homework.

As teachers of the household, *educación* or life education is used to instill values from the family in the children (Guzman-Martinez, 2012; Valenzuela, 1999; Zarate, 2007). Three participants spoke of *educación* or life education. Mrs. Robles stated, “*Yo siempre que recojo a mis hijos. Precisamente antes de venir a la escuela antes de recogerlos hablamos sobre el comportamiento del día que pongan atención que respeten.*” (“Every day when I pick up my children from school or even before school, we always talk about their daily behavior. I tell them that they should pay attention and be respectful.”)

In a similar manner, Mrs. Lopez tells her children, “*Ellos tienen que comportarse respetar a los maestros como respetan a sus papas.*” (“They must behave and respect their teachers, just as they respect their parents.”) Mrs. Robles also spoke about the routine she established for her children when they get home from school. She stated:

Cuando vengo a recoger a mi hija, mi primera pregunta es ‘¿Cómo te fue?’. Recojo a mi hijo y llegamos a casa, regularmente hacemos la comida. Lo que se requiere, tienen un horario para televisión o usando sus teléfonos. Pero llega el momento en el cual ya es tareas el compromiso de saber cómo les fue en el día las quejas. Ya de ahí empezamos con las tareas.

(When I pick up my daughter [from school], the first thing I ask is how her day was. After I pick up my son [from school], and we get home, normally we start preparing dinner. I require that they have a schedule to watch television or use their phones. Then comes homework along with my commitment to listening to how their day was and their complaints. And then we start with homework.)

The participants in this study engage with their children’s education by using *consejos* to articulate the value of an education by providing advice and guidance their children need to be successful in school. The participants instill values of

working hard, expecting good behavior at school, and establishing daily routines to support their children as they navigate K-12 schooling.

Determination

The theme of determination illustrated the value of hard work and perseverance from the participants' lived experiences and their families. Although six participants mentioned experiencing "difficult times," not all of them elaborated on the intimate details of their hardships except to state that they use their experiences to teach their children lessons about determination. However, four participants courageously shared their own personal experiences exemplifying their determination for a better life for their families. They shared about their experiences immigrating to the United States as young children, not knowing the language, work demands, and the loss of a spouse. Many tears were shed by the participants who spoke and by those who heard their stories.

In the following narrative, Mrs. Robles illustrated her determination to work hard as result of the challenges she faced as an immigrant to the United States:

Mi hermana y yo llegamos aquí, yo de 15 años por primera vez. Mi hermana tenía 17. Empezamos a trabajar y nos trajimos a nuestros padres y mis tres hermanos menores de México por la situación en México. Llegué aquí ilegalmente. No hablo inglés muy bien pero puedo escribir un cheque. Puedo escribir de las notas de sus escuelas. A veces pido ayuda para que me traduzcan. A veces no pido porque puedo pero a veces les da pena hablarlo porque de repente pueden ser que me digas lo

correcto. Pero esa es mi motivación y eso es algo que me ha hecho crecer con ellos y eso es algo en lo cual es mi meta.

(My sister and I arrived here for the first time when I was 15 years old and my sister was 17 years old. We arrived here with nothing and went right to work. Then we brought our parents and three younger brothers here because of the situation in Mexico. My older brothers took care of the maintenance of the home and brought in the food. My sister and I worked in order to put our younger brothers and sister through school. I arrived here illegally, I don't speak English very well, but I can write out a check. I can write notes for school. Sometimes I ask for help with translation. Sometimes I don't, because I am able to understand. Sometimes we don't speak English, because we are afraid of saying the wrong thing. But that is my motivation, and this is something that has made me grow with them, and it is something which is my goal.)

Mrs. Robles' *consejo* teaches her children lessons about determination through her personal experiences with hardship. In this narrative, she teaches her children that it is acceptable and essential to ask for assistance even if she was apprehensive or uncomfortable with the situation. She grows in her own self-confidence and models her own learning to her children as she has learned the language and other responsibilities in the U.S. Her children learn language should not be a barrier in their mother's efforts to support and advocate for her children. Her children listen to her speak, and witness the sacrifices she endured

for her children and her family. Her children know she wants them to have a better life.

While language is frequently cited as a barrier to parent involvement in schooling, Mrs. Lopez and Mrs. García shared how they resolved to move beyond language as a hindrance. In this *consejo*, Mrs. Lopez teaches her children that she is there to support them through her physical presence and that they should strive to reach their future goals. She says, “*Como les digo no sé hablar inglés. Pero siempre estoy ahí para ellos, y dándoles ánimos para que ellos realicen sus sueños.*” (“As I mentioned, I don’t speak English well, but I am always there for them and giving them encouragement for them to realize their dreams.”) Her comment illustrates that language will not be a barrier for her to be present for her children or impede her from motivating her children to set goals and reach them.

The following *consejo* from Mrs. García also instills a positive mindset toward education and shows opportunities not only for her children but for herself. Mrs. García’s story revealed her perseverance and resilience in overcoming obstacles not only for her children’s future but for her future. She stated:

Entonces por razones de que me vine para acá muy chica y ya no pude estudiar. Pero a mí sí me gusta ir a la escuela. Mi mama decía yo quería que fueras a la preparatoria y todo eso pero te fuiste ya no pudiste estudiar. Yo regrese a la escuela por mi GED, tome cursos en español

porque era más fácil de entender. Me gusta estudiar. Continuo, aunque ya estoy mayor de edad. Ahora tomo clases de ELD en el colegio comunitario.

(I came here [to the United States] at a very young age, and I couldn't continue studying. I would have loved to continue my education. I really liked school, but I couldn't for various reasons. My mother would have liked for me to keep studying. She would have liked for me to go to high school, but since I left home I couldn't continue. I went back to school to get my GED. I took [my]classes in Spanish, because it was easier for me to understand. I like going to school. I continue to study, even if I'm old. Now I am taking classes in ELD at the community college.)

In this example, Mrs. Mora teaches her children that a college education is possible at any age, and resources are available to non-native English speakers. Her children are taught by her example to set goals and to pursue them. She showed her children how she achieved her goal of completing her high school education and is now pursuing a college degree no matter what obstacles she encountered. In response, Mrs. Mora commented in support of these participants:

El inglés no debe impedir porque lo que hace a una persona no es ser que hable inglés o cualquier otro idioma, lo que hace una persona es lo que usted le está transmitiendo a ese niño o niña que usted tiene.

(English should never be a barrier, because what matters is what a person

does and not that they speak English or any other language. What matters is what you do and what you are transmitting to your boy or girl.)

It was a very emotional moment for the group when Mrs. Mora, Mrs. Jiménez, and Mrs. González talked about the work demands they experience including inflexible work schedules, demanding employers, and being the only wage earner for their families. Mrs. Jiménez began to cry as she described her experience as a child, “*Desafortunadamente, mucho tenía que trabajar mi papa y mama, no había oportunidad de hablar y de decir que quieres cuando seas grande, motivación de verdad. Yo no quiero eso para mis hijos.*” (“Unfortunately, both of my parents had to work, so there wasn’t time to talk about what we wanted to do when we grew up. Some kind of motivation. I don’t want that for my children.”)

This experience shared by Mrs. Jiménez illustrates how the absence of her parents due their work schedules affected her post-secondary options. Both parents had to work to provide the basic necessities for the survival of their family. Mrs. Jiménez learned from this experience how critical it is for her as a parent to be informed and knowledgeable about the post-secondary options available for her children. In order to guide them adequately and advocate for them, she realizes she needs additional information and support as her children progress through the K-12 educational system.

Mrs. Mora described her experience going from being a stay-at-home mom to working outside the home. She said:

Ana hablaba me hizo agarrar el sentimiento porque no sabía si iba a tener yo me lo pedi aquí en la escuela siempre participando con mis niños.

Tengo cinco niños. No trabajaba. Recibo mucha ayuda mis hermanos y ellos siempre me inculcaban trabajar a mí por tu propio bien. Ahora que voy a trabajar tengo la opción de trabajar temprano o tarde. Y les digo como madres de verdad no saben lo que yo extraño. Preguntarles como hacen en escuela. Mi mano, me lo lastime en mi trabajo. Ellos me miraron. Mi niña me curaba. Yo no fui al doctor por miedo porque yo no quería que me dejaran de pagar. No quería dejar de trabajar. Iba con mi mano bien hinchada. Eso es motive para decirles. Esto es lo que yo no quiero para ustedes.

(When Ana was speaking, it caused me to get emotional, because she knows how I was always at the school participating with my children. I didn't work [outside the home]. But my brothers would always tell me to work, for my own good. I have the option to work morning or night. You don't know how much I miss being there [at home] to ask them how their day was at school. Once I hurt my hand at work. My children saw this. My daughter would dress my wound. I never went to the doctor, because I was afraid of losing my job. I wasn't going to get paid. I would go to work with my hand all swollen. I did not want anything like this to happen to them.)

This narrative from Mrs. Mora illustrates how she uses her experiences with adversity to teach her children about perseverance and working toward a better life. Mrs. Mora worked the night shift in order to be home in the morning to personally take her children to school. She struggled through a work injury without medical care, because as a single mother she needed the work to financially and emotionally support her children. She teaches her children that adversity does not keep her from providing for her children or being engaged with them. Her determination to overcome these adverse situations shows her children that they should aspire to have a better life.

Mrs. González shared her struggle as a recent widow, and how she is the only wage earner for the family. She shared:

No te preocupes por la casa, no te preocupes por nada. Yo voy a ser que tú vayas a la Universidad. Yo soy viuda. Y yo quiero que mis hijos se gradúen. Fue una etapa muy difícil hasta la fecha para mí para mis hijos pero yo creo que todo esto que a Dios tiene él sabe cuándo y porqué y todo esto ha impulsado a mis hijos a salir adelante. Y como le digo a pero yo sé que vamos a salir adelante con la ayuda de Dios.

(I am a widow, and I want my children to graduate. I tell her [my daughter] that she doesn't have to worry about anything here in the house, and I'm going to do everything I can so she can go to a university. [Mrs. González begins to cry.] This has been a very difficult time for my children and I. And I think that all the things that have happened. [She paused as she

wiped her tears.] God is the only one who knows when and why things happen. All these things have encouraged my children to continue striving. I tell my son that I can't help him much [financially], because now I am alone. With God's help, we will come out on top.)

Mrs. González's uses her faith in God as source of strength to help her through the death of her husband and to meet the demands of providing for her two children and her parents who also live with her.

Through their experiences of hardships and challenges, the participants exhibited their determination through hard work, perseverance, and sacrifice. They kept moving forward in spite of the personal hardships or challenges with their immigration status, language, death, and work injuries. The experiences of these participants show their determination to keep moving forward when faced with adversity and serve as lessons to teach their children to persevere when they are faced with difficulties.

Role Models

The second theme of role models is "personified through examples" (Alfaro et al, 2014, p. 13) of family members and others within their social networks that have attended college or are currently in college. While the participants and their children can be characterized as first-generation college families, they are able to construct conceptions of college from their familial and social networks as a means to motivate their children. By providing their children

with concrete familial examples, participants showed their children that attending college is realistic and possible for them.

In the following narrative, Mrs. Robles offers her children examples of her two younger brothers and two sisters who attended a community college then transferred to the university, as examples of familial educational success. These familial examples convey an appreciation for formal education and her own aspirations that her own children will also attain a college education. Mrs. Robles shares:

Pero sacamos a mis tres hermanos en colegio y universidad. Tengo un hermano que es este soldador bajo el agua un estudio caro pero él sigue estudiando su profesión. Tengo mi hermana que trabaja ella Estudió Administración de Empresas. Y ella trabaja en un canal de televisión. Tengo mi otra hermana también estudió Administración y ya es manager de una compañía grande en el país. Porque ellos ven el ejemplo en el círculo familiar. Ya tenemos seis en el colegio. Si ellos pudieron, ustedes también pueden.

(We [my older sister and I] were able to put our younger sister and two younger brothers through college and then the university. My brothers went to community colleges, and then went to the university in our community. One is an underwater welder which is an expensive career but he continues to study. My sisters also studied in Bakersfield colleges and took [courses in] Business Administration. One works for a television

station, and the other is now a manager in a large company in this country. They [my children] see the example in the family circle. We now have six in college. I tell them if they could do, so can you.)

Mrs. Jiménez also used her younger brother and a family friend as examples to express her expectations for her children to pursue a college education. She points out, “*Tu tío está llendo a la Universidad de Berkeley o mira el hermano de Gena que va a la UCLA. Le pongo ejemplos. Alguien que ellos conocen. Si es posible y lo están haciendo.*” (“Look your uncle goes to the University of Berkeley. Oh, and Gena’s brother goes to UCLA. I give them examples of people that they know to show them that it is possible for them to attend [college].”) Familial role models serve as examples of the values, attitudes, and behaviors that are important to us. For Mrs. Jiménez using her brother and a family friend who are current college students as role models for her children, expressed a clear sense that the pursuit of a college education is important to her. She used these examples to inspire and encourage her children to see themselves as future college students.

Both Mrs. Mora and Mrs. García noted their older children in college as examples to encourage and inspire their younger children to be like their older siblings and pursue a college education. In this manner, younger children can envision themselves as college students, because their direct connection and visualization process knowing their siblings’ success. Mrs. García also serves as an example for her children. With a smile on her face, she proudly explained, “Yo

también estoy asistiendo al colegio y ella también eso. Fuimos a las conferencias de Grant, y tenían mesas de colegio. Ella me dice, '¡Mira Mami que es tu escuela! ¡Que orgullosa y me dio un abrazo, Mami!'" (“I am also attending [community] college, and my daughter also sees that. We went to parent conferences at Grant [high school], and they had tables from [community] college. My daughter said, ‘Look Mommy, that’s your school! I’m so proud of you, Mommy!’”)

As Mrs. Mora concluded, *“Pensar nuestras propias vidas y las vidas de los demás personas para motivarlos.”* (“Think about our own lives and the lives of other people to motivate them [our children].”) Four participants had a clear sense that a college education was important to them, and in turn instilled a mindset in their children that college is possible. Using familiar examples from their families and the community, they demonstrated to their children the potential within themselves and of their future opportunities.

Optimism

Consejos about optimism were readily apparent in the experiences shared by participants. In this study, *consejos* of optimism instilled a sense of hope and purpose by establishing the connection between the pursuit of an education and the opportunity for a better life. Every mother voiced a sense of optimism for their children’s future by going to college, becoming a professional, getting a good, and having the financial means to support themselves in a comfortable lifestyle.

Mrs. Robles, Mrs. Lopez, and Mrs. García described their personal struggles or that of their husbands that exposed them to the realities of manual labor. While their *consejos* teach their children the consequences of lacking a formal education, they also remind their children how fortunate they are to receive a formal education and of the future opportunities of having a career aligned with a college education. Mrs. García would ask her son:

¿Quieres trabajar así como tu papa fuera en el sol? 'No.' Por qué entonces echarle ganas. Y de ahí empezamos y él empezó a estudiar y echarle ganas y empezó. Queremos que ellos tengan un futuro mejor que el de nosotros.

(Do you want to work hard like your father out in the sun? And her son would answer, 'No.' So we encourage them to go to college, because we want them to have a better future than ours.)

Mrs. Lopez shared a similar experience:

Como dice mi esposo no quiero que andes en el sol como yo a pico y pala. No te pagan tus horas completas. Estás todo nervioso porque el patrón no le gusto el trabajo que hiciste o te salió mal. Nosotros estamos ahí para ellos yo les busco la manera en la escuela y ellos les ayudan.

(My husband tells them that he doesn't want them to have a job like his. Working in the blazing sun. Using a pick and a shovel. Not getting paid for the hours he works. Worrying that the boss will not like the job he's

done or that something went wrong with the job. I tell them we are there for you, and we will find a way in school to help you.)

Using the fathers as examples, Mrs. Lopez and Mrs. García teach their children the difference between a job and a career. A job is a single work position that does not require a formal education or specialized training, earns a paycheck, and has a minimal impact on one's future work life. While fathers were limited in their employment opportunities without a formal education and training, and they were relegated to jobs where they were considered disposable labor, mistreated by the employer, had inflexible schedules, and exposed to harsh working conditions. Whereas, a career requires an education and/or specialized training, is connected to one's interests and experiences, and provides opportunities for learning and advancement.

In the following narrative, Mrs. Robles described the reality of working in the fields in an effort to impress upon her children her hopes for a better life for them. She says:

El sueño es como madre. Tener la idea que ellos sigan el ejemplo de los demás de ir colegio. Que no quieran ser trasladados como su papa. Que no quieran ser este trabajando en un campo de uvas como trabajó su mama. En un campo donde trabajamos cortando naranjas y empacando papas. Cuando les enseñas tus manos y dicen Mami por qué tú tienes tus manos tan duras. Y porque tienes músculos tan fuertes como un "boy." Le digo que porque mama trabajo en trabajos muy difíciles. De

levantarme a las cuatro de la mañana y llegar a tu casa a las cinco de la tarde. Pero con un título no a trabajar tan duro como nosotros.

(My goal that I dream about is that my children will be successful. They have the possibility to go to college, because they see the example of other family members and not work as a truck driver like their father. Not having to work in the grape fields like their mother or picking oranges or packing potatoes. They would see my rough hands and ask why my muscles were like that of a boy. I tell them because I had to work in very hard jobs in the fields getting up at 4:00 in the morning and getting home at 5:00 in the evening. But with a [college] degree they won't have to work as hard as we did.)

In Mrs. Robles' example, she explains to her children that a college degree will provide them with opportunities to have a career, to work in a field of interest, and to be successful. They will not be subjected to the physical demands of a job like she was. Her children see the detrimental physical effects on her body resulting from her job as field laborer. Mrs. Robles uses her experience to teach her children the connection between an education and a career, and her desire for them to be successful and have a better life that is not subjected to long hours, damaging bodily effects, and physical exertion.

Both Mrs. Jiménez and Mrs. Ramirez explicitly stated their aspirations for their children to attend college so they could have a better future. Mrs. Ramirez said about her daughter, "*Debe estudiar ir al colegio para cuando ella sea grande*

no tener que trabajar en trabajos tan pesados. Y tenga mejor futuro tenga un buen dinero.” (“She needs to go to college. So that when she is grown, she won’t have to work in jobs that are so hard. So she can have a better future and financial means.”) Mrs. Jiménez expressed, “*Una cosa que yo siempre les digo a mis hijos. Recuerden, que tienen opciones. Si vas a la escuela. Más posibilidades mejores trabajos que tú quieres. Que vas a estar feliz de ir.*” (“I always tell my children if you go to college, you will have the possibility to get better jobs. You will have the life you dream about.”) The participants expressed their optimism for their children’s future by reminding them they have the opportunity for a better life when they take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The findings in this section reveal that Latina/o parents of elementary school-aged children have *some* information about college preparation and college knowledge. However, these data also suggest the information about college preparation and college access are limited and insufficient. As noted earlier, every participant in this study expressed a desire for their children to have a better future, rooted in educational advancement. Furthermore, seven participants distinctly stated their expectation that their children would go to college acknowledging that an education is highly valued. Here, and throughout the data collection and analyses, formal education is a means to a better life. With relevant and sufficient college information and college knowledge, these participants potentially have the ability to be actively engaged in advocacy roles

for their children's pathway to college beginning in elementary school. The participants specifically identified a need for information on academic preparation for college, tuition costs and funding sources, college admission requirements, and understanding the structure between the community college and the four-year university systems.

College Information and College Knowledge for Latina/o Parents

Data from the second focus group interview revealed that information about college preparation and college access provided to Latina/o parents was either insufficient, unclear, or delayed until their children were in middle or high school. As a result of the limited, unclear or absent information about college preparation and college access, Latina/o parents often develop assumptions, misconceptions, and anticipate barriers to a college education for their children. Furthermore, findings from this study suggest that college choice for Latina/o students is vastly influenced as result of the anticipated barriers and misconceptions about college preparation and access. Figure 2 provides a visual representation of key factors that influence college choice for Latina/o students and their families.

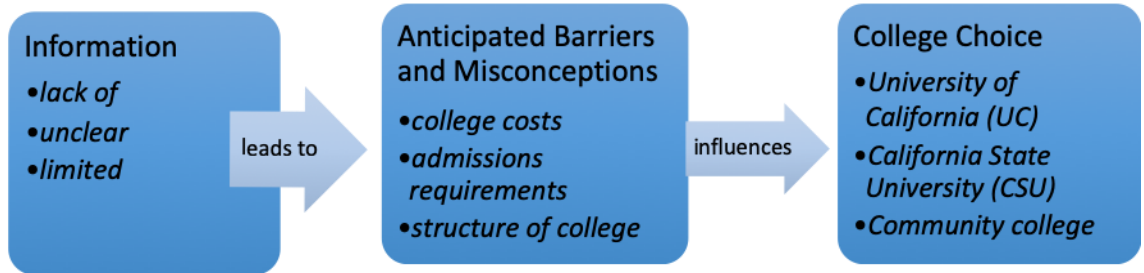


Figure 2: Factors Influencing College Choice for Latina/o Students

Need for Information for College Preparation and College Access

Findings from the second focus group session illustrate that Latina/o parents need and expect direct and explicit college information and college knowledge required for college success for Latina/o students as early as the beginning at the elementary school level. As first-generation college families, participants in this study need and expect college knowledge or information on how to “do” college (Sommerfeld, 2011) in order to be advocates for their children and guide them on a pathway to college. Mrs. Jiménez commented in English, “It is easier for children to go to college who have educated [college degree] parents. We in the Hispanic community are not educated.” This comment indicates that although they want their children to attend college, Latina/o parents feel their lack of a formal education hinders their children from

accessing a college education, but in reality they as parents need sufficient information early in their children's K-12 schooling to advocate and guide their children on a pathway to college.

These participants reiterated their need for information and knowledge about college in order to engage in advocacy for their children's education beginning during the elementary school years. Mrs. García stated, "*Cuando estaba mi hijo los maestros casi no hablaban mucho de universidad sólo les decían o que tienes que ir a la universidad.*" ("When my son was there [elementary school], the teachers almost did not talk much about the university. They just told them that you have to go to the university.") This comment indicates the expectation of going to college is present at the elementary school level; however, the information on how to access a college education and prepare for a college education are absent.

The following comments from Mrs. Jiménez and Mrs. Robles communicate the high value placed on education and the expectation for their children to attend college; however, college information is necessary for first generation college families to advocate for appropriate resources and tools for college admission. Mrs. Jiménez commented in English, "We need college information now when our children are in elementary school, so they will have options for their future. Mrs. Robles added, "*Hacen mucha falta de esa información porque sí no se explican lo que es el colegio y explican que escuchamos a nuestros hijos a la universidad. Pero si somos madres primerizas*

cómo vamos a saber.” (“There is a great need for that [college] information, so we can explain what college is and share what we heard with our children about universities. But if we are first time participants, how would we know?”) When Mrs. Robles mentions being a “first time mother,” she is referring to sending her son to college for the first time and not knowing the requirements of the college system.

Four participants in this study noted their knowledge about college preparation and access was acquired through personal experiences. These include having an older child or relative in college, from talking with other parents with children in college, or from workshops provided by the high school. However, they also indicated that they needed to be educated more about college in order to guide their children. *“Infórmenos para que nosotros lo digamos a nuestros hijos.”* (“Inform us so that we can say it to our children.”)

Misconceptions and Anticipated Barriers for College Access

Salient thematic data in this study revealed that the information Latina/o parents hold regarding college preparation and admission is insufficient or inaccurate. The lack of relevant information leads to assumptions or misconceptions about college preparation and admission which often results in the creation of anticipated barriers to college access.

College Preparation and Admission Requirements

An initial finding from the second focus group interview was a need for a clearer understanding of the requirements for college admission. The participants mention classes [academic courses], grades, and state test scores as being necessary for college; however, they did not fully understand the admission requirements for a community college, the University of California system, or the California State University system in relationship to academic courses, grades or grade point averages (GPA), and tests.

Mrs. Jiménez equates high scores on the annual state tests (SBAC) with being able to apply to “better” colleges, such as the University of California, Berkeley or the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She stated, “*Las calificaciones que son muy importantes y especialmente las puntuaciones que reciben en los exámenes del Estado. Las puntuaciones más altas porque eso sí cuenta más adelante cuando van a inscribirse a un colegio pueden seleccionar un colegio mejor.*” (“The grades are very important, and especially the scores they receive on the state exams. The highest [test] scores count later when you enroll in a college, and you can select a better college.”) It is a misconception that scores from the Common Core State Standards-aligned assessments (SBAC) will affect college enrollment or help a student gain access to a more competitive university. This statement indicates that parent training and education is warranted to explain the purpose of annual K-12 state exams and to

provide information on college admission exams, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), which are also needed for college awareness and preparation.

Mrs. Robles also indicates that her son is struggling in high school and assumes he may not be able to attend college given the courses he was placed in may not meet minimum college admission requirements. She stated, "*Mi hijo está en su primer año de high school y mi hijo apenas está subiendo sus puntos porque salió bajito. La escuela entonces lo puso aquí.*" ("My son is in his first year of high school, and he is barely getting his scores up, because he was a little behind. The school then placed him here [not college preparatory courses].") Mrs. Robles continues, "*Estas clases van a la universidad y puedes con los puntos que tú estás haciendo aquí puedes pasar a la universidad. No sé si estoy mal o quizás a lo mejor los cambios en las informaciones.*" ("These classes go to the university, and you can [go to the university] with the points [credits] that you are doing here. I don't know if I am wrong or maybe perhaps there are changes in the information.")

High schools often make curricular choices for students without involving Latina/o parents. Mrs. Robles is uncertain that the curricular placement made by the high school personnel will prepare her son for a four-year university admission. In order to successfully advocate for their children's academic preparation for college, Latina/o parents need information to familiarize themselves with the requirements for admission to the four-year college and university system.

Structure of College

Another finding was the need to compare a four-year university with the community college in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the structure of the higher education systems. While five participants explicitly requested information about the differences between the community college system and the four-year university system, the other two participants present nodded in agreement. These participants wanted an explanation of the pros and cons to help develop their understanding of the postsecondary education systems. However, their request poses a means to also help influence their children's higher education choice based upon the particular expense for a particular college education.

The following assumes that all teachers are knowledgeable with regard to the courses of study at both the community college and the four-year university. Mrs. García commented:

Ellos que nos lo digan mira si tu hijo quiere estudiar esto tiene que ir a la Universidad o dice a veces no necesitan ir a la Universidad tiene que ir. Pueden si quieren hacer una carrera corta lo que sea.

(They [teachers] should tell us, look, if your child wants to study this, he or she has to go to a university, or sometimes they may not need to go to a university. If they want, they can choose a shorter career pathway.)

Latina/o parents want to be involved in the education of their children, however, they need sufficient and adequate information from the K-12 school system about the four-year college and university system in order to successfully advocate for the appropriate curricular placement that will prepare their children for admission to a four-year college or university.

Mrs. Mora added, “*Las posibilidades y la diferencia entre los colegios y las universidades. Y muchas veces la diferencia entre los precios.*” (“The possibilities and the differences between [community] colleges and the [four-year] universities. And many times the difference in price.”) These two comments indicate financial cost is a major factor that may influence college choice for low-income, Latina/o families. Interestingly to note, however, both Mrs. García and Mrs. Mora have children attending four-year universities.

With past experience with both the community college and four-year university within her family, Mrs. Robles recommended that parents receive information that compares a community college with a four-year university. She stated:

Que hay muchos papás que necesitamos que nos expliquen realmente qué es colegio que es una Universidad. Entre mis cunadas y las familias de nosotros cuando empezaron nuestros primeros familiares a entrar en el colegio y la Universidad estaban tan confundidas. Que no sabían realmente qué era un colegio y que era una universidad.

(There are many parents who need an explanation of what a [community]

college is and what a university is. Among my in-laws and family, when our first family members entered [community] college and the university, they were so confused. They really did not know what a [community] college was and what a [four-year] university was.)

Mrs. Robles' family members knew they needed to go to college for a better life, however, they initially chose the community college, because it was close to home and less expensive than the university. This comment further delineates the need for Latina/o students and their families to understand the structure of the postsecondary educational system and the related outcomes for each system in order to make informed decisions about college.

College Costs

A significant finding is related to financing a college education. Every mother expressed concern about paying for college, including the three participants with children presently attending a four-year university. The participants all nodded in agreement when Mrs. Robles said, "*Simplemente al pensar en hablar sobre el colegio estamos hablando de dinero. Entonces aquí es donde nos ponen un bloqueo a muchos padres.*" ("Just thinking about college means we are talking about money. So this is where we put a block to many parents.") Mrs. García whose son is in graduate school to become a medical doctor added, "*Porque muchas de las veces uno lo primero que piensas en el dinero. No puedes ir porque cuesta mucho dinero.*" ("Many times, the first thing

one thinks about is the money. No you can't go, because it [college] costs a lot of money.”)

Mrs. Robles acknowledged, “*Muchos límites para los padres de bajos ingresos. ¿Cómo enviaré a mi hijo a la universidad?*” (“There are many limits for low-income parents. How will I send my child to college?”) Mrs. Robles’ question indicates that college costs may pose as a barrier for low-income students and Children of Color and may potentially exclude them from attending college. Low-income families and Families of Color anticipate financial barriers based upon their perception that they cannot afford to send their children to college. These are often assumptions based on hearsay regarding high tuition costs and other related expenses. In reality, these families need information on financial aid resources to help them understand the options to pay for a college education.

The limited, or lack of, information about scholarships and other financial aid resources create potential barriers for college enrollment especially for first-generation college families. Several participants were aware of scholarship opportunities, but they were not fully aware of other types of financial aid or the differing criteria required for specific scholarships. There was a misconception that only students with good grades receive scholarships. To further complicate the misconception surrounding scholarships, are the differing levels of support provided by schools which is based upon the academic level of a student.

In the following narrative, Mrs. Robles is keenly aware of imbalance of support that her children receive from their respective schools. She stated:

Mi hijo no aplica para una beca porque no tenga los puntos.” No todos los niños son inteligentes para sacarse becas. Mi hija está a nivel altísimo. Qué bueno que afortunada es. Tienen las clases directamente al colegio. Ella tiene todo y tiene beca y los maestros lo están ayudando a esta. Ahí la diferencia es un balanceó que la balanza está arriba para los que tienen inteligencia pero está abajo para los que no.

(My son does not apply for a scholarship, because he does not have the points [grades]. Not all children are smart to get scholarships. My daughter is at the highest level. How lucky she is. They [schools] have the [college preparation] classes directly to the college. She has everything and has a scholarship, and the teachers are helping her. There the difference is a balance that the balance is up for those who have intelligence, but is below for those who do not.)

This stratification reflected in Mrs. Robles' narrative indicates that curricular placement decisions made by school personnel have an effect on post-secondary options for Latina/o students. Latina/o parents need K-12 curricular placement information early to advocate for their child's education.

Mrs. Gamboa shared an experience when her daughter was in high school,

Esa mala experiencia la tuve con mi hija porque yo no sabía nada ni de becas ni nada de eso. Entonces ella no aplicó. Lo que me ayudaría mucho es información hacia las becas y que son todos los requerimientos.

(I had that bad experience with my daughter, because I did not know anything about scholarships or anything like that. So, she [my daughter] did not apply [for college]. What would help me a lot is information about scholarships and about all the requirements.)

The other participants nodded in agreement with Mrs. Gamboa's statement. This unfamiliarity with the requirements for specific scholarships, as well as other financial aid resources, create an anticipated barrier to college access based upon the Latina/o parents' perceived expense for a college education.

Parents Engaging in and Leading Participatory Action Research: The *Plática*

At the conclusion of the second focus group session, researcher asked the participants how should the elementary school disseminate college information to Latina/o parents. Mrs. Robles suggested that we, the seven participants and researcher, meet as a group for a third time to discuss the topics from the recent focus group discussion. She stressed, "*Muy importante para que como padres Latinos que si todos pudiéramos alguna reunión y todos pudiéramos nuestras temas. Creceríamos mucho como comunidad.*" ("It is very

important for us as Latino parents that we have a meeting, and all of us put [discuss] our topics. We would grow a lot as a community.”)

As comments about low parent participation were reiterated by the participants, I asked:

Several of you [participants] mentioned low parent participation, so what can the school do to increase parent participation? To encourage parents to come to workshops? To come to meetings? To come and receive information? How can we [the school] encourage parents? What can we [the school] do for you [parents]?

After my question was interpreted for the participants, it was suggested by Mrs. Mora that we collaboratively develop a questionnaire to determine what college information parents want or need from the elementary school. “*Porque solamente en máximo 10 a 15 padres vienen enfocarse en tratar de hacer tal vez hacer un cuestionario.*” (“Because only a maximum of 10 to 15 parents come, focus on trying to maybe do a questionnaire.”) Mrs. Mora also suggested that we learn when parents would be available to attend school-sponsored workshops, meetings, and other events and base the schedule on parent availability. She suggested, “*Si trabajan en la mañana, en la tarde. ¿Cuáles son posibilidades? Y basado en eso.*” (“If they work in the morning, in the afternoon. What are the possibilities [availability of parents]? And base it [schedule] on that.”)

Every mother agreed with Mrs. Mora’s suggestion to create an original questionnaire for parents to determine what college information they want or

need while their children are in elementary school. Mrs. Robles further stated, “*Tenemos que unirnos como grupo y platicar entre nosotras.*” (“We have to unite as a group and talk among ourselves.”) Mrs. Jiménez reiterated her statement about receiving college information before middle school. She stated in English, “We [parents] need to know about [post-secondary] options now. We need to know about college. We need to think about some questions to ask. We want to help you [with your research project].” When Mrs. Jiménez’s comment was interpreted for the other participants, they began to nod in agreement. Mrs. Mora laughed, “*¿Qué un poquito de tarea para nosotras?*” (“What a little bit of homework for us?”) Everyone smiled and laughed about having homework to complete.

It was mutually agreed upon between the participants and myself to meet again. We established that our purpose was to create a parent survey about the need for college information. To be clear I summarized for the participants, “What I hear is we need to draft a questionnaire with questions about college to give to our parents to find out what we need to do here at the elementary school.” The participants responded with affirmative nodding of heads and “*Sí.*” [“Yes.”]

Mrs. Mora and Mrs. Jiménez took the lead and began to organize the *plática*. Mrs. Mora, Mrs. Gamboa, and Mrs. Jiménez offered to contact the participants who were absent or had left early due to work obligations. Mrs. Jiménez stated in English to the group, “I will contact Regina (Mrs. García), Cecilia (Mrs. Ramirez), and Rosemary (Mrs. González) to see when they can

meet next week.” Mrs. Gamboa offered to contact Isabel (Mrs. Huerta), and Mrs. Mora said she would contact Jacqueline (Mrs. Vasquez).

I provided the participants with my personal phone number by writing it on the whiteboard in the meeting room, so they would be able to contact me with the details for the *plática*. Mrs. Jiménez stated in English to me, “I will figure out when everyone is available and let you know what everyone says. When we can all meet. Can we meet here at the school?” I responded, “We can definitely meet at the school. Just let me know the date and time that is most convenient for everyone.” I requested that Mrs. Jiménez contact me through email or a text message. The following is a personal email exchange between Mrs. Jiménez and myself regarding the scheduling of the *plática*. Mrs. Jiménez provided the details for the *plática*. She wrote, “Hi. Hope you are doing well. The lady’s want to meet this Friday in the morning at 7:30 if it is ok with you. Sorry for the delay.” (A. Jiménez, personal communication, March 25, 2019).

In preparation for the *plática*, study memos were reviewed and the Spanish transcript from the focus group session. Using NVivo 12 software, a word frequency query on the Spanish transcript was assessed, and with support from the bilingual interpreter-translator, we translated the most frequent words related to college into English. Using those words, color-coded them in the English transcript and noted them in the researcher memo journal. Figure 3 represents a poster to represent the college topics that resulted from the triangulation of focus group data, verbatim transcription codings, and from

researcher memos. The main topics from the discussion data and my memos were: financial costs (green), community college (orange), university (orange), college entrance requirements (red), and college preparation programs (purple).

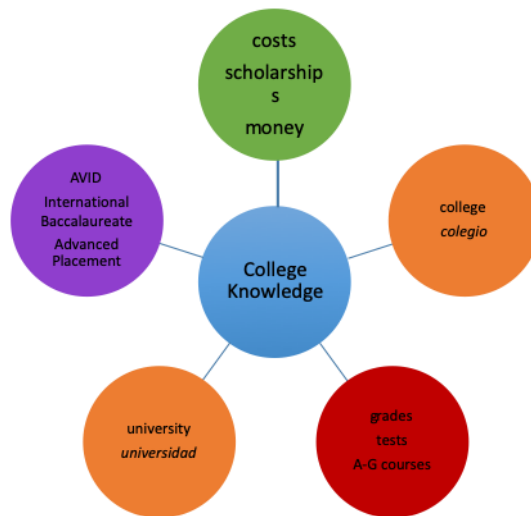


Figure 3: Participant-Driven College Knowledge Key Topics

The poster would also confirm the main topics from the participants' discussion were represented and would serve as starting point for the development of the parent survey.

The *plática* took place six days after the second focus group session at the school site with five participants, myself, and a bilingual interpreter present. Coffee and *pan dulce* were provided, again, to continue to foster a feeling of comfort and safety for the participants. The *plática* was not audio recorded

however it lasted approximately four hours. Although a bilingual interpreter was present, three of the participants served as interpreters for each other and for me.

The participants and I began by considering the topics noted on Figure 3. It was critical for the participants to determine the topics before we began to formulate the questions for the parent survey. Schools often present information about college preparation and access that educators deem relevant for parents. However, this presents a possible disconnect from what Latina/o parents consider essential for their needs to serve as advocates for their children's education and future aspirations.

Each topic from Figure 3 was written on individual sheets of chart paper in English and were posted around the meeting room. This allowed the entire group to see the topics. The topics were color-coded to match the bubble map which made it easier to navigate when discussing, making notes, and formulating the survey questions. The participants and I mutually decided on the following topics: financing a college education (green), community college and four-year university (orange), college entrance requirements (red), and college preparation (purple). It was decided to aggregate community college and four-year university together, because several participants reiterated the need to understand the differences between the two school systems.

The bilingual interpreter would interpret as the conversation unfolded which helped me follow the conversation and understand what the participants

were conveying as important. Mrs. Mora and Mrs. Jiménez took active leadership roles in facilitating the conversation and served as interpreters for other participants as well as for the researcher. As the group's conversation moved from poster to poster, we took note and would write words, phrases, and questions for each topic as they were generated.

We began with the "financing a college education" poster as this appeared to be the primary concern for the participants. The word loans and FAFSA were added to the "financing a college education" poster when Mrs. Jiménez and I mentioned them as part of financing a college education. Mrs. Gamboa added, "Where will we get the money?"

The second topic that generated much conversation from the participants was community college and four-year university. Mrs. Robles asked, "What is the difference [between a community college and a four-year university]?" Mrs. Jiménez added, "What are the pro and cons [for a community college and a four-year university]?" I noted the questions asked by Mrs. Robles and Jiménez on the poster. Mrs. Robles suggested having charts that compare the community college and four-year university would be helpful for parents to understand the differences including the costs.

The third topic for discussion was on college entrance requirements. Mrs. Mora readily mentioned the A through G requirements and asked, "What are they?" which I noted on the poster. Mrs. Gamboa and Mrs. Jiménez both mentioned grades and scores from state testing. This was perceived as parents

wanting to know the connection between college admission requirements and their student's high school grades and state test scores.

The final topic we discussed was college preparation programs. The participants mentioned Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Advanced Placement (AP) courses, which were noted on the poster. Mrs. Robles asked, "What programs are there [in K-12]?" Whereas, Mrs. Jiménez asked, "Is there AVID at the elementary school? Because my son is in the program in middle school." I responded, "AVID is available for elementary schools."

Additional sheets of chart paper were added to the topic posters as we began to formulate questions for our parent survey. Each question was related to a topic discussed during the *plática*. We initially drafted nine questions related to the topics we discussed during the *plática*. Figure 4 and Figure 5 illustrate the development of the parent survey. The participants recommended adding a question about parental college attendance, which was noted in the researcher memo journal.

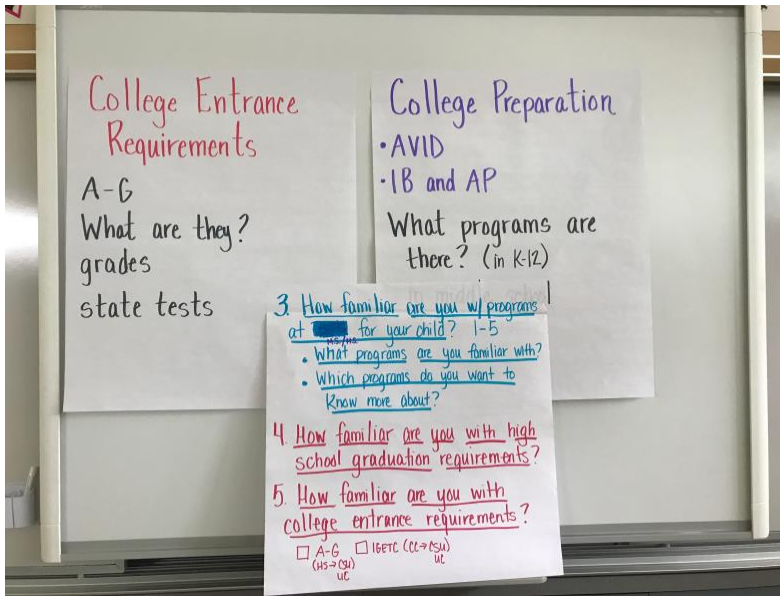


Figure 4: Development of Parent Survey (Part 1)

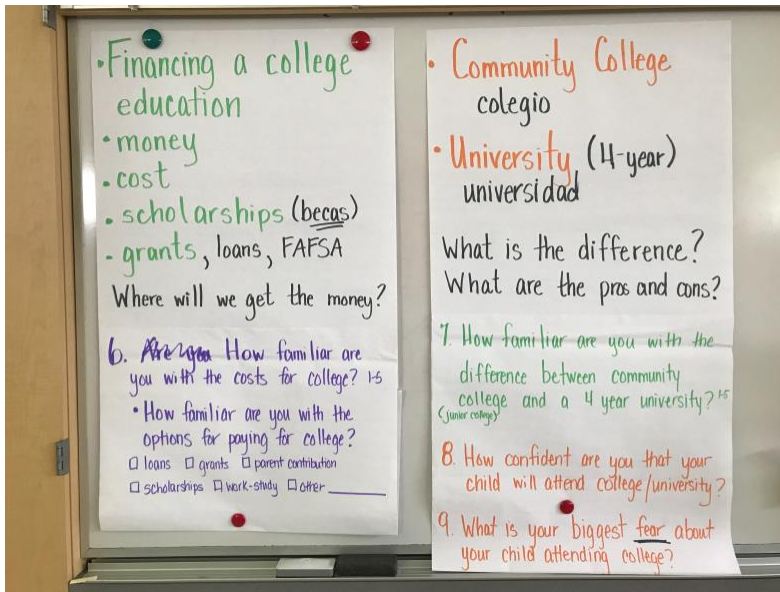


Figure 5: Development of Parent Survey (Part 2)

The dialogue revisited the topic of parent participation. Mrs. García previously acknowledged her participation at informational workshops on college preparation at the high school. However, the workshops were often not well attended. She said, “*Cuando vamos a las juntas que ahí nos dicen cuáles son los requisitos y los caminos que hay. Yo he ido a reuniones donde nada más hay dos tres cuatro o cinco personas y es triste.*” (“When we go to meetings that they tell us what the requirements are, and what paths are available. I have gone to meetings where there are only three, four, or five people, and it is disappointing.”)

This comment was followed by the participants validating the collaborative development of the parent survey based upon their topics of interest and relevancy to them as Latina/o parents. Mrs. Mora made an additional recommendation that the school seek input for scheduling workshops that work with parent schedules. As the researcher and educational leader, the recommendation was noted in the memo journal to ensure a question to the regarding parents’ availability to participate in workshops at the school is included in the survey.

I observed the conversation continue between the participants about how and when the parent survey would be distributed. It was suggested that the survey be distributed in Spanish and English when the new school year begins. The participants and I felt the beginning of the school year was the most appropriate time to distribute the survey in an effort to gather input from parents

regarding college information and plan for future parent workshops with a focus on college access. It is important to note that prior to the distribution of this survey, it will be sent out to a broader group of parents to be validated.

In the researcher reflection notes, a keen observation was taken back to the second focus group session. There was a pivotal moment when we realized this study had evolved into a participatory action project. This was when Mrs. Robles stated, "*Muy importante para que como padres Latinos que si todos pudiéramos alguna reunión y todos pusiéramos nuestras temas. Creceríamos mucho como comunidad.*" ("It is very important for us as Latino parents that we have a meeting, and all of us put [discuss] our topics. We would grow a lot as a community.")

I remember the transformation in the participants when they named themselves *Impulso Hispano*. They were talking animatedly amongst themselves and planning the next steps for developing the parent survey. They were taking ownership of this process and it was clearly evident their engagement and involvement was transformational for all involved. Naming their group empowered them to lead and move the group forward. The participants saw their purpose and their role as co-researchers as they took the lead in co-developing a parent survey to address the need for college information for Latina/o parents while their children were in elementary school.

In the beginning, I had observed how the participants were hesitant to respond and needed examples from me before responding to questions.

However, as each mother had the opportunity to share her story, our group evolved into one of support and inspiration for one another. On several occasions I observed participants assume parenting roles with each other as they offered advice and guidance. With stories of struggle and loss, they cried together, embraced each other, and offered words of encouragement.

Their personal stories of struggle and determination deeply impacted me, as the researcher and educational leader. I struggled after each interview session to put their stories on written format for this manuscript. The emotions listening and learning about Latina/o parent resilience within me would surface, and I needed time to process and comprehend the magnitude of their sacrifices and commitment to their children and families. I could not understand how people and scholars would venture to say Latina/o parents did not care about their children or their children's education. It was evident from this study and those referenced in the literature review that these participants, these parents, these mothers were advocating for more than just their own children. They were taking action and advocating for all children and their families.

Summary

This study validates and reiterates the high value and regard Latina/o parents hold for the educational trajectory of their elementary school-aged children. Latina/o parents hold high aspirations for their children's future including the expectation that their children to attend and obtain a college

degree. The funds of knowledge held by Latina/o parents recognize the value that family and household practices contribute to formal educational experiences for students. These funds of knowledge also acknowledge that Latina/o parents are actively engaged in the formal education and *educación* of their children as demonstrated by their parental engagement practices of *consejos*. The use of *consejos* by Latina/o parents demonstrate the aspirations, goals, and navigational resilience they have for their elementary school-aged children. The data also reveal Latina/o parent knowledge and understanding of college structure and access is vastly limited by a lack of information provided to them. Furthermore, this study shows that Latina participants developed both advocacy and leadership roles as they initiated the process of collaboratively co-developing a survey with the university researcher. The intent and premise is to gather input from other parents and create parent workshops focused on college-going practices at the elementary school level.

In Chapter five a summary of results presented along with providing key recommendations for educational leaders and the next steps for educational reform. A discussion on the limitations of this study recommendations for future research are presented. Lastly, a summarized conclusion concludes this dissertation manuscript.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This concluding chapter summarizes the findings from this study and discusses their implications for educational leaders and schooling communities. A discussion of the limitations of the study are presented, along with key recommendations for future research.

The goal of this participatory action research was to effectively engage with Latina/o parents to develop college-going practices at the elementary school. The premise would unapologetically focus to assist Latina/o parents to guide their children to post-secondary aspirations and opportunities. To begin, this study sought to gain an understanding of how Latina/o parents currently engage with their elementary school-aged children in college-going discussions outside the formal school setting. Additionally, this study sought to discover what college knowledge Latina/o parents of elementary school-aged children held in order to develop relevant and practical college knowledge workshops for parents. This participatory action research project demonstrated how to engage Latina/o parents in the co-development of a parent survey in an effort to create college knowledge workshops based upon their needs to guide their children in the pursuit of higher education. It is important to note that the survey must still be sent out to a broader group of parents and validated before distributing it widely.

The key findings from this study indicate that Latina/o parents place a high

value on education and communicate this to their children through the use of *consejos*. This form of parental engagement conveys the expectations and aspirations that Latina/o parents have for post-secondary opportunities for their children. Additionally, the findings revealed Latina/o parents need and want college information in order to advocate and guide their children toward post-secondary opportunities. Lastly, Latina participants in this study were given the opportunity to assume leadership roles of advocates as they co-developed a parent survey with an educational leader to advance a college-going culture at the elementary school.

Recommendations for Educational Leaders

As school leaders, we often have the responsibility to effectively involve and engage parents in the schooling decision-making processes. However, we must pause and acknowledge whether we are proactively creating a welcoming and inclusive environment in which parents are empowered to participate and advocate for their children. As such, the first recommendation is for school leaders to explore alternate ways to effectively engage with Latina/o parents. How can we ensure we expect parent engagement if the mechanism to do so are not culturally-inclusive, nor culturally- or linguistically-appropriate?

This study highlights the importance of family and social networks among Latina/o families. School leaders can leverage and celebrate family's accomplishment by also noting older siblings who have successfully gained

admission to colleges and universities. Celebrating local accomplishments are key in acknowledging familial strengths and role models within the community. Further, school leaders can also begin to informally engage with Latina/o parents in the school by connecting with them in a more familial and social manner. As the example noted in this study, the offering of coffee *y pan dulce* as a frame of welcoming parents into a space are not overly complicated. On the contrary, it notes how school leaders are culturally-responsive to the local community. Additionally, in an effort to make parent workshops and other school events more accessible, these activities and events should be scheduled at times that are convenient and accessible for parents and their families. Lastly, school leaders may consider investing in professional development opportunities for school administrators, teachers, and other school personnel to gain a better understanding of Latina/o parents, their culture, and cultural practices. School personnel should embrace Latina/o parents and acknowledge them as knowledge holders. These professional development opportunities may also include how elementary school personnel can ignite and sustain a college-going culture by accessing age-appropriate materials to share with students and families. A college-going culture begins as soon as children are born; elementary school sector have an immense responsibility to practice and celebrate high expectation of all students, especially Latina/o students as they continue to be historically underrepresented in higher education.

Next Steps for Educational Reform

School leaders and districts can learn from the process of engaging with Latina/o parents of elementary school-aged children as co-researchers. Latina/o parents worked collaboratively with an elementary school leader to co-develop a survey instrument to serve as a tool to gather college knowledge information from parents of children at the elementary school level. This process proved to be successful in allowing parents Latina/o parents to connect with other parents and school leaders in an effort to develop college-going practices within an elementary school community. As a result, parents were inspired to continue working collaboratively in preparation for serving as a resource for other Latina/o parents in the path of preparing their children for college and other future opportunities as early as at the elementary school level.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should consider assessing the administration of the college knowledge parent survey. Using data from this survey, one can also assess how data-driven and decision-making processes, rooted in parent leadership, may help share content of parent workshops. Following up with the educational leader and the Latina/o parent leaders to understand the implementation process and the analysis of the survey data in development of the college knowledge workshops. The timeframe for this study was limited and did not intend to implement the survey, only develop the instrument. In the

future, the aim is to validate the survey with various parent populations before the implementation of the survey.

In this study there was a noticeable difference between the parents whose children were currently enrolled in a four-year university. Future research could examine how these parents successfully navigated the college pathway with their children and its impact on younger children.

Limitations of the Study

Conducting this study in the participants' primary language was especially important. However, this posed a challenge for the researcher as an English-speaking scholar. The need to translate and transcribe the audio recording was a cumbersome task for the bilingual interpreter/translator and took more time than expected. In the future, I would consider the use of interpreting equipment to get simultaneous translation and not interrupt the flow of the conversation.

Conclusions

Latina/o parents place a high value on education and have optimistic aspirations for their children. Latina/o parent commitment to education is demonstrated through non-dominant forms of parental engagement. Parental engagement is possible when parents are seen as an integral part of the schooling process. This study acknowledges that Latina/o families possess knowledge, resources, and assets necessary to advocate for their children's

education. Therefore, schools must support parents who are already engaged as well as reach out to those who are not yet engaged. Effective parental engagement requires flexibility and differential strategies as well as acknowledging culturally-relevant engagement practices in the home. Schools must actively reinforce that all parents matter (Harris & Goodall, 2008).

This participatory action research project demonstrates how a more inclusive, asset-based approach to parental engagement challenged the notion that Latina/o parents are not involved in the education of their children. The stories shared by the participants in this study demonstrated the importance of education and the aspirations they hold for post-secondary opportunities for their children. The participants in this study were aware of their need to acquire more college knowledge in order to be advocates for their children's post-secondary opportunities. In the process, the participants assumed a leadership role and led the development of a parent survey on college knowledge.

Schools leaders should acknowledge the integral part that Latina/o parents play in the education of their children. Schools leaders should build and strengthen an understanding that Latina/o parental engagement is evident and critical to student success. By acknowledging Latina/o parents with an asset-based approach, these will help work to develop strategies to effectively engage with Latina/o parents to support their children in pursuit of higher education.

APPENDIX A
COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE PARENT SURVEY

COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE PARENT SURVEY

PARENT SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about the needs of our parents regarding their knowledge about postsecondary options for their children. This information will help us develop future Parent University Workshops. **This survey was co-developed by parent-participants and researcher.**

1. What is your highest level of education completed?
 - a. less than high school
 - b. high school diploma/GED
 - c. some college
 - d. Associate's Degree (community college)
 - e. Bachelor's Degree or higher (4-year university)
 - f. Other (please specify) _____

2. How familiar are you with postsecondary (after high school) options for your student?

1	2	3	4	5
Not familiar at all		Somewhat familiar		Very familiar

3. What will be your **biggest** concern/fear when your student goes to college/university?
 - a. Not being accepted to a college/university
 - b. Not being able to afford a college/university education
 - c. Moving away from home to attend college
 - d. Other (please specify) _____

4. How familiar are you with high school graduation requirements?

1	2	3	4	5
Not familiar at all		Somewhat familiar		Very familiar

5. What are the classes your student will need to take in high school to be able to apply for admission to a four-year university?
 - a. The classes do not matter as long as he/she earns A and B grades
 - b. A through G classes
 - c. Honors, Advanced Placement(AP), International Baccalaureate(IB)
 - d. Other (please specify) _____

6. How familiar are you with college/university entrance requirements?

1 2 3 4 5
Not familiar at all Somewhat familiar Very familiar

7. How familiar are you with the options to help your student pay for college?

1 2 3 4 5
Not familiar at all Somewhat familiar Very familiar

8. Please list the options for paying for college you are familiar with. (Skip if you are not familiar with any options for paying for college.)

9. How familiar are you with the difference between a community college (e.g. RCC) and a university (e.g. UCR, CSU San Bernardino, CBU)?

1 2 3 4 5
Not familiar at all Somewhat familiar Very familiar

10. How confident do you feel that your elementary school-aged student will attend college?

1 2 3 4 5
Not confident Somewhat confident Very confident

11. What questions do you have about college/university?

12. What is the best time of the day for you to attend Parent University Workshops about college/university?

- a. morning (8:15 am - 10:15 am)
- b. afternoon (2:30 pm - 4:30 pm)
- c. evening (6:00 pm – 8:00 pm)
- d. Other (please specify) _____
- e. I would need childcare to attend.

ENCUESTA PARA PADRES

El propósito de esta encuesta es recopilar información sobre las necesidades de nuestros padres con respecto a su conocimiento sobre las opciones postsecundarias para sus hijos. Esta información nos ayudará a desarrollar futuros Talleres para Padres sobre Universidades. **Esta encuesta fue desarrollada conjuntamente por los padres participantes y el investigador.**

1. ¿Cuál es su más alto nivel de educación completado?
 - a. Menos que la escuela secundaria
 - b. Diploma de escuela secundaria/GED
 - c. Alguna educación superior
 - d. Grado Asociado (colegio comunitario)
 - e. Licenciatura o superior (4 años de universidad)
 - f. Otro (favor de especificar) _____

2. ¿Qué tan familiarizado/a está usted con respecto a las opciones postsecundaria para su hijo/a (después de la escuela secundaria)?

1	2	3	4	5
No estoy familiarizado		Algo familiarizado		Muy familiarizado

3. ¿Cuál será su **mayor** preocupación/temor cuando su hijo/a vaya a un colegio o universidad?
 - a. No ser aceptado a un colegio o universidad
 - b. No poder pagar para una educación en colegio o universidad
 - c. Alejarse de casa para asistir a un colegio o universidad
 - d. Otra (favor de especificar) _____

4. ¿Qué tan familiarizado/a está usted con los requisitos de graduación de la escuela secundaria?

1	2	3	4	5
No estoy familiarizado		Algo familiarizado		Muy familiarizado

5. ¿Cuáles son las clases que su hijo/a necesitará tomar en la escuela secundaria para poder solicitar la admisión a una universidad de 4 años?
 - a. Las clases no importan siempre y cuando el/ella obtenga calificaciones de A o B
 - b. Las clases de A a G
 - c. Clases de Honor, Colocación Avanzada (AP), *International Baccalaureate (IB)*
 - d. Otra (favor de especificar) _____

6. ¿Qué tan familiarizado/a está usted acerca de las opciones para ayudarlos a pagar para el colegio?

1	2	3	4	5
No estoy familiarizado		Algo familiarizado		Muy familiarizado

7. Por favor indique las opciones para pagar por el colegio con los cuales usted está familiarizado/a. (Si no está familiarizado/a con las opciones para pagar, siga a lo siguiente.)

8. ¿Qué tan familiarizado/a está usted acerca de la diferencia entre el colegio comunitario (por ejemplo, RCC) y una universidad (por ejemplo, UCR, CSU Can Bernardino, CBU)?

1	2	3	4	5
No estoy familiarizado		Algo familiarizado		Muy familiarizado

9. ¿Qué tan seguro está usted de que su hijo/a de escuela primaria asistirá a la universidad?

1	2	3	4	5
No estoy seguro		Algo seguro		Muy seguro

10. ¿Qué preguntas tiene usted acerca del colegio/universidad?

12. ¿Cuál es la mejor hora del día para asistir a talleres para padres sobre los Colegios/Universidades

- a. mañana (8:15 am - 10:15 am)
- b. tarde (2:30 pm - 4:30 pm)
- c. noche (6:00 pm – 8:00 pm)
- d. Otra (favor de especificar) _____
- e. Necesitaré cuidado para niños.

APPENDIX B
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

From: mgillesp@csusb.edu
Subject: IRB-FY2019-166 - Initial: IRB Expedited Review Approval Letter
Date: March 5, 2019 at 3:54 PM
To: 002156621@coyote.csusb.edu, nacevedo-gil@csusb.edu



March 5, 2019

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Expedited Review
IRB-FY2019-166
Status: Approved

Ms. Mary McAllister-Parsons and Prof. Nancy Acevedo-Gil
Department of Educational Leadership & Technology
Doctoral Studies Program
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Ms. McAllister-Parsons and Prof. Acevedo-Gil:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Creating a College Going Partnership with Latina/o Parents and Families of Elementary School Students" has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The informed consent document you submitted is the official version for your study and cannot be changed without prior IRB approval. A change in your informed consent (no matter how minor the change) requires resubmission of your protocol as amended using the IRB Cayuse system protocol change form.

Your application is approved for one year from March 4, 2019 through March 4, 2020.

Please note the Cayuse IRB system will notify you when your protocol is up for renewal and ensure you file it before your protocol study end date.

Your responsibilities as the researcher/investigator reporting to the IRB Committee include the following four requirements as mandated by the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 listed below. Please note that the protocol change form and renewal form are located on the IRB website under the forms menu. Failure to notify the IRB of the above may result in disciplinary action. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following by submitting the appropriate form (modification, unanticipated/adverse event, renewal, study closure) through the online Cayuse IRB Submission System.

- 1. If you need to make any changes/modifications to your protocol submit a modification form as the IRB must review all changes before implementing in your study to ensure the degree of risk has not changed.**
- 2. If any unanticipated adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research study or project.**
- 3. If your study has not been completed submit a renewal to the IRB.**
- 4. If you are no longer conducting the study or project submit a study closure.**

Please ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional approvals which may be required. If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the IRB Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval identification number (listed at the top) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Donna Garcia

Donna Garcia, Ph.D., IRB Chair
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

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