


11-2014

## Stakeholders' perceptions of parental involvement and home-school connections in a South Texas border town

Cynthia A. Lopez  
*The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/leg\\_etd](https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/leg_etd)

 Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Early Childhood Education Commons](#), and the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Lopez, Cynthia A., "Stakeholders' perceptions of parental involvement and home-school connections in a South Texas border town" (2014). *UTB/UTPA Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 47.  
[https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/leg\\_etd/47](https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/leg_etd/47)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Legacy Institution Collections at ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. It has been accepted for inclusion in UTB/UTPA Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. For more information, please contact [justin.white@utrgv.edu](mailto:justin.white@utrgv.edu), [william.flores01@utrgv.edu](mailto:william.flores01@utrgv.edu).

The Dissertation Committee for the University of Texas at Brownsville Certifies that this is the  
Approved Version of the Following Dissertation

Stakeholders' Perceptions of Parental Involvement and Home-School Connections in a South  
Texas Border Town

By

Cynthia A. Lopez

A Dissertation Presented to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Education in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

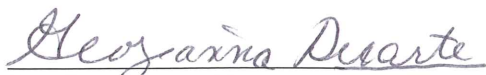
Doctor of Education

In the Field of Curriculum and Instruction

Approved By:



Dr. Peter B. Gawenda  
Dissertation Chair



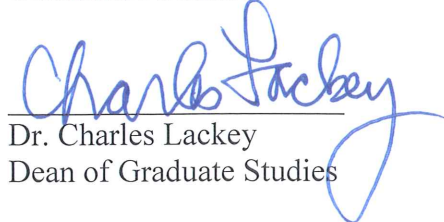
Dr. Georgianna Duarte  
Committee Member



Dr. Ming-Tsan Lu  
Committee Member



Dr. Bobbette Morgan  
Committee Member



Dr. Charles Lackey  
Dean of Graduate Studies

University of Texas at Brownsville

November 2014

Stakeholders' Perceptions of Parental Involvement and Home-School Connections in a South  
Texas Border Town

A Dissertation

Presented to the

Graduate Faculty of the

College of Education

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction

by

Cynthia A. Lopez

The University of Texas at Brownsville

November 2014

Copyright

by

Cynthia A. Lopez

2014

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey towards a doctoral degree has been long and arduous. Though the path was lonely at times, I was fortunate to be surrounded by people who encouraged and supported me along the way. As I reflect on my experiences, it is only fitting that I express my gratitude to the individuals who have played an instrumental role in my pursuit of this endeavor.

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my Lord. Thank you, Lord, for giving me the strength and determination to, not only follow my dreams, but also the wherewithal to achieve them.

Next, I would like to thank my loving family.

To my father, who has always modeled for his children the importance of hard work and fortitude. It was my father who, when I first mentioned to him that I wanted to return to school to earn my doctorate degree, said to me, “Look, Mija, the time will go by either way. You might as well follow your dreams.” Thank you, Dad, for continuously being there to guide and support me. Thank you for inspiring me to pursue this degree.

To my mother, who has been my personal cheerleader throughout my entire life. During those times that I felt like giving up, your advice kept me moving forward. I will always remember those times, as a little girl, when you told me that you wanted me to obtain a college education to be able to provide for myself. Thank you, Mom, for always encouraging me to aspire for greatness and for raising me to be an independent, self-reliant woman.

To my little brother, my very first best friend, thank you for always believing in me. It was your frequent questioning about my graduation date that helped to propel me to move forward.

Thank you for reminding me that quitting was never an option. Thank you for your words of encouragement.

To my niece and my nephew, let your aunt's accomplishments serve as an example to you. Always know that your education will open an insurmountable amount of doors for you. Make a plan. Stay on course. Achieve your dreams. If I can do it, so can you. Believe that you are destined for greatness. Expect no less than the best for yourselves. Dare to dream!

To my little D-, thank you for always being by my side as I researched, analyzed data, and wrote my dissertation. Thanks for keeping me company throughout these four years, Buddy!

Then, I would like to offer my gratitude to my dissertation committee.

First of all, I would like to thank my dissertation committee chairperson for assisting me throughout the dissertation process. Dr. Peter Gawenda, thank you for agreeing to serve as my dissertation chairperson. Know that I will forever be grateful for your decision to accept the challenge when others would not do so. Your insight, guidance, and support were invaluable throughout this process. Thank you for your commitment to the doctoral program.

Dr. Bobbette Morgan, thank you for your professionalism. Your knowledge and feedback were of great significance and assistance in helping to shape this dissertation. Dr. Ming-Tsan Lu, thank you for your positivity and advice regarding the collection and analysis of the data. Your skilled proficiency of qualitative methodology was helpful in answering all of my questions. Dr. Brendan O'Connor, thank you for your expertise regarding the education of the Latino population. Though you are no longer at UTB, I would still like to express my gratitude for the assistance that you provided to me during the first phase of the dissertation process. Your

guidance was instrumental in helping me to reach this point. Dr. Georgianna Duarte, thank you for accepting the challenge to teach a group of Cohort 4 students, outside of your track, for one semester. Before long that one semester turned into several as you helped to guide us throughout the rest of our dissertation development. Thank you for always being there for me even when you didn't have to be. Now, as a member of my dissertation committee, I would also like to thank you for your keen eye to detail and assistance in reviewing my work.

Lastly, I would like to offer my appreciation to my friends and acquaintances.

To my Cohort 4 colleagues, Gaby, Lisa, Jaime, and Diana: thanks for the memories. I will always be grateful for your collaboration, encouragement, and camaraderie. To my best friend, Gaby, I am pleased and grateful to have shared this journey with you. I know that, no matter in which direction our lives may take us, I can always count on you to be there for support, friendship, and a dose of light-hearted humor.

As I embark on this new chapter in my life, I would also like to offer my gratitude to the study participants who, for a brief moment, allowed me to gain a glimpse into their family lives, careers, and education so that I could proceed with completing my dissertation. Thank you for your commitment to education.

Finally, to anyone, who, during these four years of doctoral study, offered me a kind word of encouragement, praise, or inspiration, along the way, I say thank you. Though I may have forgotten exactly what you said to me for that fleeting moment in time, I will never forget the impact that your collective well wishes had on my life.

## DEDICATION

So often we proceed through our lives consumed by our own preoccupations that we rarely pay reverence to those dearly departed family members who came before us and laid the foundation for our existence and our current ways of life. To them, I wish to dedicate my dissertation.

To my great grandparents who, when they made the choice to come to this country for better lives, likely never envisioned that generations later, their great granddaughter would realize her dreams and pursue a doctorate degree. Were it not for their sacrifices many years ago, I would not be where I am today.

To my maternal and paternal grandparents, who as they each respectively raised their children, built a solid foundation for generations to come. Thank you for leaving a legacy of love, wisdom, and sense of family.

To my maternal grandmother, who when I began the doctoral program, repeatedly mentioned that she wanted to live long enough to see me graduate. Sadly, her wish did not come to pass. Grandma, I know that you are watching from up above. Thank you for believing in me.

Lastly, for my uncle, whose determination and perseverance in following his own dreams inspired me to follow my own. Your efforts to pursue a postsecondary education served to motivate me to follow my own educational pursuits. Thank you, uncle, for blazing the trail and creating a path bright enough so that I could walk behind you.

May my efforts serve to inspire others to fulfill their own dreams.



## ABSTRACT

Latinos have a high amount of individuals residing in poverty, and, yet, are still the fastest growing minority group in the nation (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; National Council of La Raza, 2014). For some families, living in poverty and the need to earn a living prevents parents from being actively involved in their children's education (Moreno & Gaytan, 2013). Therefore, the need to form alliances with parents is critical. Partnerships with parents must be formed to better understand the necessities of these children. Consequently, educators should convey to parents the significance of forming links between the home and school.

Moreover, the purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the current implementation of the funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) that exist within Latino families along the Texas-Mexico border to facilitate partnerships between home and school. Data was collected over a timeframe of twenty-three weeks. The research study was comprised of: semi-structured, face to face interviews; questionnaires; observations; and document analysis. A two phase data analysis process was utilized. Data analysis consisted of transcribing interview content, open-coding to identify trends among the interviewees' responses, an examination of field notes, and an evaluation of the data to identify commonalities, categories, and patterns. Validity was established through the triangulation of the data sources.

The results of the study suggest the emergence of four themes: stakeholders' responsibilities, the types of support available to students, the existence of cultural values, and the prevalence of community connections. Discussion of each theme and subtheme is provided. Furthermore, responses to the research questions and correlations to community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) are delineated. Implications for educators, educator

preparation programs, and parents are noted. The limitations of the study are also documented. Recommendations for future research are included in the research study.

## Table of Contents

Chapter One .....	1
Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Theoretical Framework.....	4
Research Questions.....	5
Significance of the Study.....	6
Scope of the Study .....	8
Overview of Research Design .....	10
Outline of Dissertation.....	10
Definitions.....	11
Chapter Two .....	13
Review of the Literature .....	13
Theoretical Framework.....	13
Community Cultural Wealth.....	15
Funds of Knowledge.....	17
Review of the Literature .....	20
Parental Involvement and Latinos .....	20
The Latino Family.....	21
Building Bridges between Home, Community, and School.....	24
The Instructional Setting.....	27
Summary.....	30
Chapter Three .....	31
Methodology.....	31
Introduction.....	31

Study Design.....	31
The Researcher’s Role .....	33
Researcher Positionality.....	35
Research Timeline .....	35
Setting .....	36
The Regional Context .....	36
The Municipality.....	37
The Research Site .....	38
Participant Selection .....	39
Data Collection Methods .....	41
Observations .....	43
Interviews & Questionnaires.....	43
Document Review.....	45
Data Analysis .....	46
The Primary Phase of Analysis.....	48
The Secondary Phase of Analysis.....	52
Validation of Data.....	53
Ethical Considerations .....	53
Summary.....	54
Chapter Four .....	55
Results.....	55
Introduction.....	55
Purpose of the Study .....	55
Research Design.....	56
Participants.....	57
Description of Findings.....	60
Document Analysis.....	61
Observations .....	61
Interviews.....	62

Questionnaires.....	63
Emerging Themes .....	64
Stakeholders’ Responsibilities .....	65
Types of Support Available to Students .....	70
Cultural Values .....	80
Community Connections .....	86
Summary of the Chapter .....	90
Chapter Five.....	91
Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations .....	91
Introduction.....	91
Summary of the Study .....	91
Overview of Methodology .....	94
Discussion.....	96
Findings Related to Research Questions.....	96
Connections to Theory .....	106
Community Cultural Wealth.....	107
Funds of Knowledge .....	115
Implications.....	118
Limitations .....	122
Recommendations for Further Research.....	123
Conclusion .....	125
References.....	128

## APPENDICES

Appendices.....	140
Appendix 1: Questions for District Administrator .....	141
Appendix 2: Teacher Focus Group Interview Questions.....	142
Appendix 3: Parent Questionnaire .....	143
Appendix 4: Parent Interview Questions .....	144
Appendix 5: School Administrator Questionnaire.....	146
Appendix 6: Student Questionnaire .....	151
Appendix 7: Discussion Notes Form .....	155
Appendix 8: Observation Form .....	156
Appendix 8: Observation Form Continued.....	157
Appendix 9: School District Approval Form.....	158
Appendix 10: University IRB Approval.....	159
Appendix 11: English Consent Form.....	160
Appendix 12: Spanish Consent Form .....	162
Appendix 13: English Student Assent Form.....	165
Appendix 14: Spanish Student Assent Form .....	166
Appendix 15: English Parent Consent Form .....	167
Appendix 16: Spanish Parent Consent Form .....	169
Appendix 17: UTB IRB Modification Approval Form .....	171

Appendix 18: Revised English Consent Form..... 172

Appendix 19: Revised Spanish Consent Form ..... 174

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Individualism and Evolution: Relative Emphases.....	22
Table 3.1	Research Timeline.....	36
Table 3.2	Level One: Excerpt of Analysis of Interview Transcript.....	49
Table 3.3	Level Two: Excerpt of Analysis of Document Review.....	50
Table 3.4	Level Three: Excerpt of Analysis of Observation Field Notes.....	51
Table 3.5	Level Four: Excerpt of Analysis of Administrator Questions.....	52
Table 4.1	School Administrator Participants.....	58
Table 4.2	Teacher Participants.....	59
Table 4.3	Parent Participants.....	59
Table 4.4	Student Participants.....	60
Table 4.5	Student Responses.....	80



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1	Exchanges of Information .....	41
Figure 3.2	Existence of Common Themes in Data Sources.....	42
Figure 3.3	Data Analysis Process.....	47
Figure 4.1	Emerging Themes.....	65

## Chapter One

### Introduction

Parental involvement favorably impacts student success for children from all types of backgrounds (Cucchiara & Horvat, 2009; Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Williams & Sanchez, 2012). For Latino children, the need to obtain parental support for education is critical. As students' first teachers, parents have the capacity to influence the lives of their children. Even more so, when parents and teachers work together, students' education and progress are enriched (Mandell & Murray, 2009). For this reason, it is imperative that schools utilize the social and cultural capital present in families and communities to create partnerships between home and school.

Latinos are the fastest growing minority group in the nation (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). In fact, "Between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic population grew by 43 percent, which was four times the growth in the total population" (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011, p. 2). Despite being the minority group with the swiftest population growth, Latinos have a high amount of individuals residing in poverty (National Council of La Raza, 2014). In addition, according to the Children's Defense Fund (2014) over 30% of Latino children are being raised in poverty. Although parents attempt to economically provide for their children, unfortunately, their resources are insufficient. As a result, some parents must work longer hours at their current jobs or secure second or third jobs to be able to earn sufficient money to pay bills and provide food for their families (Carlisle, Stanley, & Kemple, 2005; LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011).

For families living in poverty, the need to provide a suitable income for survival can sometimes outweigh the need to become actively involved in the education of their children (Moreno & Gaytan, 2013). Consequently, this minority group does not fare well academically

(Casas & Ryan, 2010; Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Subsequently, due to poverty and numerous survival challenges, there is a critical need to form alliances with parents to better understand the needs of these children. As a result, educators should communicate to parents the importance of establishing connections between the home and school.

### Statement of the Problem

Within the educational setting, Latino children are expected to quickly assimilate and minimal reverence is paid to their cultural diversity (Valenzuela, 2005). In fact, other research shows that, while in United States schools, students have minimal possibilities to cultivate positive views about education (Becerra, 2012). Opportunities for students to encourage favorable views toward education are not always maximized. Regrettably, teachers are not always professionally equipped to work with their students' parents (LaRocque et al., 2011). While in the classroom, teachers receive minimal training from campus administrators and district personnel on how to form professional partnerships with parents to better serve the needs of the students (Clayton, 2011). Therefore, teachers are left to formulate their own methods on how to establish and maintain communication with parents. In some cases, this becomes a difficult task for some educators. Though coursework and graduation requirements vary across the universities, for the most part, a great number of preservice educators complete a minimal amount of training on family relations and cultural competence. As specified by Smith and Smith (2008),

Most graduates of typical teacher education programs know little about the cultural traits, behaviors, values, and attitudes which minority children and/or children from low SES backgrounds bring to the classroom

and how they affect the students' responses to instructional situations (Dance, 2002. Groulx, 2001) (p. 336).

In addition, as indicated by Moreno and Gaytan (2013), "...many courses often reflect superficial, stereotypical, and/or inaccurate understandings of diverse cultures, which leaves the educator unprepared and the students at a distinct educational disadvantage" (p. 12).

Additionally, some educators may not have sufficient knowledge of working with populations of diverse learners. As a result, educators, with minimal experience working with cultures different than their own, may experience some difficulties if they are not familiar with the nuances of the population (Carlisle et al., 2005; Clayton, 2011; Verdugo & Flores, 2007).

To remedy this, educational systems should capitalize on available resources. As noted by Gregg, Rugg, & Stoneman (2012), the application of "a funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) approach to parent-teacher communication can encourage family engagement and build stronger bonds between home and school" (p. 89). Hence, by incorporating the social and cultural capital already present in Latino households into the educational setting, home-school partnerships can be forged and utilized to strengthen levels of academic achievement (Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama, Gravitt, & Moll, 2011).

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the current implementation of the funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) that exist within Latino families along the Texas-Mexico border to facilitate partnerships between home and school. The United States-Mexico border has been redefined by the presence of a large Mexican-American population (Guinn, Vincent, Lin, and Villas, 2011; Padilla, 2000). For

Latino children living on the Texas-Mexico border, ethnic diversity is scarce due to the chiefly Latino population. As a result, children who reside along the border remain in constant contact with their Mexican heritage and customs. In fact, present in this area of the country are Latinos of varying backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, and generational compositions. Despite the prevalence of Latinos living in the region, rarely do students see themselves represented in the curriculum.

Milner (2010) indicates that students, regardless of diversity and ethnicity, “become disengaged, disinterested, and disconnected from lessons and learning opportunities when they do not see themselves reflected in the curriculum and related opportunities to learn” (p. 6). Along those lines, while in American schools, students experience only minimal representation of their cultural affiliation and, as described by Valenzuela (2005), undergo a “de-Mexicanization,” where culture and language are subtracted from their identities. This process often results in dire consequences to students’ “achievement and orientations toward school” (Valenzuela, 2005, p. 338). Many Latino students’ personal experiences are devalued in the classroom, when they should serve as springboards for student engagement and familial involvement (Luna & Martinez, 2013). Moreover, by uncovering the social and cultural capital present in Latino families, partnerships between the home and school can serve to subsequently support teaching and learning.

### Theoretical Framework

The literature review is comprised of an analysis of two theoretical frameworks that serve to support this study. In an effort to examine the experiences that children are afforded within their home environments, the first theoretical framework reviewed for this study is Yosso’s (2005)

tenets of community cultural wealth. In the examination of cultural capital, Yosso (2005) contends that, within each community, various forms of capital can be found which coexist and form a symbiotic relationship with one another to create community cultural wealth. The components of community cultural wealth include: (1) “aspirational capital; (2) linguistic capital; (3) familial capital; (4) social capital; (5) navigational capital; and (6) resistant capital” (Yosso, 2005, p. 77-81). In addition, funds of knowledge (Moll, et.al, 1992), based in anthropological studies, contends that Latino households possess cultural resources that can be used within the classroom setting to create connections to learning and establish relationships with families. Therefore, by examining both community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992), the researcher has gained insight to the different types of social and cultural experiences that exist within Latino households and serve to influence and shape the lives of Latinos in the Rio Grande Valley.

Moreover, through a review of the literature, the researcher explored the context of the Latino family and the nuances that distinguish it from families of other ethnicities. In addition, a discussion of parental involvement within the Latino population can also be found within the chapter. Also included in the chapter is a description of the significance of establishing connections between home and school. The literature review ends with an explanation of the benefits of incorporating culture within the instructional setting.

### Research Questions

The research questions were based on distinct assumptions derived from the work of Moll et al., (1992) and Yosso (2005). First of all, Moll et al., (1992) contend that Latino communities contain funds of knowledge that can serve to support “household or individual functioning and

well-being” (p. 133). Next, Yosso (2005) contends that diverse communities contain six types of capital: “aspirational, social, linguistic, familial, resistant, and navigational” (p. 77-81).

Grounded on the premise that “culture influences how society is organized, how school curriculum is developed and how pedagogy and policy are implemented,” the researcher attempted to determine the experiences that Latino families impart on their children that serve to guide their education (Yosso, 2005, p. 75). Additionally, the researcher examined how those experiences held by children and families were incorporated into the school setting to foster home-school partnerships. The following questions guided this research study:

- How do the parents involved in this study impart their cultural values on their children?  
How does this transmission of values reinforce learning?
- How do Latino parents support their children’s academic progress in school?
- What are educators’ (teachers and school administrators) beliefs regarding parental support of education?
- How do schools incorporate community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) into the school setting to promote home-school connections?

#### Significance of the Study

Regrettably, while an increasing number of Latino students are in schools, the outside curriculum that students derive from the culmination of their experiences is sometimes neglected. In the context of the classroom, these experiences can serve to create correlations between a student’s home environment and the classroom context (de la Piedra, 2010; Hogg, 2011; Moll, 1992; Moll, Velez-Ibanez, & Greenberg, 1990; Moll & Diaz, 1987; Moll, et al,

1992). Through these connections, teachers can help students gain an appreciation for their culture, reinforce teaching and learning, and, at the same time, establish partnerships between the home and school.

Moreover, the experiences that Latino children bring from home can serve to create connections between the home environment and the academic setting. Instead of being viewed as deficiencies, cultural differences should be viewed as valuable sources of capital that can serve to influence the education of students within the instructional setting (Cerna, Perez, & Saenz, 2009). The familial connectedness that exists in Latino homes can contribute to children's perceptions of academics if educators choose to embrace rather than negate cultural differences (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Hogg, 2011; Kiyama, 2010). At times, educators fail to recognize the realities associated with their students' lives and the contributions that parents and families make to their child's overall education.

Latino children bring rich experiences from home that should not be overlooked. These experiences serve as a lens from which children can view the world. The use of funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) in the classroom can be used to support instruction and build connections between students' experiences and newly presented material (Amanti, 2005). If education is a process that changes behaviors and can improve an individual's future, it is even more critical for teachers to value the experiences that children bring from their homes (Hill & Torres, 2010). These experiences are opportunities for teachers to strengthen teaching and learning. Therefore, Latino students should be taught that "the school experience" can allow them "to dream of what they might become, of how they might contribute, of why they are needed in life" (Ellis, 2004, p. 13). As such, educators should recognize that all students arrive



at the school door with something to contribute to the educational processes that transpire within classrooms (Gay, 2000). Providing students with curricular and instructional concepts that they can associate with their cultural backgrounds may possibly draw out their willingness to participate and positively impact academic achievement (Milner, 2010).

Furthermore, in a community that has cultivated relationships and uses these relationships to increase their knowledge base and learn new skills, the notion of supplementing academics with the knowledge attained at home could potentially result in higher academic gains (Dewey, 1929; Sugarman, 2010). Undoubtedly, educational attainment in the Latino community is in dire need of improvement. By forging positive relationships between both home and school settings, students can use their funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to improve their education

### Scope of the Study

This study focused on the observations and insights of stakeholders regarding the implementation of funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) within the home environment and school setting to foster parental involvement. Furthermore, this study contributed to the existing body of literature associated with the education of Latino students. Research findings gleaned from semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with four different levels of stakeholders (school administrators, teachers, parents, and students) are included in this research study. A vast amount of research regarding parental involvement focuses on educators and/or parents' beliefs. For instance, some studies examined the viewpoints of parents, teachers, administrators, and other school staff regarding parental, family, and/or community involvement (Cucciara & Horvat, 2009; Gordon & Louis, 2009).

Other studies investigated the views about parental involvement and/or family engagement of only one stakeholder group such as teachers, administrators, parents, students, or community members (Flynn & Nolan, 2008; Mandell & Murray, 2009; Martinez-Cosio, 2010; Marschall, 2006; Shah, 2009). Researchers such as Good, Masewicz, and Vogel (2010) studied parents' and teachers' insights about Latino English language learners and the establishment of connections between the home and school. Nelson and Guerra (2013) reviewed teachers' and educational leaders' views and social familiarity. Still, other studies reviewed the perceptions of school personnel (administrators and/or teachers) and parents' understandings of family, community, and/or parental involvement (De Gaetano, 2007; Jasis & Ordonez-Jasis, 2012; Spillane, Healey, Mesler Parise, 2009; Williams & Sanchez, 2012). Moreover, DeCuir-Gunby, Taliaferro, & Greenfield (2009) studied teachers', counselors', and principals' perspectives on culturally appropriate programs for educational achievement. Finally, Niemeyer, Wong, & Westerhaus, (2009) investigated parental involvement, family interactions, and educational accomplishments on student performance. However, despite the extensive amount of research in existence, regarding parental involvement, few studies have been conducted that explored the views of school administrators, teacher, parents, and students at a single research site. This study examined the perceptions of stakeholders at one campus regarding the application of cultural values and beliefs within the school setting to increase home-school relations. Additionally, this research study is of significance because research was conducted along the Texas-Mexico border in a predominately Latino population at a campus where more than 95% of the faculty, staff, and students are of Latino origin.

## Overview of Research Design

Through this qualitative study, the researcher sought to determine how the funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) , and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) that exist within Latino families along the Texas-Mexico border were utilized within the school setting to forge home-school partnerships. To undertake this task, the study was conducted in a community along the Texas-Mexico border, specifically in the Rio Grande Valley. The study was comprised of: semi-structured, face-to-face interviews; questionnaires; observations; and document analysis. Data was collected over a span of twenty-three weeks. Data analysis consisted of transcribing interview content, open-coding to identify trends among the interviewees' responses, a review of field notes and an analysis of the data collected to identify commonalities, categories, and patterns. Validity was established through the triangulation of data. In an effort to maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in place of the participants', schools', and school districts' actual names.

## Outline of Dissertation

This qualitative dissertation is divided into five chapters and the appendix. The first chapter consists of the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, outline of the dissertation, and a list of the definitions of the terms utilized in the dissertation. The second chapter is comprised of a description of the literature reviewed and the theoretical frameworks used to ground the study. Chapter three describes the research methodology employed to carry out the study. This includes a discussion of the research site, participant selection, data collection methods, the procedures used to carry out the data analysis, and the processes used to validate findings. The fourth chapter was composed of a detailed description of the research

findings including quotes obtained from interviews with the participants. Chapter five includes an introduction, summary of the study, and an overview of the methodology utilized. Also included in chapter five is a discussion comprised of the findings related to the research questions as well as any connections that exist between the findings and the theories used for this study. Implications, recommendations for future research, limitations, and conclusion are also found within the fifth chapter. Chapter five ends with a listing of the references used throughout the dissertation. Finally, the appendix contains copies of the consent forms used, interview guides, questionnaires, and a copy of the observation protocol used to gather data.

#### Definitions

Latinos. Refers to the term used to describe Spanish-speaking individuals of Latin descent.

Culture. Refers to the actions, principles, and beliefs that are acquired, distributed, and demonstrated by a group of people (Yosso, 2005).

Community cultural wealth. Refers to the six forms of cultural wealth that exist in communities composed of “aspirational wealth, familial wealth, navigational wealth, linguistic wealth, resistant wealth, and social wealth” (Yosso, 2005, p. 77-81).

Funds of knowledge. Refers to those bodies of knowledge that have been collected and socially established over time to assist individuals with the overall functioning and well-being of households (Moll, et al., 1992).

Family-school-community-connections. Reciprocal exchanges of information that transpire between students’ families, schools, and communities

Texas-Mexico Border. The 1254 miles that span between El Paso, Texas-Cuidad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico and Brownsville, Texas-Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico

Rio Grande Valley. The four counties (Cameron, Willacy, Starr, Hidalgo) in the southernmost tip of Texas.

Social capital. Refers to the skills and assets cultivated while being involved in collective networks and the initiation or amplification of those skills and assets for social profit (Monkman, Ronald, & Thréaméne, 2005).

Cultural capital. Refers to the knowledge and skills that are passed on to children from previous generations as viewpoints, partialities, and actions that are utilized for social benefit (Lamont & Lareau, 1988).

## Chapter Two

### Review of the Literature

According to Bryant (2004), the literature review denotes a segment of the study in which the researcher recognizes and explains the academic findings that have previously emerged regarding the dissertation topic. Furthermore, the literature review serves to substantiate the inquiry conducted on the scholarly work of other researchers who have previously studied the topic. Within the literature review, the theoretical framework presents the lens from which to view the topic of the study. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the theoretical frameworks examined include community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992). Additionally, this chapter contains a review of the literature supporting the two frameworks utilized for this study.

### Theoretical Framework

In schools, students are faced with challenges and regarded as disadvantaged due to their socioeconomic status, cultural background, race, and native language (Kiyama, 2010; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). Research further states that some educators tend to possess unfavorable views regarding students' ethnicity, language use, and economic status (Nelson & Guerra, 2013). Mostly, due in part to the effects of assimilation, in situations where teachers and students hold similar cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds, deficit thinking can still be found among teachers (Nelson & Guerra, 2013; Weisman & Garza, 2002). In fact, teachers tend to hold reduced expectations for Latino students regardless of their records of achievement (McKown & Weinstein, 2008; Romo & Falbo, 1996; Verdugo & Flores, 2007). For example, a culture of lowered expectations conveys a message to students and to the community that less is expected

and this impacts the Latino population (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001). These types of experiences, over time, cause students to adopt an inaccurate perception of the world, hold low expectations, and consider themselves unintelligent and unable to succeed (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004).

Based on the research (Hill & Torres, 2010; Hogg, 2011), educators need opportunities to learn how to provide learning environments and educational strategies. Educators need training, coursework, and service learning opportunities (Hogg, 2011). In their training to become educators, teachers and school administrators rarely receive in-depth training on working with communities with culturally diverse populations (Hill & Torres, 2010). Similarly, during their tenure as educators, teachers and administrators seldom receive training that specifically addresses the needs of culturally diverse populations. In some cases, student expectations are lowered in schools with diverse populations and, in time, progress is stigmatized (Esposito & Swain, 2009). Eventually, some students begin to lose interest in attaining success (Fram, Miller-Cribbs, & Van Horn, 2007). As indicated by Milner (2010), “When teachers do not have a positive frame or an appropriate lens to view some students as capable of excellence or success, it can be difficult to recognize that all students, despite their differences, bring worthwhile talents with endless potential and capability in the classroom” (p. 184).

Unfortunately, teachers, schools, and school districts are not always readily prepared to educate students of diverse backgrounds (McKenzie & Scheurich 2004). Regardless, educators must make the best of the resources at hand to provide an education to each child that is enrolled at the campus. With that said, educators must provide a learning environment that promotes cultural differences and individual equality and serves to negate discrimination and prejudice

(Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006). Educators should make strides in ensuring that students are educated in a climate that is conducive to the promotion of learning.

To accomplish this, it is necessary to establish connections between the home environment and the school setting so that educators can become familiarized with students' cultural backgrounds (Moll, et al., 1992). However, the difficulty lies in creating partnerships with parents and community when little training has been provided by the university when educating administrators and teachers on how to collaborate with stakeholders. To maximize student learning, educators should promote cultural awareness, provide students with the chance to incorporate funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and elements of their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) into the educational setting to forge partnerships between home and school.

### Community Cultural Wealth

According to Yosso (2005), within communities of color, there exists a large quantity of social and cultural capital referred to as community cultural wealth. Community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) refers to the “array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and utilized by communities of color to survive and resist macro and micro forms of oppression” (Yosso, 2005, p. 77). Interrelated with one another, these forms of capital are derivatives of the influences that exist within the lives of individuals to inform and shape their ways of living. Furthermore, Yosso (2005) has identified six forms of capital which, prevalent in communities of color, together form community cultural wealth.

*Aspirational capital.* Yosso (2005) contends that aspirational capital is the ability to aspire to greatness despite the realities of the current situation in which individuals might find themselves



and any limitations that might exist. In Latino communities, the desire to strive for prosperity is common among families. This type of aspirational capital serves as the catalyst for improving an individual's lot in life.

*Familial capital.* Moreover, because family is an integral component in the lives of Latinos, family capital can be found in Latino communities. The concept of familial capital refers to the knowledge base composed of culture and traditions inherent within families. Passed generationally between family members and the community, this set of values, principles, morals, and traditions serves to connect individuals to one another and reinforce the beliefs that are passed from one person to another. As noted by Yosso (2005), "From these kinship ties, we learn the importance of maintaining a healthy connection to our community and its resources" (p. 79).

*Social capital.* The existence of systems of individuals and communal assets available within society that serve to supplement the existing body of knowledge already found within the family unit denotes social capital (Yosso, 2005). It is through these networks that Latino families find the needed assistance to move forward in the hope of abdicating their current situation. In many instances, families are relegated to an existence of poverty and limited financial resources. Therefore, for Latinos, it is necessary to look to society for communal support. Often, support emerges from extended family or community contacts.

*Navigational capital.* For Latinos, societal and institutional barriers have long been in existence. Navigational capital refers to the ability to transcend predisposed beliefs and limitations to traverse social institutions otherwise considered inaccessible to a population within a community

of color (Yosso, 2005). If Latinos possess within them the desire to succeed, they must learn to navigate the various systems that exist within society.

*Linguistic capital.* The concept of linguistic capital refers to the intellectual and social skills attained through communication in more than one language (Yosso, 2005). By communicating in more than one language, individuals are afforded the opportunity to learn the nuances of communication for each language. While communicating with others, children need to learn how to adjust their tone, utilize appropriate mannerisms, and select the correct words and phrases that accurately convey their messages to the intended audience (Yosso, 2005). This practice teaches children various skills which can transcend the home and be utilized in many situations. Children are able make inferences and draw conclusions to decipher messages in multiple languages

*Resistant capital.* The belief that individuals who reside in communities of color must strive for more than the status quo alludes to resistant capital. More specifically, resistant capital refers to the wisdom and skillset created by the behaviors of the minority group that serve to combat inequality (Yosso, 2005). In Latino communities, individuals push themselves to succeed simply to prove that the ability to progress is attainable regardless of circumstance or impediment (Durand, 2010).

#### Funds of Knowledge

Children carry with them an abundance of information on how to traverse their everyday lives. This prior knowledge is referred by Moll, et al., (1992) as funds of knowledge. Namely, funds of knowledge are defined as “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (Moll, et

al., 1992, p. 133). More specifically, funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) revolve around the notion that, to become familiarized with individuals' lives and histories, the daily practices found within the home must be investigated in an effort to gain insight about people's actions and their own perceptions of those actions (Gonzalez, 2005; Hogg, 2011). Within the Latino community, children are exposed to a variety of resources that can serve to enhance their lifestyles. Moll, et al., (1992) outlined a sample list of funds of knowledge that can be found within communities. This list includes elements of "agriculture and mining, economics, household management, material and scientific knowledge, medicine, and religion" (Moll et al., 1992, p. 133). While the referenced list of funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) may exist to supplement the available skills, knowledge, and abilities found within Latino communities, it is simply a sample and not designed to be all inclusive. Other resources may be available within a community as well that may serve to enhance teaching and learning. Moreover, by engaging in these activities children are afforded opportunities to learn the capacities and aptitudes associated with completing tasks and working with others to achieve a common goal.

*Family and Community.* The available funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) found within the Latino community are used as resources to establish connections between families and the communities. In Latino communities, children are exposed to a multitude of resources and knowledge (Moll et al., 1992). For instance, individuals, many times, due to a lack of financial resources, must resort to their own skills and knowledge to contend with the issues that tend to arise within their own respective households. Subsequently, if one individual does not have the means to solve his own problems, then he looks to his other family members, friends, and/or acquaintances to provide assistance. By the same token, this creates a reservoir of assistance for families. It is through this interchange of expertise, abilities, and work that Latinos are able to

utilize their industriousness to persevere and prosper (Moll, et al., 1992). By being exposed to these experiences, Latino children learn how to establish their own systems of support within their communities.

*Connections to Instruction.* As a result of these cultivated relationships, children are able to work cooperatively to explore and indulge in their own pursuit of knowledge. In their communities, children can participate in real-world activities such as car repair, household assistance, or musical activities that can serve as circumstances where learning can take place (Moll, et al., 1992). Children have opportunities to interact with and learn from people that they trust. Furthermore, Moll, et al (1992) contend that, within the contexts of their communities, children are motivated by their own interests and are able to take control of their own learning. Additionally, because children work with trusted individuals, they feel more comfortable taking risks, asking questions, and engaging in activities that will further add to their knowledge base (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992). Within their communities, students are afforded the ability to freely interact with others to seek out answers to their questions or to learn how to complete tasks. In their own communities, “Children control the method by which they learn, which allows for them to make mistakes and experiment with their learning” (Kiyama, 2010, p. 334). In contrast, while in the classroom, students are for the most part expected to work independently. This practice can be counterproductive when working with Latino students. Latino children are commonly exposed to working collectively with others within their communities. For this reason, teachers should allow students to work collaboratively. In contrast, while in the classroom, these opportunities are not always made readily available to students (Hill & Torres, 2010).

## Review of the Literature

### Parental Involvement and Latinos

Research states that Latinos have low rates of educational attainment (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). The lack of parental involvement has often been cited as one of the primary reasons why Latino students do not always continue their education past high school (Flynn & Nolan, 2008). Despite these views, research states that parental involvement within Latino households is more common than previously ascertained (Jasis & Ordonez-Jasis, 2012; Nelson & Guerra, 2013; Pemberton & Miller, 2013).

According to Daniel (2011), “The term parental involvement is widely used as a general term to represent all home, school, and community based activities involving parents in supporting their children’s educational development” (p. 166). LeFevre and Shaw (2012) specify that two types of parental involvement, formal and informal, exist. Parental involvement regarded as formal “includes external activities in which parents are physically present at the school or at a school-related function or in which they initiative contact with the school” (p. 710). Formal parental involvement can include attendance at parent meetings, parental assistance with fundraisers, or volunteering at school sponsored events (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). On the other hand, “Informal parental involvement includes behaviors, activities, and emotional support that occur in the home” (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012, p. 710). More specifically, informal parental involvement relates to parents’ support of education within the home. Support can be provided in the form of establishing structured environments for homework completion, giving students advice regarding education and schooling, monitoring students’ progress, and assisting with

school work (LaFevre & Shaw, 2012). At times, providing students with academic support can be viewed as a family and community responsibility.

### The Latino Family

Within the Latino community, the concept of family is a quintessential component of the societal tapestry (Rudolph, Chavez, Quintana, & Salinas, 2011). For instance, in the Latino household, family can be considered extremely influential and an invaluable resource in children's lives (Ortiz & Santos, 2009). It is not unusual for multiple generations of a family to live within the same household. Subsequently, Latinos have access to an abundance of familial capital that serves to influence family members' actions and ways of thinking (Luna & Martinez, 2013; Moll, et al., 1992; Ramirez, 2012; Yosso, 2005). In many ways, familial capital provides individuals with a moral compass from which to guide their actions and behaviors while providing some semblance of accountability.

In addition, in some communities, the Latino culture tends to demonstrate collectivist nuances (Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, and Hernandez, 2003). As noted by Trumbull, et al., (2003),

‘Collectivism’ refers to a cluster of interrelated values that reflect a particular worldview and motivate a whole range of thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors.

From this value system's perspective, children are part of a family with interdependent members. Sharing and helping others are essential because the goal of collectivism is group/family interdependence (p. 48).

Therefore, children raised in these types of environments learn, at an early age, how to collaborate with other individuals to achieve a common goal (Moll, et al., 1992).

On the contrary, when children are part of a society that is more individualistic in nature, the needs of the individual take precedence. As noted by Trumbull, et al. (2003), “Individualism represents a set of values associated with independence, self-expression and personal autonomy and achievement. From the perspective of this value system, children are individuals who need to become independent of their families” (p. 48). The table below denotes the differences between individualism and collectivism.

Table 2.1. Individualism and Collectivism: Relative Emphases (Trumbull, et al., 2003, p. 49)

Individualism	Collectivism
1. Child as individual	1. Child is part of the group
2. Independence	2. Helpfulness
3. Cognitive skills independent of social skills	3. Social and cognitive skills integrated
4. Self-expression	4. Listening to authority
5. Parents’ role is to parent and teach; teachers’ role is to teach.	5. Parents’ role is to parent; teachers’ role is to teach and foster moral development
6. Personal property	6. Shared property

Reprinted from: Trumbull, E., Rothstein-Fisch, C., & Hernandez, E. (2003). Parent involvement in schooling: According to whose values? *School Community Journal*, 13, 45–72.

Grounded in the premises of collectivism, familismo is a cultural belief that can be seen in many Latino homes (Ayon & Aisenberg, 2010; Durand, 2010; LaRoche & Schriberg, 2005; Rudolph, et al., 2011). *Familismo* refers to the cultural belief that the family, immediate and extended, should lie at the epicenter of an individual’s life (Niemeyer, Wong & Westerhaus, 2009). The individual is expected to contribute to the betterment of the family, maintain family loyalty and reciprocity, and serve as an unconditional source of support (Ayon & Aisenberg, 2010; Durand, 2010; LaRoche & Schriberg, 2009; Rudolph, et. al, 2010; Sanchez, 2009).

Within the Latino family, commitment to one another is paramount to the needs of the individual family member.

For Latinos who often emerge from humble households, education is viewed as a road out of impoverishment and a key to a better life. Therefore, many Latino parents communicate to their children advice regarding the importance of obtaining an education (Gándara, & Contreras, 2009). Often told through *dichos* (sayings), *cuentos* (stories), or *testimonios* (testaments) parents offer their children *consejos* (advice) about the need to work towards a more fulfilling and profitable future (Auerbach, 2007; Hill & Torres, 2010; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Sanchez, 2009). Furthermore, these parents stress to their children the importance of obtaining an education regardless of their own personal levels of educational attainment or lack thereof. The notion that one day the current condition and way of life might improve provides individuals with the opportunity to aspire for greatness. By instilling in their children the desire to aspire for prosperity, Latino parents frequently communicate to their offspring the importance of setting and accomplishing goals. Through modeling, Latino parents influence their children's perceptions about work (Hill & Torres, 2010). Parents who communicate to their children that education will result in a better way of life teach their children that aspirations for greatness can lead to positive results. Moreover, if children witness their parents' propensity to work hard to achieve the American dream, children are likely to do the same (Hill & Torres, 2010).

The desire to succeed regardless of existing barriers serves as a way to combat inequality (Yosso, 2005). Latinos have been faced with a multitude of barriers in their quest for an improved existence within the borders of the United States (Yosso, 2005). As a result, Latinos have developed navigational capital which serves to propel individuals to break barriers and



strive for goals otherwise considered inaccessible to Latinos (Yosso, 2005). Latinos have become familiarized with the formal and informal rules of maneuvering through society (Monkman, et al., 2005; Yosso, 2005). In fact, as noted by Haack Gerdes, and Lawton (2012), “Latino families often maintain strong support systems with individuals in their communities” (p. 411). In many instances, Latinos seek out other members of their respective networks such as friends and family for assistance in accomplishing tasks that might otherwise be out of reach without the help and support of others (Moll, et al., 1992). Within the Latino community, individuals must know how to maneuver through the societal confines that have long been in existence to minimize progress for some populations. Due to the gap in Latino academic achievement, educators have an important opportunity to maximize achievement through the incorporation of cultural funds.

#### Building Bridges between Home, Community, and School

Deficit thinking is widespread in United States schools and is built upon the premise that the ideals, customs, and ways of knowing which emerge from the prevailing ethnic group are essentially right (Nelson & Guerra, 2013; Yosso, 2005). This type of thinking “takes the position that minority students and families are at fault for poor academic performance because: (a) students enter school without the normative cultural knowledge and skills; and (b) parents neither value nor support their child’s education” (Yosso, 2005, p. 75). Because Latino parents do not always become involved with school activities, Latino students are often stereotyped as having parents that do not care about their education (De Gaetano, 2007). In reality, Latino parents impact their children’s education in ways that are not necessarily directly involved with assuming a role in the formal parental involvement capacities available at the school system (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). Nontraditional parental involvement, generally referred to as

“informal involvement,” usually “includes behaviors, activities, and emotional support that occurs in the home” (LeFevre & Shaw, 2011, p. 710). The incorporation of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) into the educational system can serve as a method of combatting this mindset.

Moreover, educators need to become familiarized with the culture, values, and knowledgebase that exist within the Latino community, if changes are to be adequately made to favor an equitable education for all students (Contreras, 2011; Sugarman, 2010). By understanding the methods that families implement in an effort to provide support to students, educators can facilitate partnerships that promote “informed parent participation and respectful, culturally sensitive, home-school relations” (Auerbach, 2007, p. 279). As students are continuously exposed to certain behaviors within their communities, they tend to adopt the same mannerisms and ways of knowing.

According to the research, communities of color possess an overabundance of cultural wealth within their social networks (Yosso, 2005). Often, educators take for granted the experiences that Latino children bring from home (de la Piedra, 2010; Hogg, 2011; Moll, 1992; Moll, Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1990; Moll & Diaz, 1987; Moll, et al., 1992). A myriad of factors have an effect on an individual’s origin, the present state of being, and the future. For instance, learning does not simply occur within the confines of a school building. Within the context of education, to assume that curriculum and pedagogy are the quintessential components of an individual’s schooling, presents a “myopic view of what shapes human beings” (Schubert, 2010, p. 16). For this reason, it is important to recognize cultural wealth so that education can be transformed and minorities can become sufficiently emboldened to tap into the abundant resources that exist

within their communities (Yosso, 2005). The various forms of capital which exist within communities serve to acknowledge the belief systems that have risen from the individuals within those households (Yosso, 2005). Students need to be aware that their cultural backgrounds carry value and can serve as an anchor for their education. As indicated by Dewey (1929), the school environment should extend those values and morals which the child has learned at home.

Boykin and Noguera (2011) state that, within communities

...certain behaviors, values, or experiences of interest may arise because they have been cultivated in the experiences to which a given person has been prominently exposed.

This would happen by virtue of that person's participation in a given cultural community—a community of people who have emphasized these behaviors, values, and interests in the course of their daily lives, though intergenerational traditions, contact with significant cultural agents in the community, group identification or affiliation, or the society at large (p. 112).

The act of belonging to a specific community affords individuals with social and cultural capital not necessarily prevalent in other cultural groups (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). For example, the use of *consejos* (advice) and *dichos* (sayings) to communicate expectations and beliefs to children as well as the practice of taking children to work with parents can be seen in Latino households but not always readily apparent in others communities (Auerbach, 2007; de la Piedra, 2010; Hill & Torres, 2010; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Sanchez, 2009). The notion of communicating expectations through stories and sayings can serve to influence children's behavior (Auerbach, 2007). Through their experiences, children are, in a sense, guided by “home and family, culture, community, popular culture, and non-acquisitive schooling”

(Schubert, 2010, p. 14). More specifically, the act of taking their children to work with them serves to indirectly communicate to children their parents' expectations. By working alongside their parents, children are able to learn the importance of working to contribute to the household. Next, working physically demanding jobs allows children to experience the difficulties associated with manual labor. For parents, these experiences can serve as a source of motivation for their children to obtain an education. These influences build a knowledge base for students and serve to create authentic learning experiences outside the classroom setting (Moll et al., 1992).

### The Instructional Setting

Research indicates that students arrive to school with resources that could be instructional tools that might enrich students' curricular experiences (Bobbitt, 1918; de la Piedra, 2010; Keis, 2006; Moll, 1992; Olmedo, 2009; Schubert, 2010; Upadhyay, 2005). These forms of capital generally emerge from their family networks to provide support and assistance in navigating the complexities of life. In schools, educators are able to utilize the cultural and social capital that Latino students bring to campus to enhance the overall educational experiences of these students.

Establishing connections between the home environment and the school setting could prove to be beneficial as students navigate the educational system. As stated by Boykin & Noguera (2011), "...when culture is viewed as a student asset, its infusion into teaching and learning contexts potentially has a positive impact on the academic performance of disenfranchised students of color" (p. 111). Moreover, while in the classroom, students' experiences can be utilized to reinforce difficult concepts for students. Gregg, et al., (2012) specify that the use of funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) in the instructional setting serves as a way to connect

culture with knowledge to improve student comprehension and self-efficacy. Eventually, with increased levels of participation, it might be possible to raise the levels of achievement for Latinos across the nation. As noted by Boykin and Noguera (2011),

If teachers make explicit links between the material and performance strategies with popular culture data sets and conventional canons, and if they center the learning process more proactively on the diversity of students' experiences, then students can eventually become more adaptively flexible in the application of their talents, skills, and efforts (p. 110).

In the academic setting, teachers should work to create curricular correlations with the experiences that students bring from their home environments. According to Sanchez (2009), a teacher's knowledge about her "students and their families is critical to ensuring relevant classroom instruction" (p. 161). In the classroom, teachers play a critical role in recognizing the social capital that students possess. Generally, classrooms function as isolated entities where little interaction between students takes place (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992). For Latino students, who are accustomed to learning collaboratively at home, this isolation creates a clash between the known and the unfamiliar. In addition, when students live their accustomed behavior in the classroom, they are sometimes regarded as lacking discipline. By the same token, students that are unsure of how to behave might opt to not interact with others. When in reality, students are reacting to the best of their abilities. A lack of interaction can also be interpreted as disinterest or unable to follow the class.

By creating instructional contexts and utilizing curriculum in which students can work cooperatively, students can reach into their funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) to accomplish

their academic tasks. Within the classroom, teachers can utilize students' background knowledge to build connections between students' experiences and newly introduced concepts (Hogg, 2011). Learning is made relevant when teachers link "new material and skills to what students already know" (Boykin & Noguera, 2011, p. 111). By fostering connections between recently taught skills and students' background knowledge, learners are able to see the relevance and adaptability between what is learned at home and at school.

Additionally, to facilitate the transition between home and school, children should receive an education that represents and "continues" the lives that they lead at "home, in their neighborhoods, or on the playground" (Dewey, 1929, p. 36). Teachers can use these funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) in the classroom to benefit student learning and maximize academic achievement (Hogg, 2011; Marshall & Toohey, 2012; Varelas & Pappas, 2006). Through the use of instructional practices that positively harness students' cultural experiences, schools can expand the intrinsic value acquired from their home lives (Dewey, 1929). For instance, students do not always grasp the concepts presented; however, when asked to associate new knowledge with their home lives, connections with curriculum can be made (Moll, 1992). By activating students' prior knowledge, connections can provide contextual relevance. Including students' experiences into the academic repertoire is likely to solidify learning for students as they often fail to see themselves represented in the curriculum (Valenzuela, 2005).

Unfortunately, while in the classroom, teachers do not always take into consideration the idea that the outside curriculum contributes to the overall composition of the student. In the classroom, teachers can

By centering the learning process on children’s actual experiences, relating what students learn to matters of personal interest, linking classroom learning to relevant events and experiences in students’ lives, tying what is learned to the community or the larger society, and drawing connections across topics and subjects—can bring about better learning outcomes for students (Boykin & Noguera, 2011, p. 91).

These instructional strategies can serve to shift Latino students to the epicenter of the curricular conversations instead of positioning them as outliers on the fringes of society (Dworin, 2006). This transition from observers to participants can propel Latino students to make great educational strides.

#### Summary

Within every community exists an abundance of cultural wealth that, when adequately channeled, can be utilized to forge connections between home, school, and community to favorably impact student learning. By establishing positive relationships between parents and teachers, reciprocal exchanges of information can take place to promote learning for students. To improve the educational potential of Latino students, educators should make an effort to incorporate students’ community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Educators also have a responsibility to incorporate funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) into their instructional repertoire to help cultivate positive attitudes toward education. Establishing and maintaining communication with parents can serve as a catalyst for harnessing the social and cultural capital that is present in Latino families.

## Chapter Three

### Methodology

#### Introduction

Described in this chapter are the methods and procedures utilized throughout the course of this research study to examine the implementation of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) that may be present within the school setting to improve home-school partnerships. To accomplish this task, data was obtained from stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the social and cultural capital present in Latino families and the school setting. Several types of data collection instruments were utilized to obtain information from stakeholders. Multiple levels of analysis were applied to the data obtained to uncover prevalent themes which served to answer the research questions which guided this study.

#### Study Design

The purpose of this study was to examine the awareness of the social and cultural capital that existed in Latino families. Research was conducted to investigate the implementation of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) within the school setting to improve home-school connections, foster parental involvement, and subsequently affect teaching and learning. To undertake this task, the study was conducted in a community situated along the Texas-Mexico border. Through this study, the researcher examined one school's efforts to forge links between home and school. The following questions served to guide this research study:



- How do the parents involved in this study impart their cultural values on their children?  
How does this transmission of values reinforce learning?
- How do Latino parents support their children’s academic progress in school?
- What are educators’ (teachers and school administrators) beliefs regarding parental support of education?
- How do schools incorporate community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) into the school setting to promote home-school connections?

In an effort to answer the research questions, qualitative methodology was implemented throughout the data collection and data analysis phases of the study. Qualitative research as noted by Merriam (2009), tends to hone in on “process, understanding, and meaning;” utilizes the individual conducting the research as “the primary instrument of data collection and analysis,” employs a procedure that is “inductive,” and results in a product that is “richly descriptive” (p. 14). For this reason, the study, in El Sur ISD, was structured to allow the researcher to examine the viewpoints, perceptions, and experiences of four layers of stakeholders in a community school. For this research study, the researcher examined the perceptions of stakeholders as they relate to parental involvement, community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992).

To accomplish this task, the type of qualitative research employed was case study research. Creswell (2013), indicates that

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explains a real-life, contemporary bounded systems (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over

time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes (p. 97).

The research site was examined as a single case, and various methods of data collection were used to obtain the information. Through the use of interviews, observations, questionnaires, and document analysis, the researcher identified the knowledge, skills, and abilities present within the Latino community, school system, and households which served to support students' education and create partnerships between the home and school.

#### The Researcher's Role

The researcher was born, raised, and educated in El Sur. A product of the El Sur Independent School District, the researcher attended elementary, junior high, and high school campuses located within the district. After high school, the researcher enrolled at and subsequently graduated from the local university situated in El Sur. Currently, the researcher is a school administrator with over eighteen years of experience working in education. Throughout those eighteen years, the researcher worked as a middle school teacher for eight years, an assistant principal for six years, and as a dean of instruction for four years. Successively, the researcher has spent her entire career working for the El Sur Independent School District. Though the researcher is a current employee of El Sur ISD and has access and awareness to the general population within the district, she has no associations or affiliations to the research site that would obstruct, impede, or hinder the investigator from delivering an impartial study or serve to denote the existence of a conflict of interest.

As an educator, the researcher has viewed first-hand the importance of establishing a positive home-school relationship between educators and parents. In her current position, the researcher serves as a dean of instruction. Though the researcher assists with the operation of the overall campus, her primary duties consist of ensuring that the instructional program on campus meets the educational necessities of the students. In addition, the researcher is afforded the opportunity to collaborate with teachers and provide them with pedagogical practices and techniques as well as curricular resources that can be used in the classroom while working with students. Though the campus teachers work diligently to design lessons that are both rigorous and relevant to their students' academic needs, the education of the students is not without its challenges. For that reason, parental support is important.

It was the researcher's experiences as an educator that prompted her to research the topic of parental involvement and the application of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al, 1992) within the school setting. Students arrive with their own experiences to school daily. These experiences are key opportunities for parents and staff to learn from students while in the schools. However, if a concerted effort is made to work with parents to determine how to best educate and support students, a difference can be made (Mandell & Murray, 2009). By conducting the study at a school that has a high parental involvement rate in the Centers for Kids program, the researcher sought to uncover the initiatives that were in place which bolstered parental engagement efforts. Subsequently, whether parental support comes in the form of parents participating in school sponsored activities, meeting with their children's teachers, assisting with homework, or simply providing their children with a quiet place in which to complete their homework, schools need parents who will be supportive of the teachers' efforts to educate their children (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012).

## Researcher Positionality

The investigator examined the existence of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) and their prevalence for connections to parental involvement and teaching and learning in classrooms. Moreover, this research study was conducted in South Texas by a doctoral candidate at a regional university. The researcher is a Latina educator with an interest in conducting the study to learn more about the knowledge and skills that exist within the community. Though the researcher was raised and educated within the El Sur ISD area, some aspects and nuances of the community are unfamiliar to the researcher.

It should be noted that, as a child, the researcher was raised in a predominately English speaking household. As a fourth generation Mexican-American, the researcher's first language was English. Spanish was learned as a second language, while growing up in South Texas. Code-switching was a common practice in the household. In addition, the researcher grew up in a Latino neighborhood speaking both English and Spanish. Also, the researcher primarily identified as an American yet, still, acknowledged the Mexican heritage from which the family emerged by honoring some of the traditions prevalent in the community. For this reason, while analyzing data, the researcher employed a multi-level analysis process and ensured that triangulation of data was utilized to confirm the validity of the research results.

## Research Timeline

The research process began several months before the onset of the dissertation writing phase. Once the topic of study had been determined, the researcher investigated the available literature regarding the selected topic. Data was not collected from participants until the spring of 2014.

Data analysis began in the summer of 2014 with dissertation writing commencing shortly thereafter. The research timeline is delineated below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Research Timeline

Dates	Activities
June 2013-January 2014	Collected, read, analyzed literature including but not limited to topics related to parental involvement, community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992), Latinos, and education
February 2014	Obtained approval from university IRB and El Sur ISD to conduct the research project
May 2014	Modification made to IRB to change format from interviews to questionnaires for administrators and students
February 2014-June 2014	Collected data: observations, interviews, questionnaires, documents and archival data
June 2014-September 2014	Analyzed data and began to write dissertation
September 2014-November 2014	Wrote final draft of dissertation, defended dissertation, and wrote revisions

## Setting

### The Regional Context

This qualitative study took place in a community along the Texas-Mexico border. The Texas-Mexico border is composed of 43 counties and encompasses 1,254 miles from El Paso, Texas to Brownsville, Texas. In addition, this area of land serves as a dividing line between the United States and Mexico (Shapleigh, 2009). Situated at the southernmost tip of the Texas-Mexico border, lies the Rio Grande Valley. Comprised of four counties Starr, Hidalgo, Willacy, and Cameron, the Rio Grande Valley is home to a predominately Latino population. In the Rio Grande Valley, Latinos comprise more than three-fourths of the population as compared to less

than half in the state of Texas (Rodriguez, 2012). As a result, Latinos in the Rio Grande Valley are consistently connected to elements of their culture and heritage. In essence, it is a region of the country where residents are able to live transnational lives.

For residents of the Rio Grande Valley, the border between the United States of America and Mexico is not simply a line on the map where two countries meet. As noted by, Vargas-Valle, (2012), “Throughout the history of the northern border in Mexico, the population has experienced transborder relations linked to the everyday crossing of the southern US border to work, study, consume goods and services or visit friends and relatives” (p. 40). As a result of these transborder interactions, children are exposed to funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) which exist within Latino families and serve to supplement the skills and abilities needed for survival. Though it should be noted that simply living along the border does not indicate that all children regularly traverse between the two countries, however, while living along the border, children are indeed exposed to the nuances of living alongside another country. Living along the United States-Mexico border affords individuals with the opportunity to become immersed with an environment that is “grounded in a rich Mexican culture of strong family values, historical legacies, and the engagement and blending of English and Spanish” (Marquez & Romo, 2008, p. 3). For that reason, while in their communities, children are exposed to a knowledge base that is not necessarily present in the educational setting (Moll, et al., 1992).

### The Municipality

For the purpose of this study, the municipality, district, and schools involved in the research process were assigned pseudonyms. Therefore, they will respectively be regarded as the city of El Sur, El Sur Independent School District, and Cisneros Elementary. The city of El Sur, Texas

is situated along the border with Mexico. Over 180,000 people reside in this city (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). The majority of its residents, 93%, are regarded as Hispanic as indicated on the United States Census (2014). The educational attainment rates for college graduates with at least a Bachelor's Degree are low in comparison to that of the entire state of Texas. Only 15% of El Sur's residents, 25 years or older, have earned a Bachelor's Degree whereas 26% of Texans of the same age range have done so between the years of 2007-2011 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Consequently, the median household income in El Sur for the years of 2008-2012 was over \$31,000 whereas the median household income in the state of Texas is over \$51,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Finally, with a per capita income of \$13,500 during the years of 2008-2012, poverty in the city of El Sur is more than double the rate of poverty in Texas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). In El Sur, 35% of residents lived in poverty, during the years of 2008-2012, as compared to 17% of Texans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). However, despite a high rate of poverty and a low educational rate, according to the United States Census Bureau (2014), within the span of four years, the population of El Sur has grown by almost 4%.

### The Research Site

The El Sur Independent School District is situated on the Texas-Mexico Border. It is comprised of elementary, middle, high, and alternative schools and educates over 30,000 students yearly. Within this school district, 99% of students are regarded as Hispanic, and 96% are economically disadvantaged. Students, however, do attend school regularly as the attendance rate for this district is at almost at 100%.

The school selected for the study, Cisneros Elementary, has an enrollment of over 600 students (Texas Education Agency, 2013). At this campus, 99% of its students are Hispanic

(Texas Education Agency, 2013). Furthermore, 99% of the students are also regarded as economically disadvantaged (Texas Education Agency, 2013). Nearly half of the students enrolled at Cisneros Elementary School are English Language Learners and almost 70% of the students are categorized as at-risk (Texas Education Agency, 2013). In addition, the staff members reflect the ethnicity of the student body as close to 95% are categorized as Hispanic.

Furthermore, Cisneros Elementary participates in an academic enrichment program designed to provide educational and affective support for students who attend schools in areas designated as high need and low performing. For the purpose of maintaining anonymity and confidentiality, this program will be referred to as Centers for Kids Enrichment Program. Along with providing assistance to students, this enrichment program includes a family engagement component where parents are able to attend meetings on various topics relating to academics, health, and wellness.

### Participant Selection

According to Maxwell (2013), purposeful selection involves intentionally selecting “particular settings, persons, or activities . . . to provide information that is particularly relevant to your questions and goals, and that can’t be gotten as well from other choices” (p. 97). Cases that are considered to be rich in information tend to be those in which the researcher can uncover an abundance of insight about issues deemed important (Patton, 1990). For this research study, this type of sampling was utilized.

Because the school district has several campuses participating in the Centers for Kids Enrichment Program, assistance in identifying a potential research site was obtained from a gatekeeper. In this case, a school district administrator with professional expertise, knowledge, and experience regarding the school district’s efforts to promote parental engagement and/or



involvement was solicited for input. Upon receiving approval to conduct the study from the University of Texas at Brownsville Institutional Review Board and the El Sur Independent School District, the researcher scheduled a meeting with the district administrator to obtain background information regarding the goals of the enrichment program, initiatives being implemented which support parental engagement, as well as the gatekeeper's experiences with promoting home-school connections. During that meeting, the researcher requested a list of the five campuses within the district, participating in the enrichment program, with the highest levels of parental involvement.

Furthermore, from the five schools, with the highest parental participation rate, the researcher randomly selected the one school, involved in the enrichment program, which served as the research site. After meeting with the gatekeeper and identifying the site for the study, the researcher contacted the principal via email to obtain permission to conduct the study at the selected campus. The researcher specified the purpose of the study, timeline, and participants needed to carry out the research project. In addition, the participants involved in this study were comprised of four distinct populations from one school site; among them were school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Although the purpose of this study was not to conduct an evaluation of the enrichment program, involvement in the program was considered necessary for participants to be included in the study. Figure 3.1 exhibits the exchanges of information and interactions regarding parental involvement that were examined throughout the course of this study.

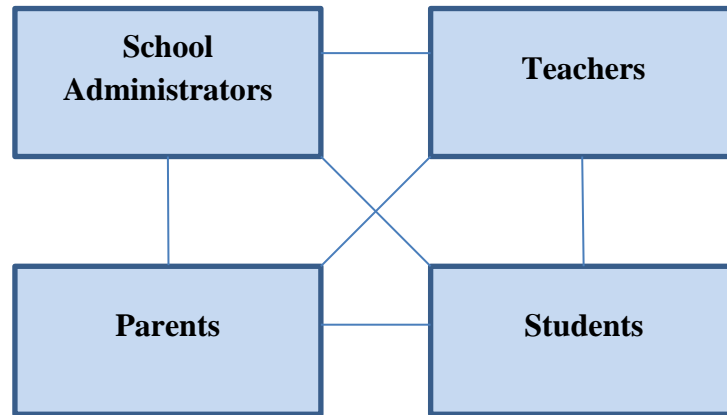


Figure 3.1: Exchanges of information

The researcher recruited three school administrators, four parents, three teachers, and four students for the research study. The criterion for selection of participants is delineated below.

- School administrators needed to serve in a leadership capacity and/or be designated as the principal, assistant principal, or instructional facilitator/dean of instruction at the research site.
- Teachers had to possess a minimum of three years of teaching experience at the site.
- Parents were considered eligible for participation in the research study if they had at least one child attending school at the research site and participated in at least one parent meeting or parent engagement session.
- Students, whose parents participated in the research study, were eligible for inclusion if they attended school at the research site.

#### Data Collection Methods

According to Yin (2006) the most frequently utilized sources of support found when conducting case studies are “documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations,

participant observations, and physical artifacts” (p. 116). Therefore, document analysis, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews; a semi-structured, face-to-face focus group interview; open-ended questionnaires; and observations were used as data collection tools. Furthermore, to identify the existence of the community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and the funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) that exist within students’ lives, data was collected from within the community, the school setting, and students’ families. This data was examined to uncover the knowledge, skills, and abilities that exist within the school, community, and home to support teaching and learning. Through the research study, the existence of common themes was discovered between the data sources as noted in Figure 3.2.

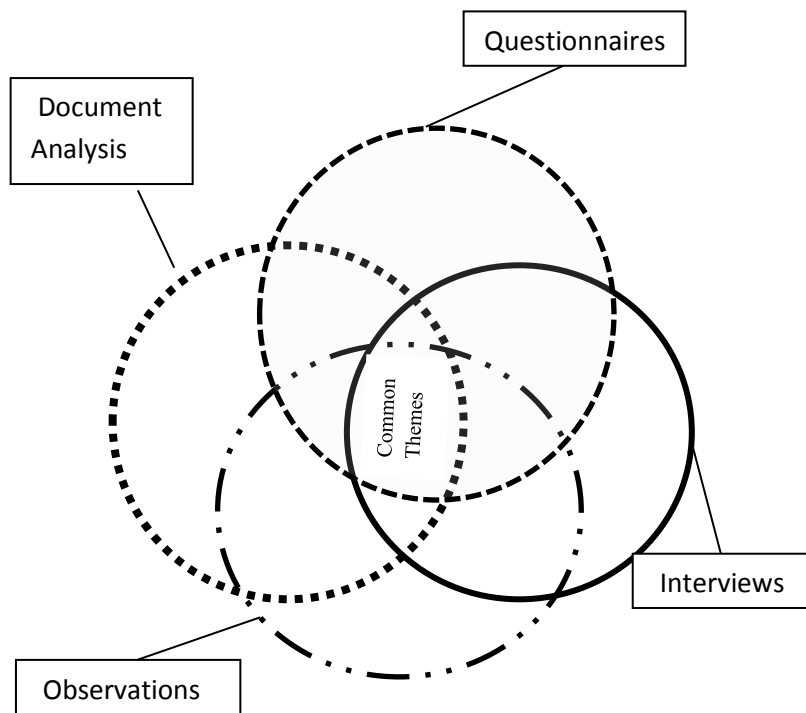


Figure 3.2: Existence of Common Themes in Data Sources

## Observations

Bogdan & Bilken (2007) indicate that there are five characteristics of qualitative research. These characteristics indicate that qualitative research must be “naturalistic, contain descriptive data, be concerned with the process, be inductive, and have meaning” (p.4-7). For data to be considered naturalistic, the researcher must collect data in its natural environment. While at the study site, the researcher implemented “grand tour and mini-tour observations” in an effort to answer the research questions (Spradley, 1980). Therefore, observations were conducted to gain an understanding of the district’s and school’s collective efforts for promoting connections between home and school. To accomplish this, the researcher attended three family engagement sessions designed to promote parental involvement held by the school district. While at the parent meetings, field notes describing the events of the meeting and topics covered throughout the session were collected. Through these observations, the researcher was able to enter the community and examine funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) present within the participants’ environments as evidenced through the family engagement sessions made available to parents.

## Interviews & Questionnaires

As specified by Marshall and Rossman (2011), when utilizing focus group interviews, “The interviewer creates a supportive environment, asking focused questions to encourage discussion and the expression of differing opinions and points of views” (p. 149). Therefore, in an effort to determine how schools utilize students’ funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to create connections between students’ lives and the school context, one focus group interview with teachers was conducted. Teachers involved in the enrichment program, who met the selection criteria, were asked to participate in an interview.

At this meeting, teachers were afforded the opportunity to respond to questions regarding their background experiences, factors affecting and promoting parental involvement, experiences with working with Latino parents, students' perceptions of family engagement in education, and the acknowledgement of culture in the classroom setting. An interview guide was utilized during this semi-structured, face-to-face, audio-taped, focus group session.

Parents of students participating in the enrichment program were also interviewed. When interviewing parents, the researcher utilized questions regarding how families formulate and utilize funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) in their everyday lives. Parents were asked questions related to their parenting techniques, support of their children's education, the levels of parental involvement at their child's school, and demographic information regarding their background. An interview guide was used and the semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were audio-taped.

Moreover, through the use of an open-ended questionnaire, input was obtained from three school administrators at the research site. The researcher solicited responses regarding questions spanning topics related to the levels of parental involvement at the campus, academic support of students, curriculum and pedagogy, and establishing connections between the home, school, and community. Consent was obtained from each participant. Upon being notified by the administrators that questionnaires were completed, the researcher went to the research site to collect the documents from the administrators.

Furthermore, open-ended questionnaires were distributed to children whose parents were being interviewed for the study. Within this questionnaire, the children were asked questions related to their home experiences, classroom instruction, and their parents' efforts to maintain

communication with the school. Consent was obtained from the parents and assent was gathered from the students prior to dispensing the questionnaire.

### Document Review

The data collection process also included collecting documents and archival data relevant to the research study in the attempt to answer the research questions. Marshall and Rossman (2011) specify that "...the analysis of documents is potentially quite rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting" (p. 160). Therefore, to gain insight regarding the parental involvement efforts set forth at Cisneros Elementary, documents and archival data were collected. Initially, the collection of documents and archival data began upon receipt of approval from the University of Texas at Brownsville's Institutional Research Board and the El Sur ISD. The districts' website was viewed to become familiarized with the demographics associated with the school district and campus. In addition, a print-out of the Texas Academic Performance Report (Texas Education Agency, 2013), School Report Card (Texas Education Agency, 2013), and System Safeguards (Texas Education Agency, 2013) for Cisneros Elementary were obtained from the Texas Education Agency website. The data consisted of documents (such as newsletters, articles, flyers, forms, agendas, handouts, etc.) utilized to generate and maintain communication and/or promote parental involvement between parents and the school. Additionally, the researcher reviewed the organization's campus improvement plan to become familiarized with the school's parental involvement initiatives. Copies of the original documents were made and, for data analysis purposes, names and recognizable material were removed to ensure confidentiality.

## Data Analysis

Yin (2009) indicates that “to ‘explain’ a phenomenon is to stipulate a presumed set of causal links about it, or ‘how’ or ‘why’ something happened” (p. 141). Therefore, the data was analyzed in two phases. The primary phase involved reviewing all sources of data including documents and archival data, observation field notes, interview transcriptions, and questionnaires. During this phase, four levels of data analysis were applied to the data collected in an effort to locate commonalities that existed between the data sources. The secondary phase of the data analysis process included synthesizing the results generated from the primary phase of analysis to locate themes present among all sources of data. Figure 3.3 below denotes the data analysis process utilized for this study.

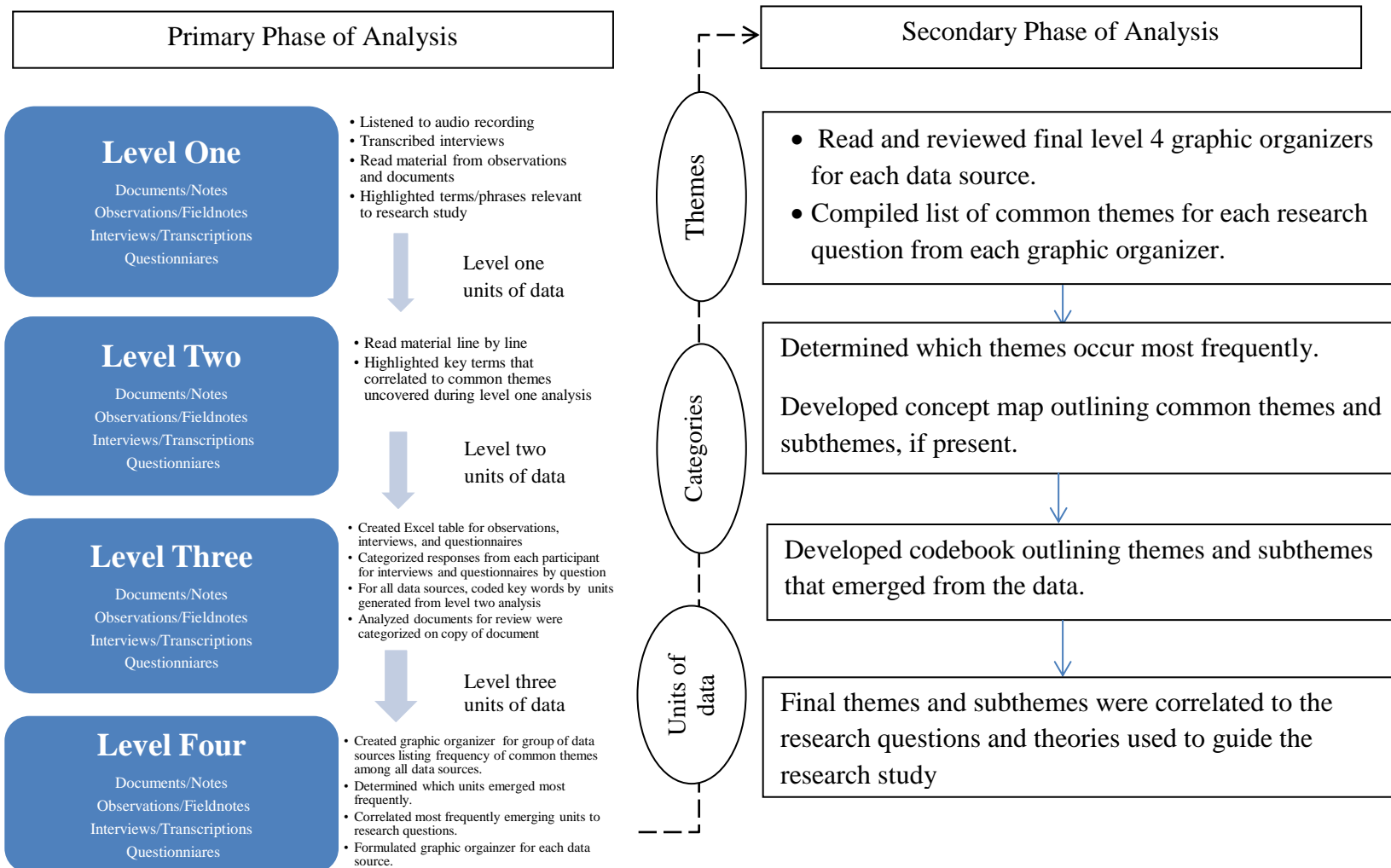


Figure 3.3: Data Analysis Process



## The Primary Phase of Analysis

The primary phase of analysis entailed reading, organizing, and analyzing the data collected to locate themes that exist within the information amassed. To conduct the primary phase of analysis each of the data sources had to be examined multiple times as four levels of analysis were utilized. After each of the data sources was scrutinized, a list of themes was composed.

## The First Level of Analysis

Maxwell (2013) notes that the first stage in conducting qualitative data analysis involves reading the data collected. As a result, for the purpose of this research study, the first level of analysis involved reading all of the data collected through the observations, questionnaires, interviews, and documents in their entirety. In addition, key terms relevant to the research questions were highlighted. However, prior to reading the interview data, it was necessary to transcribe the audio-recorded data. Before conducting the transcription, the interviews were reviewed. The researcher listened to the audio recordings to gain an overall understanding of the content as a whole during the first reading. The second listening occurred during the transcription process. Once the transcriptions were completed, the same process of reviewing the data and highlighting material supportive of the research questions was employed. Table 3.2 reflects a sample of the process undertaken to locate relevant data. Upon completing the analysis for each data source, a graphic organizer was generated listing the highlighted terms and the “units or segments of data that seemed important or meaningful in some way” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 107) that surfaced from all of the data collected. Because this was the first stage in the data analysis phase, units, which could potentially develop into categories and themes, were identified. This process resulted in five graphic organizers one for each data source

(observations, parent interviews, student questionnaires, administrator questionnaires, and teacher focus group interview).

Table 3.2: Level One: Excerpt of Analysis of Interview Transcript

Interview transcript	
Interviewer:	So, what languages are spoken in your home?
Parent #1:	in my home, Spanish and English. We are native Spanish speakers, but my daughter tends to speak more English. She understands Spanish, but doesn't really speak it.

### The Second Level of Analysis

The second level of analysis involved reading each line of the data collected to identify relevant terms. Words and phrases were deemed relevant if a correlation of the units of data uncovered during the first level of analysis were located. This process resulted in the creation of a graphic organizer for each data source (observations, documents, interview, and questionnaires) delineating the words/phrases that supported the units of data uncovered during the first level of analysis. Table 3.3 exhibits an excerpt of the analysis completed during the document review. A list of common units emerged from this process.

Table 3.3: Level Two: Excerpt of Analysis of Document Review

Document review: Level two analysis			
Artifacts	Information gleaned		
Flyers/ Pamphlets	types of support: academic & affective	encouraged students to attend school regularly	college & career readiness promoted
Notices to Parents	types of support: academic & affective	promotion of involvement in school sponsored activities	important information relayed to parents
Newsletters	solicit input from parents	physical involvement- parents attend meetings	dates of upcoming parent training sessions
Documents	98% Economically disadvantaged	100% Hispanic students	standardized test scores
Schedules	family engagement sessions offered once a month	students sessions offered four times a week	list of topics for sessions
CIP	forming partnership	promoting partnership	community wealth
Common Themes	communication: one- way, two-way	Types of support: Affective, academic, parental	education

### The Third Level of Analysis

The third level of analysis involved examining the data sources for existence of units of data uncovered during the second level of analysis. To complete this task, tables were created on Microsoft Excel to classify information obtained from the questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Responses collected from the questionnaires and interviews were arranged by question with each participants' response listed underneath the question. Data generated from the observations were listed by lines on an Excel spreadsheet. An excerpt of the process utilized

can be found on Table 3.4. For the document analysis, units of data were highlighted and classified on copies of the documents (flyers, notices, schedules, campus improvement plan, and pamphlets) that were reviewed.

Table 3.4: Level Three: Excerpt of Analysis of Observation Field Notes

Themes							OBSERVATION DATA COLLECTION DATE MARCH 29, 2014
Culture	Goals	Family	Social	Future	Opposition	Language	
			the family engagement specialist and the project director are standing outside				As I arrive at the venue, <b>the family engagement specialist and the project director are standing outside</b>
meeting is held in a school cafeteria			greeting attendees				of the cafeteria in the hallway <b>greeting attendees</b> The <b>meeting is held in a school cafeteria.</b>

#### The Fourth Level of Analysis

The fourth level of analysis involved reviewing the graphic organizers formulated from each level of analysis for each group of data sources (observations, interviews, questionnaires, and documents) to create a list of the units of data that emerged from each level of analysis. The units of analysis which emerged most frequently were then utilized as organizational categories. As noted by Maxwell (2013), organizational categories are regarded as “broad areas or issues that you want to investigate, or that serve as useful ways of ordering your data” (p. 107). As a result, the researcher employed the use of organizational categories to classify the data. The most frequently noted categories which surfaced from each level of analysis were listed on a new graphic organizer, as noted on Table 3.5. Then, the categories were correlated to the research

questions used to guide this study. A concept map was generated for each data source. The researcher did not rely on a preset inventory of codes to detect patterns.

Table 3.5: Level Four: Excerpt of Analysis of Administrator Questionnaire

Administrator Questionnaire: Level 4 Analysis			
Q1: Educators' Beliefs	Q2: Cultural Values	Q3: Support Progress	Q4: CCW & FOK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parents &amp; educators should share responsibility in students' education.</li> <li>• support at home</li> <li>• parents should be physically involved at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parents as advocates for education</li> <li>• welcoming environment at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support education</li> <li>• support academics</li> <li>• should inquire about progress regularly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community capital: experiential knowledge</li> <li>• school should promote community involvement</li> </ul>

Once the data was transcribed, the researcher did employ open coding to classify the data by categories (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw's, 1995). This involved sorting and categorizing distinct portions of lines in the transcriptions to identify patterns and connections between the data. As indicated by Marshall and Rossman (2011), "As coding progresses, the researcher sees the ways in which data/codes group or cluster together and behaviors and sentiments appear concomitantly or in some patterned sequence" (p. 213). If codes revealed patterns in the data, the researcher utilized clustering to identify relationships (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Once each source of data was analyzed, the researcher attempted to identify patterns between each of the cases included in the study. The data was analyzed multiple times to verify accuracy and to locate connections between participants' responses, observations, and documents.

### The Secondary Phase of Analysis

The secondary phase of analysis was implemented after the four levels of analysis were completed. At that time, all of the graphic organizers that were created, reviewed, and cross-

referenced. A list of the themes that emerged from the data was formulated. The list was reviewed to identify the most frequently occurring themes. A concept map outlining the themes and any subsequent subthemes located within the data was developed. To provide an explanation for why the themes were selected, a codebook which specified the themes, explanations/definitions of the themes, elements for inclusion and elimination of themes, and the subthemes that emerge from each theme were formulated. Finally, the final themes were correlated to the research questions and theories used to guide the research study.

### Validation of Data

To ensure validity, the researcher employed triangulation which involved gathering data from different individuals and settings through the use of varying methods (Maxwell, 2013). According to Maxwell (2013), triangulation “reduces the risk of chance associations and of systemic biases due to a specific method, and allows a better assessment of the generality of the explanations that one develops” (p. 128). Multiple levels of analysis were implemented with the data collected. The researcher examined interviews, questionnaires, observations, and documents to uncover the connections and patterns that materialized from the analysis of the four sources of data. Themes were, subsequently, developed, as a result. Emerging themes were compared among the sources of data in an effort to triangulate findings. Procedures for carrying out the study were included to allow for subsequent replication.

### Ethical Considerations

This research study was carried out in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Texas at Brownsville. Informed consent and and/or informed assent forms were obtained from all participants prior to engaging in the study.

Consent was obtained from the school district involved as well to ensure that permission to conduct the research study on district property was allowed. Individuals involved in the study were informed that participation was strictly voluntary. In addition, the researcher introduced herself as a school administrator for the El Sur Independent School District but assured parents that the research study was conducted by the investigator in her capacity as a graduate student at the University of Texas at Brownsville and not in her official capacity as a representative of the school district. Participants were informed that confidentiality would be maintained.

Data related to this study, including information containing names and other identifiable information, will be kept in a password protected hard drive in a locked cabinet in the office of the principal investigator for a minimum of three years. Hard copies related to the study will also be kept in a locked file cabinet. To ensure anonymity, all participants were assigned pseudonyms. The school district and research site involved in the study were designated a pseudonym. In the final publication of the study and all subsequent publications resulting from this research, the use of pseudonyms will be utilized.

### Summary

This chapter contained a description of the data collection techniques, data analysis procedures, methods for validating data, and the ethical considerations employed during the course of this study. This research study included the viewpoints solicited from three school administrators, four parents, three teachers, and three students as well as field notes collected during observations, and information gleaned from the document review. The following chapter includes data uncovered while attempting to answer the research questions used to guide this study.

## Chapter Four

### Results

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of a case study conducted at an elementary school in South Texas. The section opens with a discussion of the purpose of the study as well as a brief synopsis of the methodology utilized before, during, and after the research process. Then, a description of the findings from data obtained through observations, document analysis, interviews, and questionnaires is presented. In addition, the chapter contains a discussion of the themes uncovered through the data collection and analysis processes.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the knowledge, skills, practices and abilities present within Latino families that can serve to promote parental involvement and reinforce home-school connections to reinforce teaching and learning. The researcher also sought to examine the application of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) inside the academic setting to cultivate heightened levels of parental involvement and increase home-school relations. For this case study, research was conducted in a South Texas school district. The identified school district was composed of elementary, middle, and high schools as well as alternative campuses. The research site was an elementary school campus situated in a neighborhood with a predominately low socioeconomic composition and students of mostly Latino origin.



## Research Design

As previously stated, this case study was conducted in a school district situated on the South Texas border. The research site, an elementary school, was selected because it was regarded as a campus with a relatively high parental participation rate among schools throughout the school district that participated in an enrichment program, referred to throughout the study as the Centers for Kids program. To determine which school to include in the research study, the district administrator who oversaw the program for the entire district was contacted. She provided a list of the schools within the district that participate in Centers for Kids and have the highest levels of parental participation. Once the research site was randomly selected from the list, the school principal was contacted via email for permission to conduct the study at the campus. A meeting was conducted with the principal to review the data collection timeline and discuss the details of the study.

After determining which campus would serve as the research site, the data collection process ensued. The data collected for this study included documents and archival data, observations, interviews, and questionnaires. The researcher gathered and viewed documents and websites related to Cisneros Elementary to become familiarized with the campus, its demographics, and its policies and procedures. Three observations were conducted at district sponsored events held for parents to learn about the school district's attempts to promote partnerships between home and school. Moreover, information was solicited from four layers of stakeholders (school administrators, teachers, parents, and students) regarding district and campus policies and procedures as well as parental involvement initiatives and family dynamics. Three school administrators provided insight about their campus initiatives and district policy by completing questionnaires. Data regarding parental involvement and school programs was acquired from

three teachers through a focus group interview. Input was obtained regarding academic support, familial interaction, and campus efforts to promote parental engagement from four parents. Finally, four students, each with parents participating in the research study, provided responses to questions concerning their school and home activities on open-ended questionnaires.

Following the data collection process, the data was analyzed using a two phase method. Four levels of analysis resulting in the identification of themes and categories prevalent among all sources of data were employed. To determine validity, triangulation was utilized. Since the research study included document analysis, observations, questionnaires, and interviews, the researcher was able to cross reference the findings from each source with the others to identify common themes. Lastly, each participant was informed that confidentiality would be maintained at all times. Approval was attained from the University of Texas at Brownsville Institutional Research Board and the El Sur Independent School District prior to beginning the research study.

### Participants

As previously mentioned, this research study involved collecting research from four levels of stakeholders. All of the stakeholders who participated in the study were affiliated with Cisneros Elementary in one of the following capacities: administrator, teacher, parent, or student. All of the participants are of Latino descent. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant in an effort to maintain confidentiality.

At the campus level, three school administrators were contacted. Questionnaires were distributed to each administrator along with participant consent forms. Questions related to district and campus initiatives and parental involvement were included in the questionnaire. As noted in Table 4.1, each of the campus administrators possessed more than seventeen years as an

educator. Each of the campus administrators was a female Latina. All of the administrators have worked at Cisneros Elementary for more than three years, as well.

Table 4.1: School Administrator Participants

Name	Educational Background	Current Position	Years in Education	Years as Administrator	Years at Campus
Nancy Torres	Master's Degree	Principal	29	19	8
Alicia Marquez	Master's Degree	Assistant Principal	31	13	13
Lisa Montes	Master's Degree	Dean of Instruction	17	3	3

The study also included a focus group interview with three teachers at the campus. To recruit these teachers, an email was sent to the faculty at Cisneros Elementary denoting the details of the study as well as the researcher's contact information so that potential participants would be able to communicate with the researcher regarding any potential questions that might arise. After two failed attempts at securing participants, the researcher visited the campus during summer school to recruit participants. Three teachers volunteered to participate. Two female Latino teachers and one male Latino teacher participated in the study. All of the teachers participating in the study have taught at Cisneros Elementary for more than six years and attended El Sur ISD schools. The interview took place at Cisneros Elementary and was approximately thirty minutes in length. Table 4.2 denotes background information regarding the teacher participants.

Table 4.2: Teacher Participants

Name	Educational Background	Years in Education	Years at Campus
Mrs. Maria Mendoza	Bachelor of Arts	18	14
Mrs. Lisa Guerrero	Bachelor of Science	9	6
Mr. Jose Rivera	Bachelor of Science	6	6

Input from parents was also solicited for this study. Two parents were recruited at one of the district sponsored meetings observed during the data collection phase. The remaining parents were recruited at Cisneros Elementary School via the use of “purposeful selection” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 98). The interviews took place at Cisneros Elementary School and were approximately twenty-five to fifty minutes in duration. In total, two parents were Latino males and two parents were Latina females. The parents were of diverse educational backgrounds and all but one were married. Table 4.3 provides additional details regarding the parents involved in the study.

Table 4.3: Parent Participants

Name	Age	Highest Educational Level	Occupation	Marital Status	Total Number of Children
Mrs. Eliza Juarez	53	Master’s Degree	School Counselor	Married	2
Mr. David Gonzalez	43	Bachelor’s Degree	Unemployed	Divorced	4
Mr. Juan Rodriguez	42	Tenth Grade	Roofer	Married	5
Mrs. Norma Martinez	31	GED	Housekeeper	Married	2

Finally, four students were recruited for participation in the study. Each of the children involved in the study were children whose parents also participated in the research project. The

students were provided with the opportunity to complete a questionnaire regarding their education, home lives, and school activities. Two Latino boys and two Latina girls filled out the questionnaires. The majority of the students were fifth graders. One student was a fourth grader. Table 4.4 describes details regarding the student participants.

Table 4.4: Student Participants

Name	Age	Grade Level	Parent's Name
Katie Juarez	11	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	Eliza Juarez
Johnny Gonzalez	9	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	David Gonzalez
Alex Rodriguez	12	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	Juan Rodriguez
Julie Martinez	11	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	Norma Martinez

### Description of Findings

Qualitative data was gathered during the course of twenty-three weeks. For this research study, three observations were conducted. Documents and archival data reflecting campus and district initiatives promoting academic awareness and performance, parental involvement, family engagement, as well as home-school connections were also examined. Three administrator questionnaires were collected. A semi-structured, face-to-face focus group interview with three teachers was conducted. Four parent semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were completed. Finally, four student questionnaires were also obtained. The following sections detail the findings that emerged as a result of the data that was collected and analyzed for this study. An overview of the document analysis, observations, interviews and questionnaires is outlined. In addition, themes that surfaced and correlations to the research questions that surfaced through the data analysis process will also be presented.

## Document Analysis

Documents were collected reflecting the campus and district initiatives set forth by Cisneros Elementary and El Sur ISD to support students and parents. As previously mentioned, these documents included flyers, newsletters, articles, forms, agendas, handouts, notices, pamphlets, websites, etc. Documents were analyzed to determine the types of information that were present; subsequently, several themes surfaced. These themes encompassed types of support, opportunities for involvement, communication, and promoting awareness.

For instance, many of the documents contained information related to the types of support that were offered by the school district and the campus for parents and students. Opportunities for involvement in school, district, and community events were also located within the websites and/or documentation. In addition, documents and/or websites also served as a mode of communication where crucial information could be relayed to the community. The documents and/or websites also served to promote an awareness of academic opportunities and community resources.

## Observations

Three observations were conducted at district sponsored events during a span of four months. These events, subsidized by the Centers for Kids Enrichment Program, were held at various locations throughout the school district. When attending events, the researcher arrived at the location at least thirty minutes prior to its onset. This practice allowed the researcher to secure a seating area and stay on the sidelines and simply observe and take field notes about the events that transpired. For each event, the district recruited individuals to conduct presentations on various topics for the attendees. Additionally, two of the sessions included student

performances; another event involved an activity where fathers and sons could collaborate to complete a hands-on activity.

For the most part, the events were structured to allow presenters to interact with the audience. Participants were afforded opportunities to ask questions and/or provide commentary as the presentations progressed, because speakers consistently informed the participants that they should feel free to do so. As a result of these interactions and the other events taking place at the sessions, data relevant to this study was noted and, subsequently, analyzed using the field notes collected.

Several themes emerged from the analysis of the data. These themes included community involvement, the value of an education, the importance of family, the value of hard work, and involvement of parents. The data review revealed several instances where presenters made reference to the importance of obtaining an education. The concept of family and its relevance in the lives of students was also prominently discussed with participants during the presentations. Allusions to the concept of work and its value within the Latino community were also made. Finally, discussion was initiated about the involvement of parents in the lives and education of their children.

### Interviews

Four interviews were conducted with parents of students attending Cisneros Elementary School. Held during the summer of 2014, these semi-structured, face-to-face interviews took place at the campus. Participants had children that participated in the Centers for Kids Enrichment Program. These parents also attended at least one parental engagement activity throughout the course of the school year. During the interviews, parents shared responses to

questions regarding the education of their children, campus and district initiatives, their home lives, and parental involvement. After analyzing the data, the themes that emerged from the information collected included family dynamics, importance of education, parents' beliefs, culture and its role in the lives of families, support of parents, and the importance of hard work.

Similarly, a semi-structured, face-to-face focus group interview was held in the summer of 2014 at Cisneros Elementary. For this interview, three teachers were able to contribute their perceptions regarding campus and district initiatives, education, and parental involvement. The teachers that participated in the interview had worked at Cisneros Elementary for several years and were familiar with the demographics, inner-workings of the schools, and the community in which it was situated. During the interview, teachers were asked questions about the campus programs, their interactions with parents and students, and the levels of parental engagement at the school. The data analysis revealed that academic support by parents, communication with stakeholders, parental support, and community involvement were common themes that emerged from the information collected.

### Questionnaires

School administrators at Cisneros Elementary were provided with questionnaires regarding the practices established at their campus to support parental involvement, home-school connections, and the district's efforts to forge alliances with parents. The questionnaire consisted of sixteen questions and was distributed to the three school administrators at Cisneros Elementary with instructions for completion and the researcher's contact information should questions arise. The questionnaires were collected and the data was analyzed. Common themes that resulted from the analysis of the data included: stakeholders' responsibilities, types of



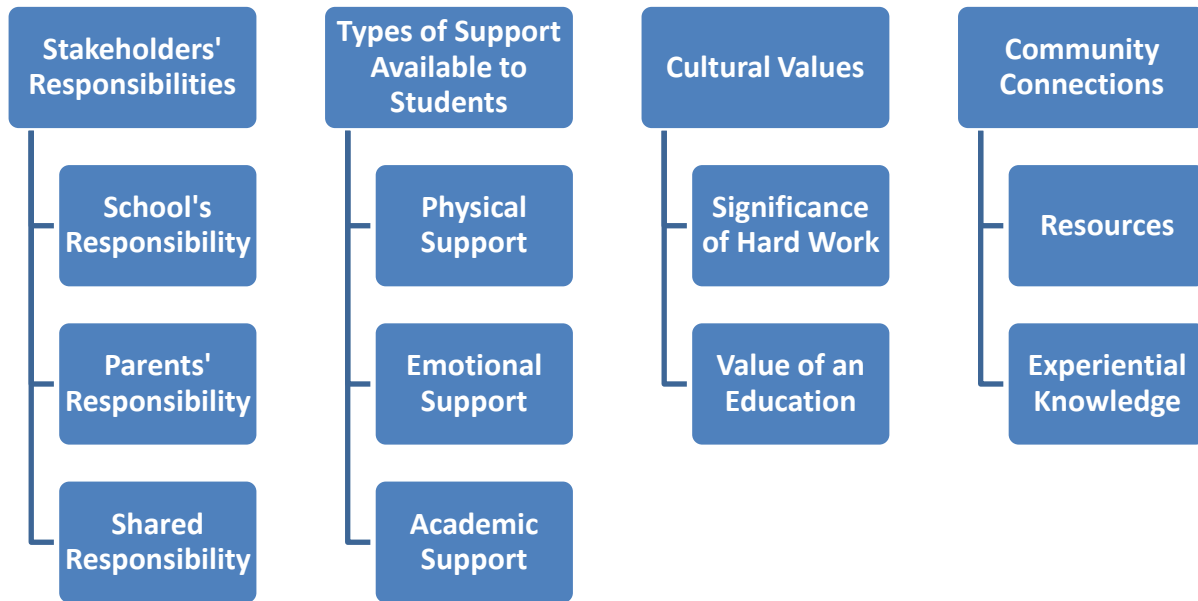
support, involvement of parents, importance of an education, and communication between home and school,

Student participants were also afforded the opportunity to share their input via questionnaires. The students who participated in the study were children of parents who had also agreed to participate. The questionnaires consisted of fifteen questions about their children's lives and experiences in relation to school and their families. The analysis of the data collected from these questionnaires resulted in the emergence of the following themes: support from parents, importance of an education, and the role of family in students' lives.

#### Emerging Themes

This research study involved collecting data from four sources: documents and archival data, interviews, questionnaires, and observations. The data was subsequently reviewed and analyzed. From this analysis, several themes emerged which were later categorized, subdivided, and outlined in a graphic organizer. Figure 4.1 lists the themes that were uncovered as a result of the data analysis process. Furthermore, a discussion of the themes and subthemes follows in the subsequent paragraphs.

Figure 4.1: Emerging Themes



### Stakeholders' Responsibilities

According to the data collected, educators consistently commented on the importance of stakeholders' roles and types of responsibility regarding students' education. School administrators and teachers alike shared common viewpoints. The data revealed that educators believed that three levels of responsibility existed: responsibilities shared by both the school staff and the parents, the responsibility of the parent, and the responsibility of the school.

*Shared responsibility.* The expectation throughout the El Sur Independent School District was that schools and parents would form partnerships to support students' education. At Cisneros Elementary, school administrators echoed the same sentiments. School administrators indicated that shared responsibility between parents, the school, and the district made a positive difference in establishing favorable educational relationships. Mrs. Montes, the Cisneros Elementary dean of instruction, indicated that the "District's policy regarding parental involvement is one that encourages the parents to interact with their children's school. It makes

it clear that our parents are equally important as the education system.” At the campus level, this expectation was carried forth by involving parents in school sponsored events. The administrators at Cisneros Elementary worked to support district initiatives. As noted, developing partnerships with parents was viewed as a crucial component in parental involvement. Mrs. Torres, school principal, commented, “Our district has an active parental-involvement department. Our policy has been to welcome parents into the school and make them a partner in educating their children.” With that said, at Cisneros Elementary, parents were able to become active participants in the school’s day to day activities and were afforded with opportunities to engage in the decision making process at the campus level. According to the assistant principal, Mrs. Marquez, “Parents are full partners with educators in education. They participate in school and community activities throughout the year. They are considered as an integral part of the school functions: CIP, SBDM, training...” Moreover, the administrators at Cisneros Elementary specified that parental involvement is essential to student success. Mrs. Torres, principal stated:

The parents are a key component in educating our students. If they can get them to school on time and make sure they have done their homework then we are already ahead. The parents have a big influence on student attitude and behavior and we need their support in educating their children.—Mrs. Torres, principal

Mrs. Marquez, assistant principal, commented:

Parental involvement is key. Students do better as parents are well-informed of the child’s responsibilities. Parents can better monitor their child's progress. As parents show interest, students’ work is focused and students are accountable to the parents’ expectations.

Mrs. Montes, dean of instruction, outlined:

The connection between home and school is an important one. Our purpose

is to educate students and prepare them to be responsible citizens in this demanding world. We are all stakeholders in our future (our students).

Subsequently, administrators at Cisneros Elementary shared the belief that educators and parents should be joint collaborators in the education of their students.

*Parental responsibility.* Though the educators at Cisneros Elementary recognized that the partnership between the school system and parents was vital to the education of students, they also contended that parents should independently bear some responsibility in ensuring that their children were successful. The educators that took part in this study believed that, when parents made an effort to become familiarized with the academic expectations, policies, and procedures set forth at the campus, parents were able to increase their awareness of what transpired within the school system. For instance, Mrs. Torres, the principal asserted that:

It's important for parents to know the goals and objectives that we have in each grade level. If they can support us by making sure their child keeps up their work and daily homework that's a big help.

Furthermore, educators, who took part in the study, also expected that parents would speak to their children about the value of an education and then consistently work with their children to set goals for the future. Establishing an educational foundation by engaging in goal-setting could help to guide students on their academic paths (Durand, 2010). Mrs. Montes, the dean of instruction at Cisneros Elementary, mentioned that, "Parents should be an advocate for education. They should encourage their children to earn the highest degree." In addition, Mrs. Marquez, assistant principal, proclaimed that,

Parents should oversee their child's academic performance, making sure they are well prepared physically, emotionally, and mentally. They should be ready to make profitable decisions that support academic

success. They need to make sure attendance is punctual and homework is done.

Moreover, administrators were not the only educators at Cisneros Elementary who believed that parents should assume some responsibility in supporting education.

Teachers at Cisneros Elementary School shared the same beliefs. The teachers that were interviewed for this research study also proclaimed that parental involvement was vital.

According to Mr. Rivera, teacher, when parents were actively involved in their child's education, they were likely to see positive results. He further affirmed:

I think it's really important like they say the first school is home. I think that the more they get involved in their child's education, I think the performance speaks for itself for the most part. I think that when they do come during Open Houses that it's important that you show them that these kids are doing well because their parents are more involved. I think that if you show them through example of how their child can progress. I think that is the best way to show them that they're child can become better if they are involved more.

By providing parents with examples of how their involvement can improve their child's education, Mr. Rivera asserted that parents were able to see for themselves the impact that their support and involvement made on their child's academic advancement. Although parents were expected to accept some responsibility in educating their children, educators also indicated that the school had to also work independently of parents to achieve the same task.

*School's Responsibility.* As the entity entrusted by the community to provide instruction to its children, educators were cognizant of the size of the task. Both administrators and teachers alike commented on the various techniques utilized to work with parents and students. First and foremost, the principal of the campus, Mrs. Torres, commented on her role in involving parents at her campus. She indicated, "I believe that it needs to start with the principal, so my attitude

toward them should always be positive and welcoming.” The rest of the administrative staff at Cisneros Elementary School echoed this same sentiment and also believed that parents should be made to feel welcomed while at the campus. For example, the assistant principal, Mrs. Marquez, shared the Cisneros Elementary educators’ collective view on parental involvement. She noted, “Parental involvement is highly encouraged at our school. We have an open communication and activities that involve parents: parent classes, committee involvement, and assistance in direct classroom functions.” Mrs. Montes also declared,

We welcome and encourage parents to be part of our school by inviting them to “Meet the Teacher” night. We have an open door policy for our parents to communicate with administration as well as teachers (during non-instructional hours). They are asked and signed up to be parent volunteers so they may assist teachers in the classrooms.

Ensuring that parents knew that their presence was both needed and wanted at the campus was of utmost importance to educators at Cisneros Elementary. Mrs. Montes later denoted, “I believe that we should encourage parents to be involved. We should make them feel that we are listening to their concerns. They are stakeholders as well.” Along similar lines, educators also reminded parents that their assistance with academic affairs was warranted.

Notably, the teachers at the campus spoke of the importance of relaying to parents the difference made by their involvement in their children’s education. Mr. Rivera asserted, “We stress it to the students also how important it is for the parents to be there. I think that helps a lot that that they tell their mom, ‘You really have to come.’” Educators also communicated to parents how much they relied on their assistance to academically support children while they were at home. Mrs. Mendoza, teacher, stated, “I try to get them to help me out a lot with homework getting them to help their child with homework, their practice at home, letting them know how they are improving, and not improving and maybe help out with projects that the

students are assigned.” Finally, educators at Cisneros Elementary specified that as a campus they held a duty to the parents and students to ensure that school was a place where students could receive a sound education, and parents could work with its administrative staff and teachers to ensure that students’ abilities are maximized to their fullest potential.

### Types of Support Available to Students

Analysis of the data collected indicated that parents provided students with different types of support. This support in turn served to reinforce students’ educational advancement in school. For the purpose of this study, support was noted as any emotional and/or physical actions, activities, and efforts set forth by parents to reinforce academic progress in school.

Three types of support were identified. They were physical support, emotional support, and academic support. Physical support included physical presence at school sponsored events. Emotional support included activities associated with providing children with affective guidance and encouragement to do well in school and in life. Next, academic support included working with children at home to assist with schoolwork and forging connections with teachers to become informed with academic expectations to be able to assist their children at home. The subsequent paragraphs describe the types of support provided by parents.

*Physical support.* As previously mentioned, at Cisneros Elementary, parents were afforded the opportunity to participate in school sponsored events. While some of these events took place at the campus, still others transpired off campus at other locations throughout the school district. For instance, the Centers for Kids Program hosted parent meetings and community events during the school year. These events were designed for parents of students participating in the Centers for Kids Program but also open to parents of students enrolled in the district who wanted to

become familiarized with the topics discussed at these events. Attendees were never turned away for lack of enrollment in the Centers for Kids Program. Specifically, the parents who took part in this study participated in at least one event. For instance, when asked during the interview if they attended school sponsored events, the parents shared their responses. Mrs. Juarez, the parent of a fifth grade student, and also an employee at Cisneros Elementary asserted:

Yes, I do. Well, she had a program. Well, she danced for the school. She was in the drill team and I attended. I went and saw her, and I had to rush over here and pick her up. She played soccer. I didn't go to her practices, because they were during school time. I went to the games, and I supported her. The Centers for Kids Program had a mobile so I went there, and, you know, if she's at special programs, then I'm going to be there with her. No, well her dad came to the soccer game ... and he came to the Centers for Kids Program. We had a Christmas program, and he came to that. But, because of his work schedule, he usually does not. But, when he's off, he does attend.

Interestingly, in this study, mothers seemed to participate in school sponsored events more frequently than the fathers did. Mrs. Martinez, mother of two Cisneros Elementary students, stated that she actively participated in events throughout the school year both at the campus level and at the district level. She specified in Spanish:

*Si a todas juntas voy a el que hace El Sur ISD en el Family Center dos juntas por año...porque como mi niña grande es GT soy la representante de eso y voy y tomo la información y vengo y reparto en la junta los miércoles que tenemos por semana. Pues las de Centers for Kids pues a todas. Pues más que nada bueno de primero cuando tuvimos a Alma Zapata vio que no sabíamos nada. Bueno aprendí de cosas. Más que nada me prepare que no sabía que le pueden ayudar a mi hija la grande como los grados y saber que en tal año tiene que aplicar para eso y los grados que tienen que tener... cuando vas a la Glanville que ya llevas ciertos grados...es como un puntaje que necesitan tener; andale si, los créditos...tengo todo apuntado.....y también le trato porque de primero si batalle para acoplarme de lo que es la escuela...porque cuando eres nueva tienes que aprender.*



Translation:

Yes, I go to all of the meetings that El Sur ISD makes at the Family Center... two meetings per year. Because my oldest daughter is GT, I am the representative. So I go and get the information, and I come back and share it at the Tuesday meetings that we have each week. Well, the Centers for Kids meetings, all of them. More than anything, well at first when we had Alma Zapata she saw that we didn't know anything. I didn't know. Well, I learned about things; More than anything I learned that my daughter could get help with her grades and, to know that in certain grade levels, she has to apply for this and what grades she has to have and when she goes to Glanville that she's already taking certain grades with her...like some points that she needs to have...the credits. I've got it all written down and that's the way it is. And, I try because at first I did struggle to get accustomed to what school is like. .because when you're new, you need to learn.

As noted, Mrs. Martinez indicated that she attended meetings to become more familiarized with the programs that the district offers to better help her children through the academic process.

For Mrs. Martinez, attending meetings was an opportunity to learn more about the school district and education in general as a whole. Mrs. Martinez also volunteered at Cisneros Elementary during the school year. Mrs. Martinez spoke of her experiences and reasons for participating and volunteering at Cisneros Elementary:

*Pero más que nada por la experiencia que yo tuve que mi mama nunca fue a la escuela y yo veía como otras niñas se sentían muy seguras y podían levantarse a la hora que querían. Yo sentía que ellas tenían mucha seguridad y que sus mamas de arrepiente allí estaban. Entonces yo siempre tuve eso y igual yo siento que al verme aquí como cuando la chiquita pasa y me mira y yo estoy ayudando. Y sabe la grande que cualquier cosa que pasa yo lo voy a saber. A veces le ha dicho cosas y dice, “¿Y tu como sabes? Ya vez todo voy a saber y tienes que decirme.*

Translation:

Well, more than anything because of the experience that I had that my mother never went to the school and I would see how other girls

felt very confident and were able to get up at the time that they wanted to. I felt that they had much confidence and their mothers all of a sudden were there. Then, I always had that (idea) and similarly I feel that when they see me here like when the little one passes by and she sees me and I'm helping here. And, the older one knows that whatever happens I will find out. There have been times that I have told her things and she's asked me 'How do you know?' See I know everything so you have to tell me.

According to Mrs. Martinez, volunteering allowed her children to know that she was within reach if the need to contact her arose. Her experiences of seeing other mothers at her school as a child served to motivate her to become active in her own children's education.

On the other hand, some of the other parents, who were interviewed for this study, attended school events for other reasons. Markedly, some parents tended to participate more when their children were involved in activities. Mr. Rodriguez, father to three students that attended Cisneros Elementary, commented in Spanish when asked if he attended school sponsored events:

*Pues, no solo que ellas tengan un actividad aquí en la escuela que se juntan, que tengan algo para los padres, pero casi no. Que ellos participen en algo es cuando venimos seguido.*

Translation:

Well, no only if they have an activity here at school where they get together, that they have an event for the parents, but not really. If they participate in something, that's when we attend regularly.

In some cases, parents denoted that their participation was sporadic and contingent on whether they received announcements on upcoming events from school or not. One of the parents, Mr. Gonzalez was a divorced father of four children who shared custody of his children with his ex-wife. He noted that because he only had custody of his children on the weekends, he did not always receive notices to school sponsored events. Mr. Gonzalez proclaimed:

Well, I participated in the Centers for Kids Symposium. I haven't participated in most of the meetings, because, like I said, I usually

don't get the notices. I did participate in taking my son to the flag football, but that's about it.

Mr. Gonzalez later went on to comment that he speaks to his children about attending school events. He indicated:

I tell them. For example, I tell them that their school has a lot of activities for parental involvement that I should be aware of them more often. Sometimes, I don't get the flyers, and I wish that I did. There's a lot of great topics that I wish I could go to.

Though the parents involved in this study specified that they, for the most part, make an effort to remain physically involved with the school system to provide support, they also strive to emotionally support their children in their educational pursuits.

*Emotional support.* Parents recognized that school can be challenging for their children. For this reason, the parents, who took part in this project, took the time to provide their children with the emotional support that they felt was necessary to affectively guide them onto what they considered to be the right path. Whether it came in the form of leading by example, speaking to their children, or engaging in conversations with their children's teachers, these parents noted that providing emotional support was essential. With that said, Mr. Gonzalez commented that his responsibility to provide his children with an education is:

... one of the most important responsibilities that I have that I encourage them to study as hard as they can so they can become whatever they intend to become in the future, That is my main responsibility...that they continue their education. Look out for each one of them and for each other and to always be polite and to always do their best. That's all I ask of them to do their best.

At times, parents referenced their own beliefs, experiences with education, and encounters with earning a living to try to motivate their children to do well in school. Mrs. Juarez, parent, denoted:

Well, as a parent, I think that I have to provide the supplies the stuff that she needs. I need to contact the teacher, you know. Not for the academics cause my daughter is a very bright child; like is there something that you need as a teacher and things like that. And, uh I have to make sure that she goes to sleep early. I have to make sure that she wakes up early and she's ready for the day. Since I'm in education, I've seen these children come in and they're half asleep cause they go to sleep at midnight. My responsibility is to prepare my child at home so that she can function in school.

For other parents, teaching their children that maintaining proper behavior at school was vital to the success of their education. Mr. Rodriguez specified that his responsibilities were:

*Pues asegurarme que vengan a la escuela, que se porten bien, y que hagan su trabajo sus tareas, y que tengan lo que necesiten.*

Translation:

Well, to be sure that they come to school, that they behave, and that they do their work and homework, and that they have what they need.

Mrs. Martinez echoed the same sentiments when she commented that her responsibility was to teach her children not to disrespect their teachers and to maintain proper behavior at school as well as how to avoid bullying. In Spanish, Mrs. Martinez stated,

*Pues en no faltar el respeto a los maestros...educativamente o nada mas como parte lo que le tengo que enseñar de la escuela; bueno por ejemplo en lo social es el respeto...también acerca de cómo se ha oído mucho acerca de lo bullying yo hablo con mi hija y le digo que ni sea ni que se deje ser...*

Translation:

Well, not to lose respect for their teachers. Educationally or simply part of what I need to teach them about school. Well, for example, socially, it's respect and such, and since there has been so much talk about bullying, I talk to my daughter about that. I talk with my daughter and tell her not allow herself to be bullied and not to engage in it...

Teachers and administrators at Cisneros Elementary have also been witness to the emotional support provided to the students by their parents. They spoke of instances where parents

inquired about their child's progress at school. Mrs. Guerrero, teacher, noted that parents often approach her to find out how their child is doing in her class. She said:

I think the parents are very involved in that they want their kids to do better especially in their grades. They're always asking even me for PE they ask me, "How is my son doing?" Is he behaving better? You know, little things, but they ask. They'll come and ask...a lot of involvement with the kids....

Similarly, school administrators commented on being asked, by parents, questions about students' progress. Mrs. Marquez, assistant principal, commented that parents tend to ask questions such as, "Are they passing? What subjects are challenging? Is my child successful? Is my child safe? What does my child need?" Mrs. Torres spoke of parents inquiring "how they can help their children at home" to be more successful at school.

In summary, the parents, teachers, and administrators who took part in this research study commented on Cisneros Elementary parents' willingness to provide their children with emotional support to reinforce students' experiences at school. In some cases, parents spoke to students about their own experiences, maintaining proper behavior, and academics. Just as parents opted to provide their children with emotional support at home, the parents of students who were involved in this study also assisted their children with academics at home.

*Academic support.* Academic support refers to parents' willingness to work with their children within the home to assist with learning and/or schoolwork. Creating connections with teachers and school staff to foster an awareness of instructional expectations to be able to help their children at home also signaled a desire by parents to provide children with educational support. Parents sometimes drew on their past experiences to know when to provide their children with academic support.

Mrs. Juarez, an educator and parent of a Cisneros Elementary school student, commented on her experience as a teacher and how she parlayed that knowledge into working with her child at home. Mrs. Juarez commented:

Well, I was a PK teacher for many years. So, when my daughter was like PK age, I did a lot of things that I would do with my students, and as she's progressed in school, like especially the math, I was never a math whiz. So, the math is getting harder for me. But, you know, I used to see students where the parents didn't interact so the child is totally lost in the school environment.

Similarly, Mrs. Martinez indicated that she worked with her child at home as well. She noted that her primary reason for working with her child was to help her get ahead in her studies. Mrs. Martinez commented in Spanish;

*...En lo académico siempre trato de avanzar. Como la chiquita que apenas está aprendiendo a leer, estoy con ella en la casa. Que me leía aquí, que leía los libros... así siempre que sepa más de lo que va en su grado...*

Translation:

...Well, in academics, I always try to get ahead. For instance, like the little one who is just learning to read, I'm with her at home. Read this; read the books. That way she knows more than what is covered in her grade level.

In addition, Mr. Rodriguez, a parent, stated that he reviewed his children's report cards and maintained contact with his children's teachers. In addition, he mentioned that because his daughters liked stories that they read to them. In Spanish, Mr. Rodriguez revealed:

*Con sus tareas, asegurarme que tengan su trabajo--sus report cards que todo está bien y cuando venimos aquí. Mi esposa o yo les preguntamos que si tienen problemas con ellos, que nos hablen, lo que pueda yo ayudar. A las gemelas si a ellas les gusta mucho los cuentos. Les gustan los cuentos y nos ponen que le léanos.*

Translation:

With their assignments, make sure that they have their work—their report cards that everything is good and when we come, my wife and I, we ask them if they are having problems with them that they can call us and I'll help in whatever I can. The twins do like fairy tales. They like fairy tales, and they ask us to read to them.

Mrs. Martinez, despite not being fluent in English, also stated that she made it a point to communicate with her children's teachers regarding assigned schoolwork and homework. She indicated:

*Bueno, por ejemplo, siempre acostumbro hablar con la maestra y preguntar con qué es lo que batallo más o que es lo que necesita que le puedo ayudar de lo que está aprendiendo---más con la chiquita porque con la grande pos ella ya está muy bien. Pero la chiquita es la que necesita más ayuda y en eso estoy. Ya vez las palabras; ya ve que ahorita tienen que saber las rimas de lo final. Entonces me pongo yo en la casa hacer eso con ella.*

Translation:

Well, for example, I'm always accustomed to talking to the teacher and asking about what my child struggled the most with or what she's learning that she needs me to help with--more with the little one because the older one is doing well. But the little one is the one that needs more help and that's where I'm at. You see the words; you know right now they need to know the end rhymes so then I work with her at home to get that done.

Sometimes parents did not necessarily directly work with their children to complete their assignments. At these times, parents instead ensured that their children had the necessary resources to accomplish their scholarly tasks or simply opted to inquire about the types of assignments that were dispensed by the teachers.

... I ask every day, "What do you have for homework?" because my daughter is in the GT program and sometimes she's assigned these projects. So, I tell her, "Don't wait to the last minute," cause I was that last minute person, and I don't want my daughter like that. So ok what do we have to buy? She had the last project that she brought to school, a diorama about a story that she read, so I took her downtown and we bought little animals. I called a retired librarian, and she brought what she had, and then her dad cut a board. So it was a family project.

We all got involved, and so, she got a hundred on the project and uh so whatever the school is asking I'm asking her and I'm not pushing her to do it but I'm telling her. Whatever you need to do, if you need to research it on the computer, do it, and don't wait until Sunday night when it's due Monday morning. So, I'm teaching her that responsibility where it's do it, get it out of the way, and you're free to go.

Mr. Gonzalez commented on his children's abilities to use the resources that are available at home to complete their homework. He acknowledged:

We have internet so they can go on and check homework sites that can help them look up information for their reports or studies or things of that nature.

The students, involved in study, reinforced their parents' comments regarding their willingness to provide academic support. The majority of them spoke about their parents instilling structured play time and homework time for them at home. Some indicated that they went outside to play first and then came in to do homework while others contended that they did their homework first and then played afterward. For instance, Katie, age 11, indicated, "If we have homework, I do it first; and if we don't, I play with my electronics;" whereas, Alex, age 12, revealed that after arriving home from school "...I sit down, I eat, I go and play, and I talk about school." Additionally, all of the students stipulated that their parents had either provided them with advice regarding school or assisted them with homework. Table 4.5 below delineates the students' responses to two questions on the questionnaire regarding their interactions with their parents and advice given to them by their parents.



Table 4.5: Student Responses

Student Participants	Do you talk to your parents about what happens at school? Your grades? Your school work?	Tell me about a time when your parents gave you advice about school.
Katie	Yes, I do.	When my mom taught me an easy way to do the multiples of nine.
Johnny	Yes, I tell them how was my day	When I had trouble on my homework
Alex	Yes, I do. I talk to them about my grades on school or how will I do.	The time my parents gave me advice was when we were getting ready for the STAAR and he told me to stop fooling around and respect your adults and get ready.
Julie	Yes.	Whenever I have problems with friends or teachers my mom helps me

As has been stated, parents involved in this study generally provided support to their children. For the most part, all of the parents made an effort to become involved in their child’s education. Some of the parents actively participated in school sponsored events on a regular basis. All of them provided their children with emotional support by offering their children words of encouragement and guidance. These parents also worked to academically support their children by assisting them with assignments, projects, inquiring about children’s educational progress, or forging connections with school staff to become more cognizant of academic expectations. To conclude, providing students with support was not the only practice that emerged as a result of the data analysis. The existence of cultural values also arose from the data collected.

### Cultural Values

The data also revealed cultural values to be significant within the community surrounding Cisneros Elementary. For the purpose of this study, cultural values are defined as actions,

principles, and beliefs that are held in esteem by a group of people of similar backgrounds. The values that consistently emerged through the analysis of the data were the significance of hard work and the value of an education. A discussion of the values will be presented in the subsequent paragraphs.

*Significance of Hard Work.* The significance of hard work was a value that consistently appeared throughout the data collection process. During the observations conducted at school sponsored events, speakers consistently referred to the importance of working hard to achieve one's dreams. Presenters talked about their struggles to survive and subsequently obtain an education. When conducting interviews, parents and teachers noted that hard work was needed to get ahead in life. Working hard to achieve one's dreams was a message relayed by parents to their children across the generations as indicated by the research participants. Mrs. Juarez, parent, talked about how she rewards her daughter for doing well in school. She stated

She got a perfect score on the STAAR, so I always try to reward her for her hard work. I don't tell her, if you get this grade, I'm going to give you this. Once she got it, then, I said ok this is what I'm going to do for you. There is never a bribe so that she can perform, but once she has performed then there is a reward.

Other parents commented that they generally speak to their children about how working hard can make a favorable impact in their lives. Mr. Gonzalez mentioned that he tells his children:

It is very important to be always honest, hardworking, and you know to be diligent in whatever they are doing to never give up and, if they ever need anything, that I will be there to help them out in anything that they need.

Mr. Rodriguez also affirmed that he tells his children that they need to be prepared for the future and for all that life has to offer. He pointed out, in Spanish, that he tells them

*Pues que tienen que estar preparados para las dificultades que hay en la vida y buscar la mejor solución. Luchar por lo que quieres. Lograr lo que tú quieres.*

Translation:

Well that they have to be prepared for the difficulties that exist in life and look for the best solution. Work for what you want. Achieve what you want.

Mr. Rodriguez also mentioned that he learned the value of hard work from his father and that he, in turn, tries to teach his children that hard work can help them get ahead.

*Mi papa siempre nos enseñó el deporte y el trabajo. Mi papa...mira mi papa le sabe hacer de todo y siempre que había trabajo siempre nos hablaba, 'vengan para que aprendan y fíjese como se hace porque algún día van a necesitar' ... siempre nos traía con él, de trabajo de carpintería, de albañilería, de plomería. El construyó la casa de nosotros en México. El la levanto nada más consiguió quien que le hiciera la placa y lo que es el foundation y todo nosotros lo hicimos. Pues poco porque en ese tiempo nos llevaba con el pero no nos ponía mucho presión. Él quería que anduviéramos allí pero si no teníamos mucha interés en algo no nos obligaba hacerlo porque él dice que aprendes más cuando quieres que cuando te obligan. También, cuando hay oportunidad, los llevo con migo para que miren mi trabajo y lo que es el trabajo y como mi trabajo es en el sol para que ellos miren que no es fácil si no estudian. Como yo me salí de la escuela... También la niña ha ido conmigo y el mayor. No pues hasta ahorita prefieren estudiar.*

Translation:

My father...look my father knows how to do everything and every time that he had work he would call us so that we can look at what he was doing and learn. He would say "Look at how this is done because one day you're going to need a house" and this and that and he always took us with him... carpentry, masonry, plumbing work. He built our home in Mexico and he raised it. All he did was find someone to do the framing, and the foundation, we did. Well, a little because during that time he would take us with him, but he really didn't place that much pressure on us. He wanted us to be with him, but, if we weren't interested, it he wouldn't obligate us to do it. He says that people learn more when they want to do something than when they're obligated to do it. When there is an opportunity, I also take them with me to work. Since my work

is in the sun I want them to see that it's not easy if they do not study.  
Since I left school...Even my daughter has gone with me and my oldest son.  
Up until now, they prefer to study.

Similarly, the teachers interviewed for this study also claimed that hard work was a valuable asset. They indicated that hard work was essential to progressing in life. Lisa Guerrero, teacher, added that one must, "Work hard and never give up. Just look ahead and keep going even if you fall get up and keep going." Mrs. Mendoza shared, "I like working, and this is the best thing that you can do. When you know you're working, and you enjoy it. Yeah, that's what they always say to find what you like and to get paid for it. Make a difference." The teachers noted that they carry forth this message of working hard to achieve one's dreams to their students. Hard work was not the only value held in high regard by the participants and witnessed in school sponsored events during the observations. Education was also viewed as a significant value within the community.

*Value of an education.* The participants involved in the study regarded an education as a means to an end out of poverty. To receive an education, in some instances, was viewed as the pinnacle of success. For the most part, stakeholders relayed this message to the children of Cisneros Elementary and more specifically to the children involved in this research project.

At the events sponsored by the Centers for Kids Program, presenters consistently reinforced to attendees the need for students to graduate from high school and subsequently attend college. In fact, one of the meetings was held in a high school lecture hall that was decorated with pictures of students on field trips to universities across the United States and university flags and memorabilia. Parents and attendees were informed of how vital it is to the students' futures that they attend college and graduate with at minimum a four year degree. Reference was regularly made to improving the community with a degreed workforce and population.

At the campus level, teachers noted that their own parents instilled in them an appreciation for education and the expectation that receiving an education could significantly alter their lives.

Mrs. Mendoza, teacher, offered the following comments:

I guess with me it was just it was never really an option. You know, my parents, they weren't really the type to push and push, but it was just understood. They migrated from Mexico. We were born here and, you know, you have an education. You have all the flexibility and the ways to do it. It was never really a question of what you're going to do. That's pretty much it.

Mrs. Guerrero, another teacher, talked about how she motivated herself to go to college.

She explained:

Basically, I wanted to better myself and have a degree. I'm the oldest one in my family so that kinda made it more like I'm the responsible one. I need to set the example. So, that was one of my biggest motivations.

Mr. Rivera shared a similar quip. He contended that his desire to improve his own family's future was his main motivation to go to college. He said, "Well, I was a young parent, and that was mostly my motivation making sure that I was responsible enough to raise my kids and get money. That was definitely a big motivator for me." While some of the participants motivated themselves to improve their educational lots in life, others received advice from their parents.

Mrs. Juarez, parent, talked about how her mother pushed her and her siblings to finish high school. According to Mrs. Juarez:

Well, my parents were migrant workers. My mother was an eighth grade dropout so to my mother a high school diploma was the ultimate thing so they stopped migrating when I started fourth grade. I came in late that first grade. I think we came in October, but that was the last year that they migrated. We were four children, and her goal in life was for us to finish high school, and we all did. So, the lesson that I learned from my mom was that an education is the best thing that they could give us. That was there

inheritance; there was no money, because they were dirt poor. Education was the most important thing in their family.

Similarly, Mrs. Mendoza, teacher, stipulated that parents sometimes used themselves as examples when speaking to their children about the importance of obtaining an education. Mrs. Mendoza related:

Well, one of the things that I've always seen no matter where I've been teaching is that the parents are always emphasizing the importance of education, and I don't believe that's Latino, you know, I think it's overall. Most of the time the parents wanting the best for their kids and that's one similarity that I see throughout. Parents are always wanting the best. Trying to help as much as they can with the little they have. One of the things that I do notice is that sometimes the parents that have the least are the ones that try the hardest and the ones that will support you the most.

Mr. Rivera, also shared his experience and stated:

I think parents, for the most part, they use themselves as examples for the most part. They say "I want you to be more than me, do better than me, or go to school." I think that pushes a lot of kids to make sure they finish school. You know you're going to be the first one to finish school or go to college. You're going to be the first one to go to college. I think as parents that's what I want more for my kids. That helps.

Mr. Rodriguez, parent, asserted that he tried to demonstrate to his children that an education is important. In Spanish, he commented:

*Como le dije hace rato mostrarles que si no estudian van a andar en el sol como yo.*

Translation:

Like I said earlier, teach them that if they don't study they will be out in the sun like me.

He further mentioned that when he was younger he dropped out of high school and spoke of his experiences attending United States schools as a recent immigrant. Mr. Rodriguez declared:

I went to Fresno Intermediate and Glanville High School. I dropped out in ninth grade. Elementary school in Mexico. It was kind of hard here cause I didn't know no English when I came here. I was twelve when I came here. It was kinda hard cause different kind of culture and uhh people treat you differently since you're coming from Mexico. The teachers expect you to learn English, as fast as the other ones. But, uh, I had good teachers. They were patient. Cause they know that you didn't speak English, and they still want to talk to you in English, and they expect you to answer, and since you don't answer, you don't understand what they're saying they treat you different. I don't know I guess it's just children. Different ways of thinking.

Mr. Rodriguez further commented that he told his children about his experiences as a student so that they would not make the same mistakes that he made and want to drop out of school.

In summary, the data revealed that stakeholders viewed cultural values as significant within their community. The appreciation of hard work and the value of an education were regarded as important values within the Cisneros Elementary School community. In addition to cultural values, community capital was also identified as a major theme in the study.

### Community Connections

Data analysis revealed that community capital was a significant theme present in the study. For the purpose of this study, community capital is regarded as the resources, knowledge, and skills that are offered or available within the community that serve to support Latino education. The types of community capital that were identified in this study are resources and experiential knowledge. Each category of community capital will be discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

*Resources.* At Cisneros Elementary, stakeholders are consistently informed of the resources that are available to parents and students within the campus and the community. For instance, the document analysis revealed that parents receive flyers and notices of upcoming parent

meetings held at the campus. In addition, brochures were sent out to the parents of students involved in the Centers for Kids Program explaining parent engagement dates, times, locations, and topics so that parents could plan their schedules ahead of time. Family engagement sessions were held throughout the year where parents and students could attend together. At these family engagement sessions, parents were exposed to the resources available within the community that could serve to provide them with academic, affective, and social support for both parents and students. Consultants were also brought in to meet with parents regarding topics related to academic and social issues. In addition, staff members regularly contact parents to inform them of upcoming events. Mrs. Mendoza, teacher, explained:

Well, they send out notices, but I know Mrs. Gamez is also very consistent about calling parents, having us call parents, reminding them, going to the cars, and reminding them cause sometimes we send out notes but the notes never get home. It's a lot of communication. Mrs. Gamez tries to communicate with the parents to let them know that there's going to be a meeting. And sometimes the students also do projects like for careers and that's where they're placed and a lot of parents do come to see them. Even in Christmas we had some stuff.

Cisneros Elementary also offered events for their students and parents. Mrs. Montes specified, "The programs we have here at Cisneros are parent volunteers, Literacy Program, Centers for Kids afterschool program, parent classes, district parent meetings, and Centers for Kids family engagement meetings." These activities allow stakeholders to obtain learn from the experiential knowledge shared by the meeting sponsors and coordinators. Teachers also noted that students take place in community sponsored events to raise an awareness of what is offered within the community and at the same time use that opportunity to establish contact with parents. Mrs. Guerrero stated:

Yeah, like with us like during the school year we have stuff like with the



kids like the running and the races that we do in different areas in El Sur. That's not like ESISD; that's part of El Sur and a lot of the parents are involved with us so we get to talk to them.

According to Mrs. Montes, dean of instruction, communication is also viewed as resource and a way to reach out to the community at Cisneros Elementary School. She noted, "Good communication, whether in person, through phone conversations, email, or notes, there needs to be communication from the classroom to the parents." Though resources were considered as a type of community capital it was not considered to be the only staple. Experiential knowledge was also held in high regard at Cisneros Elementary.

*Experiential Knowledge.* Experiential knowledge, for the purpose of this study, was considered to be knowledge that is gained from experience. The district sponsored events observed for this study relied on the experiences of presenters to relay information to parents and attendees. Important messages were often delivered in a conversational manner and sprinkled with personal stories and anecdotes to carry forth the main topics.

In addition, at Cisneros Elementary, the campus implemented a program they refer to as the Friend Support System. This program consists of matching a community member with a classroom to engage in a type of adopt the class program. Through this program, community members visit classrooms throughout the course of the year and read to the class, engage in class projects, or speak to students regarding topics of interest such as study skills, setting goals, etc.

Mrs. Mendoza, teacher, denoted:

Our partners come in once a month, and they go to different classrooms. Well, they have an assigned classroom and they talk to the kids depending on what their profession is. Well, I have Mrs. Leal from a civic organization. She's been my care partner for three years and the kids love it. Every year that she comes in

she shares with the kids her experiences in her former profession, with sports, because she's involved with sports. The kids really like her coming because they get to kind of learned from others and see other things through her. Yeah, it's only homerooms. And, some are really good about coming. I know she's really good, and I know that some kind of die out at the end. The counselors brought it in. I don't know if they picked it up somewhere, but it started about three years ago. We also have our Career Day where we have different people from the community come and share.

Another key point is that at Cisneros Elementary, community organizations were invited to conduct presentations to the students throughout the year. This process allowed the students to become familiarized with the resources available within the community and allowed the individuals invited to the campus to share their experiential knowledge as well. Students were also invited to participate in community events. For instance,

Mrs. Guerrero explained:

Fire department has been here...like the presentations for the kids. They talk about what are the safety rules, and they'll bring the fire truck.

Mrs. Mendoza added:

Fire department—the local supermarket has their yearly things where they invite the community...like the nights out. I also know that--The El Sur Challenge... our parent liaison got a group of volunteers and got a group to include in that challenge. I guess also with the races. That's community involvement. The races all of those where kids are involved.

Furthermore, at Cisneros Elementary, school staff relied on their own background knowledge to create connections with students and with the instructional material presented. Mrs. Torres, principal, quipped, “We all understand that some of our students have difficult home life even though most of the staff shared the same culture as our students.” Similarly, Mrs. Montes indicated that one of the teachers taught students about different cultures. Mrs. Montes indicated:

Cultural diversity is celebrated in various ways here at Cisneros. For example, one of our kinder teachers is Mexican-Chinese, and she teaches the students about the different New Year's celebrations for both the Mexican and Chinese cultures. We also invite parents to read to the students using stories that relate to their backgrounds.

To summarize, the resources and experiential knowledge that existed within the community surrounding Cisneros Elementary and El Sur Independent School district was considered a valuable asset. Whether resources were obtained from community members, organizations, or campus staff, they were deemed instrumental in the success of students at Cisneros Elementary School. Along those same lines, the experiential knowledge garnered from the community members and district and campus staff provided stakeholders with human capital that can be applied to education.

#### Summary of the Chapter

This chapter began with a short description of the participants and the methodology utilized throughout this research study. Description of the themes and subthemes uncovered through the data analysis process was also included. The upcoming chapter will include a discussion of the findings as well connections to the theoretical frameworks used to guide this study as well as connections uncovered that serve to answer the research questions.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations

#### Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of the study and an overview of the methodology used during the data collection and data analysis phases. Next, findings related to the research questions and the theoretical frameworks which served to guide this study are also presented within this chapter. The presentation of findings leads to a discussion of implications for scholars, educational practitioners, and parents. Lastly, recommendations for future research are also noted.

#### Summary of the Study

Students, while at school, are expected to assimilate into the mainstream culture regardless of their respective ethnic identities (Valenzuela, 2005). While Latinos are quickly becoming the largest minority in the United States, this population growth is rarely reflected within the nation's schools and in its faculty and staff (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Hill & Torres, 2010). Subsequently, with the exception of geographical areas that are predominately Latino in population, students are not likely to be instructed by Latino teachers (Hill & Torres, 2010). A lack of diversity among educators can at times create a culture clash between educator and student when neither party is familiar with the background of the other (Nelson & Guerra, 2013). On the other hand, sharing the same cultural background and/or ethnicity does not necessarily equate understanding of each group's respective needs (Moreno & Gaytan, 2013). As noted by Weisman and Garza (2002), "Even teachers who are members of subordinate groups may share these views since success in mainstream institutions typically requires assimilation and adoption of the dominant group's perspective" (p. 28). Since students do not discard their backgrounds

and identities prior to entering the school building, it would behoove educators to gain knowledge of their students' cultures and ethnicities (Hughes, Hollander, & Martinez, 2009; Hughes, Page, & Ford, 2011). By becoming familiarized with their students' cultural backgrounds, educators could cultivate teaching and learning.

For Latino students, cultural mismatch can also contribute to students' misunderstandings of the material presented or expectations for behavior as well (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). When in the classroom, Latino students do not always relate to their teachers' curricular or pedagogical practices. As noted by Trumbull, et al., (2003), in some societies, collectivism is widely practiced. In fact, within some Latino communities, the interests of the group tend to be valued more than those of the individual (Trumbull, et al., 2003). As a result, students possess sufficient knowledge regarding how to work with others to achieve a common goal. Yet, once they arrive to the mainstream classroom, Latino students are expected to work independently and maintain appropriate behavior which sometimes includes minimal interaction with others. These behaviors and expectations tend to run in opposition of Latino students experiences both at home and within their communities (Trumbull, et al., 2003). For this reason, it is necessary for educators to gain an awareness of the cultures and ethnicities of the students that populate their schools.

Moreover, Latino students emerge from their communities with an overabundance of experiences and knowledge that, when properly channeled, could assist in reinforcing the skills, concepts, and curriculum presented to them in the classroom (Moll et al., 1992). Therefore, educators should capitalize on these available resources to create connections between the home and school. For instance, according to Yosso (2005), communities of color possess six types of

capital: (1) “aspirational capital; (2) linguistic capital; (3) familial capital; (4) social capital; (5) navigational capital; and (6) resistant capital” which together form community capital wealth (p. 77-81). Similarly, Moll et al., (1992) contends that Latino communities possess “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” generally referred to as funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992, p. 133). Through the application of these funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), students are able to learn elements of social and cultural capital which serve to assist them as they navigate daily within their communities. Together, community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) serve to illuminate the social and cultural tapestries that exist within a given population.

Unfortunately, educators are not necessarily knowledgeable about the experiences that Latino students possess and take with them to the classroom (Moll et al., 1992). In addition, educators are not all equipped to work with students of diverse backgrounds. Though future educators attend university courses to become teachers and school administrators, often few classes on diversity are offered to preservice teachers and administrators (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). Similarly, once these individuals become certified to teach or lead schools, professional development opportunities on topics regarding diversity and parental involvement are not always made available to staff members. Consequently, educators are left to network with colleagues, learn on their own by trial and error, or seek out opportunities for staff development to become more knowledgeable about strategies to implement when working with diverse populations.

With that said, parents can serve as an invaluable resource in support of their children’s education. By forming partnerships with parents, educators could communicate to parents

instructional and behavioral expectations that could be reinforced by parents in the home. Kiyama (2010) contends that parents should “be incorporated earlier and in more culturally sensitive ways into their children’s educational processes” (p. 332). This process may encourage parents to become more actively involved in their children’s education. Though parental involvement is often regarded as parents’ willingness to participate in school sponsored activities, providing assistance to students can also be conducted in less formal methods (Le Fevre & Shaw, 2012). Many parents supply their children with educational assistance and support within the home but are not necessarily able to attend school events due to reasons that are not able to control. Mena (2011) maintains that, “Parental involvement has been found to positively influence student academic success; however, less is known about home-based emotional and behavioral parental involvement practices among Latino parents” (p. 491). For this reason, educators should make a concerted effort to learn more about the types of capital that are present within the home which could be utilized within the school system and the classroom to reinforce curricular, instructional, and pedagogical practices.

### Overview of Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the current application of the funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) that exist within Latino families along the Texas-Mexico border to facilitate partnerships between home and school and subsequently support teaching and learning within classrooms. To realize this undertaking, research was conducted at an elementary school in a South Texas school district. The elementary school which served as the research site was located in a predominately Latino, low socioeconomic neighborhood. Prior to the onset of the research study, approval to conduct

research was obtained from the school district and the University of Texas at Brownsville Institutional Research Board.

The research site, Cisneros Elementary School, was chosen because it was considered to be a school with a prominent parental participation level amid the schools within the school district that take part in an enrichment program. Throughout the course of the study, the enrichment program was assigned the pseudonym, Centers for Kids Program. Data was collected from four data sources which included documents and archival data, observations, interviews, and questionnaires. The researcher collected data over a period of twenty-three weeks.

The researcher gained knowledge of the study site, its demographics, and its policies and procedures by collecting documents and viewing websites related to Cisneros Elementary. In addition, three observations were conducted at district sponsored events held at various sites throughout the El Sur ISD to promote parental engagement. Data was also obtained from four levels of stakeholders: school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. First of all, the school administrators at Cisneros Elementary School completed open-ended questionnaires regarding campus procedures, policies, and their experiences with parental involvement. Next, a focus group interview was conducted with three Cisneros Elementary teachers. These teachers were afforded the opportunity to answer questions about their experiences working at Cisneros Elementary and the levels of parental involvement present at the campus. In addition, four semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with four individual parents about the modes and levels of support that they provide to their children as well as the campus efforts to promote parental involvement. Finally, each of the parent participants provided consent for one of their children to participate in the study. After obtaining assent from each student, open-ended



questionnaires were distributed to the four students. These students answered questions about their home and school experiences. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to collecting data from the individual. Assent was obtained from students after consent for the students to participate was obtained from one of their parents.

After completing the data collection process, the sources of data were analyzed using a two phase process. As described in chapter three, the first phase of analysis resulted in the identification of units of analysis and organizational categories. Themes and sub-themes were identified during the second phase of analysis. Validity was determined through the application of triangulation. By using documents analysis, observations, interviews, and questionnaires, the researcher was able to compare the findings obtained from each data source to the others to locate recurring themes and sub-themes.

## Discussion

This research study was guided by four research questions and two theories. As a result, this segment opens with an examination of the findings as related to the research questions that served to guide this study. Then, connections to the community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) theories are delineated.

### Findings Related to Research Questions

This research study was guided by three questions. This section presents the findings related to the research questions. Research questions were framed in support of the two theories community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992).

Question 1a: How do the parents involved in this study impart their cultural values on their children?

The Latino parents involved in this study shared aspects of their cultural values and beliefs throughout their interview sessions. The results of this study indicate that parents shared their cultural values through communication and modeling. Subsequently, these experiences and expectations served to reinforce teaching and learning for students when they entered their respective classrooms.

The parents who were interviewed for this study indicated that communication with their children occurred frequently within their households. Parents spoke of the importance of instilling the same values in their children as their parents instilled in them while they were growing up. All of the parents spoke of the need to relay to their children the importance of obtaining an education to be successful in life. Parents also noted that they talked to their children about education and its propensity to be a lifelong investment in their futures. These Latino parents indicated that their efforts to support their children in their educational endeavors stemmed from their desire to want better for their children than that which they attained. Therefore, they made efforts to spend time with their children to convey this message to them.

The Latino parents involved in the study modeled the value of hard work for their children. Through their industriousness, they showed their children that life is not easy and requires discipline to get ahead. Two of the parents were college graduates; one parent had obtained her GED and another had dropped out of high school. All of the parents spoke of serving as examples for their children. Those that had obtained a college education wanted their children to see them as role models; the parents that had not graduated from high school wanted his children to view for themselves the difficulties associated with life, if an education is not obtained. This father, who did not graduate from high school, shared that he took his children to work with him

so that they could see for themselves that manual labor was not fun. One mother specified that she made every effort to attend district and school sponsored events, because she wanted her daughters to see that she supported their academic endeavors. This parent also noted that she volunteered at the campus so that her daughters always felt that she cared. In addition, she indicated that volunteering was something that she learned from her grandfather in Mexico, and she noted that she hoped to pass that sense of civic responsibility to her daughters. Parents also conveyed to their children the importance of family. Discussion was made by the parents about how they spent weekends and holidays with extended family because it was important for their children to maintain their culture.

Question 1b: How does this transmission of values reinforce learning?

The Latino students who participated in this study were taught morals and values by their parents and families that could serve to reinforce learning. The students indicated that their parents spoke to them about their school work and study habits. In addition, parents ensured that students participated in activities outside of the home as well. In some instances, these activities were organized events sponsored by the community while other activities involved families partaking in outings together. By interacting with other individuals, students were provided with opportunities to learn socialization skills that can be transferred to the classroom setting. Students are afforded the chance to communicate and work collaboratively with others because they have been exposed to this kind of interaction at home. Students also learned the value of hard work from their parents. As a result, they were able to follow through with activities and requirements set forth at the school. By watching their parents work, they have learned that hard work can be rewarding.

Moreover, within their communities, students were exposed to a myriad of cultural values that served to reinforce and solidify learning while in the classroom. The Latino parents who participated in this study utilized their own experiences, beliefs, and insight to communicate their expectations to their children. Through their interactions with their children, parents provided a valued system of support for education.

Question 2: How do Latino parents support their children's academic progress in school?

According to the Latino parents who participated in this study, their children are consistently offered support by their parents and the remainder of their families. From their parents, the Latino children involved in this research project received academic support at home and parental support at school. Through this network of support, Latino children learned academic and social skills that may be transferred to the classrooms.

First of all, parents provided their children with academic support at home. The parental participants discussed their prevalence for inquiring about their children's academic progress on a daily basis. The parents noted that students were asked about the day's occurrences and homework assignments. Parents noted that students were provided with a designated location where students could complete their work. Whether students completed their homework at the kitchen table or in their own rooms, parents made an effort to inquire about the status of their children's homework, provide assistance when needed, or reinforce proper study habits. Parents made it a point to reinforce the importance of completing assignments in a timely manner. All of the parents noted that they worked with their children at home to complete assignments. This assistance came in the form of helping to complete projects, having students read, or reviewing spelling words. Some parents noted, while they recognized that assisting their children with

homework completion was important, that they felt their primary responsibility regarding their children's education consisted of making sure that the children were ready for school each day. These Latino parents also stated that they were responsible for making sure that their children had the necessary school supplies and resources.

The Latino parents involved in the study also noted that conversations were regularly held with their children about the importance of obtaining an education. As previously mentioned, parents encouraged their children to do well in school. They talked to their children about their plans for the future regarding attending college, looking for work, or joining the military. Parents also stated that they talked to their children about their own lives and the trajectories that lead to their current professional and economic situations.

In addition, the Latino parents, who participated in this study, indicated that they offered their children support while they were at school as well. Parents made efforts to go to Cisneros Elementary to meet with teachers and school officials. The Latino parents involved in this study explained that they attended school and district sponsored events to become more familiarized with the expectations, policies, and procedures associated with educating children at El Sur ISD. The support provided at school included communicating with school officials to inquire about the types of services offered at the school. Parents also talked to their children's teachers about their children's academic and behavioral progress while visiting the campus. Some of the parents also indicated that, while attending school and district events, they interacted with other parents to learn about activities and resources that were available to their children while enrolled in the El Sur ISD. Through these parental involvement opportunities, parents also sought out

additional resources available through the community that could provide assistance to their families.

The results of this study indicate that Latino parents support their children's education. Moreover, the Latino parents, who took part in this study, provided academic support at home and made an effort to support their children while they were in school. These types of support involved establishing and maintaining contact with parents and attending school and district sponsored events.

Question 3: What are educators' (teachers and school administrators) beliefs regarding parental support of education?

Educators believed that supporting students' education should be a collaborative effort between parents and the school system. As stated by the educators in the study, the responsibility of educating students should be shared by with both educators and parents. Working together to achieve the common goal of providing students with a sound education involved communication, effective school leadership, active participation by the parents, and a climate conducive to learning. For instance, the administrators involved in the study reinforced the notion that parents and family were an integral component in the lives of students. They discussed in their questionnaires the importance of involving parents in the educational processes of their children. The administrators also described their quest in ensuring that parents felt welcomed and were involved in the decision making processes at their campus. For example, regarding the connection between home and school, Mrs. Montes, dean of instruction, commented, "The connection between home and school is an important one. Our purpose is to educate students and prepare them to be responsible citizens in this demanding world. We are all

stakeholders in our future (our students).” These views assisted in creating productive relationship between educators and parents.

As stated by the school administrators at Cisneros Elementary, maintaining open-lines of communication was crucial to establishing a fruitful partnership between school personnel and parents. While confidentiality issues did not allow for complete transparency, keeping parents informed of issues that are relevant to their children was important. Along those same lines, the teachers in the study delineated that educators should make every effort to help students. Teachers stated that they often articulated to students that the key to a successful life begins with a good education. Teachers mentioned that parents should be aware of the events that take place at school.

Moreover, the principal indicated that a successful parental involvement program starts with the school leadership. Therefore, the principal at Cisneros Elementary felt that the school leader should communicate the importance of establishing and maintaining contact with parents to the school staff. In turn, she noted that this helped to increase levels of parental involvement. To increase parental involvement participation, Cisneros Elementary staff utilized various methods to communicate with their students’ parents in an effort to provide support to parents as well. Cisneros Elementary School accommodated parents’ needs by holding parent meetings after school hours, sending notes and flyers, calling parents, or walking to their cars at dismissal time to communicate important information. The parents involved in this study indicated that they worked long hours and were not always available to attend school events. To remedy this, school staff offered parental involvement classes to parents on how to offer their children academic support, health, and wellness as well.

Furthermore, according to the educators who took part in this study, parents should be active participants in the education of their children. The educators specified that parents should seek out assistance from teachers about their children's educational progress and be involved in their children's education as a whole. Efforts should be made to attend school and district sponsored events. Students should feel as though their parents support their academic efforts at home. The educators expressed that parents should understand that the ultimate responsibility in ensuring that children receive a quality education lies with them. Administrators maintained that it was the parents' responsibility to raise an active, contributing member of society. Ensuring that their children obtain an education can be a step in the right direction. The teachers specified that, while the ultimate goal should be to have each child graduate from college, the reality is that not all students will do so. In reality, there are many careers that require less than a four year degree and can offer a good salary for those who opt to take that route. Parents need to communicate with their children the importance of reaching and establishing goals.

The educators who participated in the study also stated that a climate conducive to learning and welcoming to parents and community should be felt upon entering the campus. Schools are ultimately responsible for encouraging parents to participate in school events and become active participants on campus. Administrators mentioned that, when parents do not feel welcomed at the campus, they will make less of an effort to go to the campus. Teachers also declared that the working relationship among the staff is also crucial in creating a favorable environment for all. They mentioned that when the school staff is happy, content at work, and works well with one another, those sentiments will transfer onto the rest of the individuals on campus and serve to lift morale. This, in turn, would filter over to the visitors to the campus who would feel welcomed upon arrival to the school. The teachers involved in the study also specified that community



resources should be shared with parents. Inviting community programs and organizations to communicate the ways that they can help parents and students can also contribute favorably to the school climate. They felt that establishing civic partnerships was crucial and necessary to maintain good rapport with the community.

In summary, Cisneros Elementary educators believed that parents and the school system should work together to provide children with a quality education. Cisneros Elementary educators implemented programs and initiatives on campus that served to reinforce parental involvement. As a result, parents were more inclined to become involved in school activities designed to support their children's education.

Question 4: How do schools incorporate community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) into the school setting to promote home-school connections?

The results of this study indicate that community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) were incorporated into the academic setting to promote home-school connections and reinforce teaching and learning. Elements of these theories were made visible through the implementation of several initiatives at the campus and district levels.

For instance, the El Sur ISD Centers for Kids program held parental engagement sessions for parents several times a month. During these meetings, parents were educated on various topics which served to supplement their existing knowledge of district and campus policies and procedures. Parents were also introduced to resources that were available throughout the community that offered support for the city's residents. Some parents did not possess sufficient background knowledge or familiarity with the resources available to them. By offering informative sessions to parents, the district and community provided parents with the needed

social capital to move forward through the educational system. Along those same lines, at the Centers for Kids programs held for parents and their children, presenters consistently reinforced to attendees the need to establish goals and the importance of working hard to fulfill them. Presenters also shared with the attendees the stories of their own lives as well as the journeys taken along the paths to their careers. Providing attendees with this information reinforced the existence of aspirational capital within the community. While at the Centers for Kids sessions, parents were also encouraged to use their existing funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) to work with their children on various art projects.

In addition, at the campus level, Cisneros Elementary faculty and staff were encouraged to participate in school events and volunteer on campus. Parents were encouraged to provide services to the school through activities such as assisting teachers with the creation of instructional resources, assisting in the library, and serving on campus governing boards and committees. In addition, teachers interviewed for this study specified that teachers regularly assigned projects that called for collaboration between parents and children.

At Cisneros Elementary, parents were viewed as a resource. Parental input was valued, and the application of their funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) was welcomed. In addition, campus leaders established a community partnership initiative that involved the adoption of classrooms by civic leaders. After adopting a classroom, civic leaders would visit the class and read to the students or engage in activities and projects with the students throughout the school year. Students were also able to learn about the individuals' experiences and careers. Exposure to individuals from within their own communities who were regarded as having achieved success underscored the need become familiarized with the social capital available within the

community. In addition, by listening to the experiences of others, students were exposed to the navigational capital needed to traverse through society's institutions that could sometimes serve as barriers for those students do not possess sufficient capital to move forward.

In conclusion, the El Sur Independent School District and Cisneros Elementary both incorporated community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) into the school setting to promote home-school connections. Community resources were made available to parents and students. Parents were encouraged to participate in school sponsored events in support of their children's education.

#### Connections to Theory

Two theoretical frameworks were examined for this study: community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992). Community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) is based on the notion that within each community of color different forms of capital which serve to assist individuals in navigating through society can be found. The six forms of capital present in community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) are "aspirational capital, familial capital, linguistic, capital, resistant capital, navigational capital, and social capital" (p. 77-81). In addition, funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) are described as the "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 134). Funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) are believed to exist within each domiciliary to help individuals network through society. Detailed below are this research study's findings as they relate to the theoretical frameworks examined.

## Community Cultural Wealth

Four sources of data were collected to determine whether community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) was present within Cisneros Elementary. The results of the study suggest that all six forms of capital were incorporated into the school setting to promote home-school connections. Examples of the six forms of capital, which collectively comprise community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), as they relate to the study participants' experiences are detailed below.

*Aspirational capital.* Aspirational capital relates to an individual's propensity to aspire for greatness regardless of the challenges that might be encountered (Yosso, 2005). Each of the participants shared their aspirations for themselves, their families, their students, and/or their communities at some point during the research study. A great majority of these aspirations dealt with education and the propensity for success as a result of its attainment. For instance, during the focus group interview, the teachers described aspirations held for them by their families as well as aspirations that they hold for their children. Mr. Rivera, teacher, noted that his father communicated his aspirations for him when he was growing up. Mr. Rivera indicated:

I think my dad always...I guess he instilled that in me that you have to be more...whatever I am you have to be more than what I am. All his sacrifices and I guess I had to kinda make sure that I didn't let him down. And, all of those type of parents. They've been through a lot to get me to where I am. I had to make sure I did it.

Similarly, Ms. Guerrero, teacher, shared her experiences as parent and discussed the advice that she gave her daughters regarding school and their future. Ms. Guerrero stated:

Me too. I don't have sons. I have three daughters. One of them just graduated and is going on to college. And, that's what I've told them. The best thing you're going to do in life is your education. That's the most important thing that you concentrate on right now. That's the only thing you have to care about: your education and moving up and being better than me. You better do something better. And, that's what they

want. They want to be better.

As can be seen in the examples above, the Latino teachers discussed the importance of education. The Latino parents mentioned, in the examples above, that each wanted their children to aspire for greatness. Familial expectations called for children to attend college and obtain an education so that they could succeed in life. Moreover, during the interview, the teachers specified that expectations that are held for their own children are also held for their students in relation to attending and graduating from college. For instance, according to the teachers, college and career readiness were topics regularly discussed with students at Cisneros Elementary. Students were encouraged to aim beyond society's expectations of their demographic and transcend expectations. In addition to aspirational capital, familial capital also emerged.

*Familial capital.* Familial capital involves the information and skillset composed of culture, traditions, and collective household knowledge inherent within families (Yosso, 2005). The results of this study indicated that family capital was present within the El Sur ISD and in the vicinity of Cisneros Elementary. One participant described the interactions that his family shared with one another. Mr. Rodriguez shared information on family outings and described the exchanges experienced by family members as they visited extended family in Mexico. Mr. Rodriguez mentioned:

*Pues en los fines de semana nos vamos a matamoros...ya sea con mi mama o con la madre de mi esposa. Y estamos allá un día con ellos. Si nomas estar allí con ellos, comer, convivir, platicar, y los niños jugar afuera.*

Translation:

Well, on the weekends, we go to Matamoros. Whether it's with my family or with my wife's mother... We are there with them for the day. Just to be with them, eating, spending time together, talking, and the kids play outside.

As noted by Trumbull et al.(2003), through participation and interaction with family members, children learn how to coexist and collaborate with others. Eventually, the ability to collaborate with others is utilized in the classroom when students work with one another to complete tasks.

Furthermore, familial capital was noted during the observation sessions conducted at the parent engagement sessions held at various sites throughout the school district. At the observation sessions, parents were encouraged to look to their families for support. Children were advised that their parents were their biggest allies and supporters in pursuit of their education and throughout life. Parents consistently heard messages indicating the family's influence on children's education. Correlations were made between the value of the family unit in the Latino culture and parents' influence on children's long-term goals regarding the attainment of a postsecondary education. In addition, linguistic capital was also incorporated into the school setting to promote home-school connections.

*Linguistic capital.* Linguistic capital refers to the intellectual and societal abilities accomplished through transmission of information in in more than one language (Yosso, 2005). The study participants were all Latino and possessed varying levels of proficiency when communicating in English and/or Spanish. The administrators and teachers all indicated that they were able to communicate in both English and Spanish. Three of the four parents were able to speak both Spanish and English. One parent primarily communicated in Spanish but noted that she was trying to learn English. Additionally, all of the four students also spoke English and some Spanish. At Cisneros Elementary, the population of students was primarily Latino. Some of the parents possessed limited to no English speaking abilities. For that reason, flyers and notices were sent to parents in both English and Spanish. Meetings and parent engagement sessions sponsored by both the district and campus were conducted in English and in Spanish.

During the interview session, parents shared their language speaking abilities and discussed their children's abilities to converse in both languages. Mr. Gonzalez explained how he must transition between both Spanish and English to address his target audience when communicating amid his parents and his children. When asked what language was spoken in his household, he stated

Mostly, English but we also speak Spanish. Well, I switch back and forth when I'm talking to my dad, my parents. Uh, my children usually speak only English and just barely they started practicing their Spanish and I got to switch from my English to Spanish and translate to them.

Another parent, Mrs. Martinez, indicated that she primarily spoke Spanish but was attempting to learn how to speak English. She specified that she relied on her children to teach her how to converse in English. Mrs. Martinez denoted in Spanish

*Pues yo trato de hablar los dos. Pero la niña chica es la que habla puro ingles casi. La grande yo le digo que se ponga conmigo y si quiere la tableta que me tiene que enseñar una hora a mí. Pero no se pone. Así como que hay está bien. Ya no me quiere enseñar. De primero si y le pregunto algo y porque como la idioma tiene para mí es muy difícil. Si porque es depende con que oración y me quedo, "¿Cómo qué?" Y le pregunto, "¿Qué quiso decir con esto?" Y ya me dice o me corrige...y a veces sabe que no lo digo bien y no me dicen. Digo, "¿Porque no me corriges y si no me corriges, no voy aprender?"*

Translation:

Well, I try to speak both. But the little girl is the one that speaks primarily English. The older one I have to tell her to sit with me and, if she wants the tablet, she has to teach me for at least an hour. But she doesn't want to do it. And that is okay. She doesn't want to teach me anymore. At first, she did, and I would ask her something, because, well, the language for me is more difficult. Yes, because it's depending on the sentence and I wondered, "What?" And, I would ask her, "What did that mean? And, she'll tell me or correct me. And, sometimes she knows that I don't say it right and she won't correct me. I'll ask, "Why don't you correct me if you know that I didn't say it right? If you don't correct me,

I'm not going to learn.”

Mrs. Martinez relied on her daughters to help her to learn how to speak English. Mrs. Martinez commented on the difficulties associated with learning English due to the nuances that accompany the conventions of the language. As they taught their mother how to speak English, Mrs. Martinez's daughters needed to transition between two languages to determine proper word usage and sentence structure to appropriately teach their mother. As a result, the ability to negotiate between two languages as well as the district and school district's efforts to translate documentation and hold meetings in both Spanish and English denoted that linguistic capital was present within the community. Additionally, visible in the community was the existence of resistant capital.

*Resistant capital.* Resistant capital refers to the abilities and knowledge attained as an individual adopts the tendency to contest injustice and subservience (Yosso, 2005). The decisions to move forward despite all odds as well as “engage in behaviors and maintain attitudes that challenge the status quo” denote resistant capital (Yosso, 2005, p. 81). Resistant capital was found within the Cisneros Elementary School community. Mrs. Mendoza, teacher, shared her experiences of being a first generation college student and her father's expectations regarding work. Mrs. Mendoza stated

... I was the first one to graduate from college from my house. I wasn't the oldest, but I was the first one. And my son doesn't want to go to school. He's already twenty-one, but like I said, work hard and that's what I tell him. Not everybody goes to college. Maybe it's not for you, but you have to work hard. You can't just sit around and expect for things to be given to you. You just have to...that's it. My dad told me when his vacation days came up he worked his vacation days. You just work. That's all it is. You work and then you get what you want. That's it.



The indication as evidenced by Mrs. Mendoza's comments was that her son was expected to work even if he did not want to go to school. She specified, "You can't just sit around and expect for things to be given to you," thus, exemplifying the participants' belief that an individual should resist the existing state of affairs in which he was placed by his lot in life.

Furthermore, another participant, Mr. Rodriguez, parent, also discussed his experiences with attending school in Mexico and then transferring to school in the United States. Mr. Rodriguez stated,

I went to seventh grade in Mexico, and I finished it but I couldn't get no degree, because I was born in the United States. I couldn't get a degree so they wouldn't let me keep going to school over there so I had to come this way. I had to come to the United States. And, I came into seventh grade, and I failed it. I went to seventh again and then eighth grade and then I went to ninth.

As noted by his comments, Mr. Rodriguez persevered in his attempts to attend school in Mexico and in the United States. Rather than forgo the effort to obtain an education, the decision was made to come to the United States. Mr. Rodriguez's parents could have opted not to further their child's education and instead stay in Mexico. The act of moving to the United States rather than remain in Mexico was in opposition to decisions that others might have made in the same situation. As evidenced by the experiences of both Mrs. Mendoza and Mr. Rodriguez, examples of resistant capital can be found within the Cisneros Elementary School community. Similarly, in reviewing the data, evidence was also uncovered of navigational capital within the community.

*Navigational capital.* Navigational capital denotes individuals' capacities to traverse intricate establishments and practices in existence within society not generally geared towards

communities of color (Yosso, 2005). Traversing the educational system requires skills and abilities not always inherent in some individuals. Aside from possessing the skills needed to navigate through the educational system,

*... aquí sacé el GED...fui y me informe y en una iglesia vas y de tan clases. Pagas para que te den clases y vas los lunes. Nada más eran dos horas de clase y te dan pues una ayuda nada mas de cómo manejarlo. Pues me faltó entonces y yo le dije a la maestra. Como fui y lo tuve que hacer rápido ...y dije no yo lo tengo que hacer. Fui con la maestra que los daba las clases y le dije que si me podía ayudar una semana antes, previamente que me diera una orientación más o menos de toda las clases.*

Translation:

Here, I got my GED...I went and got information. There's this church where you go, and they give you classes. You pay so that they can give you classes and you go on Mondays. It was only two hours, and they give you some help on how to maneuver through it. Well, I didn't pass and so I went and told the teacher, since I had to retake it in a hurry, and I told her, "No, I have to do it." I went with the teacher who gave the classes, and I asked her if she could help me study a week before. I asked her whether she could give me a review of all of the classes.

Mrs. Martinez, during the interview, discussed her experiences with obtaining a General Equivalency Diploma (GED). After not having passed the GED exam the first time, Mrs. Martinez noted that she sought remediation assistance from her GED instructor prior to the second administration of the exam. Moreover, after receiving remediation assistance, Mrs. Martinez did pass the exam. To accomplish this task, Mrs. Martinez needed to possess the skills required to navigate the educational organization and the ability to seek out tutorial help. In summary, all of the parental participants mentioned during their respective interviews that they consistently sought out educational support from the school system to benefit their children. As evidenced by the data collected, navigational capital did exist in the community researched for

this study. Similarly, after analyzing the data sources, social capital was also identified within the El Sur community.

*Social capital.* Social capital is described as the networks of individuals and community resources available within a society that serve to complement the existing body of wisdom already present within the family unit (Yosso, 2005). The results of this study indicated that social capital was found within the Cisneros Elementary School community. During the data collection process, participants noted the availability of community resources, networks of individuals, and services offered by the school district that serve to assist students through the educational system. For instance, the school district provided parental engagement sessions for parents throughout the school year at locations designated by the school district. At these sessions, parents learned about topics geared towards PK-12<sup>th</sup> grade education, postsecondary education, health and wellness, and financial literacy. Community organizations were brought to the locations so that parents could learn about the resources offered by each entity. Parents were afforded an opportunity to mingle and network with presenters and other attendees at these events as well.

At the campus level, educators provided students with presentations on college and career readiness initiatives so that students could become familiarized with the college-going process. Career Day presentations were also held at the campus so that students could learn about the various careers that exist within the community. Weekly parent meetings were held for the parents on a myriad of topics. Parents were also afforded with the opportunity to volunteer for various initiatives on campus. Participants also described student performances held at the campus throughout the school year. By attending school sponsored events, parents were granted a chance to interact with teachers, school staff, and other parents.

In summary, community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) was found within the Cisneros Elementary School as evidenced by the results of this study. The six forms of capital which together comprise community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) serve to assist communities of color to survive and thrive within their respective environments. The data collection process and subsequent data analysis conducted for this study indicate that community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) was incorporated into the school setting to promote connections between the home and school.

### Funds of Knowledge

As previously mentioned, funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) are regarded as “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (Moll, et al., 1992, p. 133). This study examined the funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) that exist within Latino families to promote parental involvement and the subsequent support of teaching and learning. The subsequent paragraphs describe family and community as well as connections to instruction as they relate to funds of knowledge.

*Family and Community.* The senses of family and community permeated the lives of the participants involved in this study. Within the context of the Latino family, the presence of family is a constant. The data collected for this study and its subsequent analysis supported that notion. Each parent described their families’ interactions with one another: weekend outings, holiday celebrations, and family traditions. For example, Mrs. Juarez, parent, commented, “It’s like my main tradition is food. Thanksgiving I want to have a turkey. I want people to visit.” She also quipped about the events surrounding a typical holiday for her family and spoke of her

propensity to welcome all family members to her home for the holidays. Mr. Gonzalez, parent also discussed some of the activities that his family participates in together. He indicated,

We usually like to go outside, and they like to go outside and play football. My daughter likes to go outside and do physical fitness challenges, her playhouse, jumping in and out. You know, I try to take them to the zoo, the park. Uh, Johnny is also involved in flag football.

Mr. Gonzalez noted that his children were also given the opportunity to engage in community activities. At these community activities, children networked with others to communicate and establish friendships. In addition, Mr. Gonzalez specified that, as a divorced parent, he wanted his children to know that he would always support them regardless of their parents' marital status. Furthermore, each of the parents interviewed commented that they wanted to teach their children the same morals and values that their own parents taught them as they were growing up.

From his parents, Mr. Gonzalez learned

Besides morals and umm to try to be law-abiding...they taught me to be honest and, you know, they taught me basically the good. Mostly, the good things that a good family has to instill in their children so that they can have a better life than they did.

For Mr. Gonzalez and the other Latino parents involved in the study, teaching their children morals and values was equated with good parenting, served to provide their children with a good foundation for the future, and could potentially help their children to remain focused on setting and achieving their academic goals.

*Connections to Instruction.* Latinos are often regarded as having low levels of parental involvement in their children's education (La Fevre & Shaw, 2012). However, the results of this study indicate that parents possess a myriad of skills that when transferred to their children can be utilized in the classroom to create connections to instruction. First of all, within their communities, children learned how to network with others. Next, children learned how to

communicate in two languages. Finally, parents reinforced to their children the importance of becoming involved in school and community activities.

To begin with, while in their own communities, the Latino children, involved in this study, were afforded the opportunity to interact with other individuals on a consistent basis. As previously mentioned, the research participants discussed the abundance of interactions that took place within the families of the parents and students who took part in the study. By participating in these interactions, the Latino children learned how to communicate with others. Through these experiences, the participant children learned the needed social skills to work collaboratively with other individuals. Within the educational setting, the ability to network and communicate with others can be an asset.

Within their family units, the Latino children, who participated in the study, learned how to communicate in both English and Spanish. While some of the students were not completely fluent in Spanish, they still possessed sufficient grasp of the language to communicate their needs to their parents. One of the student participants even served as a teacher to her mother who was trying to learn how to speak English. The ability to communicate in two languages was a skill that proved to be beneficial to the Latino students involved in the study. By being able to communicate in two languages, these students possessed the feasibility to navigate seamlessly between the school, community, and home. As a result, students were able to communicate effectively in all three arenas.

Also, the parents involved in this study modeled, for their children, the importance of becoming involved in school and community activities. Parents were actively involved in their children's education. Each of the parents described how they reinforced their children's

education by providing students with necessary resources. They attended parental meetings with teachers to inquire about their children's progress. In addition, parents also ensured that they exposed their children to their communities by engaging in family activities within their local environments. Some of the parents also volunteered at their children's school to gain an awareness of the academic environment as well as the policies and procedures that are in place to support teaching and learning at the campus. By modeling active involvement for their children, Latino parents conveyed the message to their children that they were active participants in their own education.

In summary, the results of this study indicate that funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) were found within the Cisneros Elementary School community. The skills and abilities shared from parents to students could be utilized in the classroom by educators to support teaching and learning. As indicated by Kiyama (2010),

If the funds of knowledge are not being valued and utilized, parents may not realize their own resources, may not develop the confidence to help their children with educational processes, and may fail to tap into their own experiences to help their children succeed (p. 351).

For this reason, schools should make an effort to incorporate the funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and experiences that students possess to solidify their learning in the classroom.

### Implications

This study explored the present application of the funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) found within Latino families along the Texas-Mexican border to facilitate collaborations between home and school to reinforce teaching and learning within the classroom. As noted in Chapter 2, previous studies analyzed the significance of

community cultural wealth and funds of knowledge in education (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Gonzalez, 2005; Hogg, 2011; Kiyama, 2010; Moll, et al., 1992; Yosso, 2005). The analysis of four sources of data which included observations, documents and archival data, interviews, and questionnaires, revealed findings obtained from this study that expanded on these topics. Implications for universities and colleges, school districts, and parents are noted in the subsequent paragraphs.

First of all, when organizing educator preparation programs, colleges and universities should formulate classes that address issues of diversity. It is important for universities to ensure that teachers are wholly prepared to assume the role of an educator. Teachers should possess sufficient competency to educate students of varying cultures, ethnicities, and background and be prepared to modify their curriculum, pedagogy, and behaviors to meet the needs of their students. Moreover, the teachers involved in this study discussed their aptitude for creating student assignments that involved opportunities for interactions between parents and students. These types of assignments provided students with the chance to access their parents' funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) to assist with the completion of tasks. The teachers involved in this study were experienced educators and familiar with how to modify lessons to meet the needs of their students. Similarly, new teachers could also benefit from learning how to create activities that are designed to promote opportunities for interaction and collaboration. Therefore, it is crucial that new teachers receive training on diversity. These teachers need to become familiarized with the features of their students' culture that make them unique. The activation of background knowledge could serve as a mode of solidifying newly introduced concepts to students. By incorporating elements of their students' culture, teachers could potentially influence teaching and learning in a positive manner. In addition, the results of this research



study also revealed that experiential knowledge was significantly utilized to transmit information to stakeholders. The school district incorporated the use of experiential knowledge into its presentations by involving speakers from throughout the community to present on various topics to stakeholders. Because school districts and campuses generally involve community members and organizations to become active in various events, participation in community outreach programs should be made available to college and university students. To gain a fresh perspective and become familiarized with the social support offered to stakeholders within the community, colleges and universities should require their preservice education students to participate in community outreach organizations. Universities and colleges could implement requirements where students are expected to obtain mentors or engage in service learning opportunities. Through their participation in community outreach programs, students can learn how to work with people from all backgrounds.

Next, school districts should establish professional development opportunities for teachers on how to work with students of diverse populations. Therefore, districts should provide professional development sessions to practicing educators on how to provide students with culturally responsive learning opportunities. For instance, the results of this research study reveal that the concept of hard work is appreciated and viewed as a source of motivation for students to progress and obtain an education. Accordingly, it would be feasible for school districts to capitalize on the social and cultural capital present within families to keep students engaged. To successfully teach minority students, educators should learn the nuances associated with the population. During these programs, district personnel could orient teachers on strategies and techniques to implement when working with Latino students. Possible topics for inclusion in a district professional development program for teachers could include how to:

- effectively communicate with all stakeholders;
- differentiate instruction to target the needs of all students;
- utilize students' cultural and social capital to keep students engaged;
- select instructional materials that are culturally responsive;
- teach students to respect others' differences.

With proper training, educators can create environments that are conducive to learning and serve to reinforce teaching and learning. Moreover, school districts should also create professional development sessions for teachers on building partnerships with parents. Educators do not always know how to effectively communicate with the parents and guardians of those students that arrive at their schools on a daily basis. By creating partnerships with parents, teachers can open the lines of communication.

Lastly, the results of this study indicate that parents should become more familiarized with district and campus programs. Parents could attend district and campus sponsored events, volunteer at the campus, or adopt a classroom. It is through these events that parents could learn how to navigate the school system as well as strategies and procedures to help in providing support to their children. Events that are catered to parents tended to revolve around specific topics designed to provide academic and affective information that could be beneficial to parents and students. In addition, the parents involved in this study regularly attended school and district sponsored parental engagement events to learn more about programs that are available to students and parents. Moreover, one parent served as a volunteer on campus and assisted school staff with various activities to be closer to her children during the day. This allowed the parent to be available for her children or her children's teachers, if the need arose. While it may not be feasible for all parents to volunteer regularly at their child's campus, it may be possible for them

to adopt a classroom and offer assistance to the teacher at different times throughout the school year. Parents could help by offering teachers support in creating instructional resources or taking supplies to the school. These types of activities would promote partnerships between parents and teachers and serve to support the instructional program.

In conclusion, implications were delineated for university and college preparation programs, school districts, and parents based on the findings derived from this research study. The results of this study could be utilized by universities and colleges, school districts, and parents to favorably enhance students' educational opportunities and provide systems of support for all stakeholders. The implications could also serve to foster partnerships between stakeholders to subsequently reinforce teaching and learning.

#### Limitations

This study possessed its challenges and limitations. For example, this study was conducted with a small sample size. In addition, research findings cannot be generalized and applied to all stakeholders (school administrators, teachers, parents, and students) in all settings due to the unique bicultural, binational area of the nation in which this research study was conducted. This study involved one school district and one campus in a South Texas border town. When a close similarity exists between the demographics of the population, participant selection criteria, and the setting, it may be possible to apply research findings from this study. However, in situations where participants do not meet the selection criteria or the study site does not match the environment in which this study was conducted, it will likely not be possible to apply the findings associated with this research study.

Challenges were also encountered during the course of this study. The most significant challenge involved the time in which to complete the data collection process. The researcher is employed full-time as a school administrator. As a school administrator conducting research at an elementary school site, locating time to collect data was a challenge. Coordinating mutual meeting times with participants was difficult. In addition, observations could only be conducted on Saturdays so the discussion topics were narrowed as a result. Moreover, participant recruitment of teachers was difficult. Due to the researcher's work schedule, recruitment and interviews had to be completed during the onset of the summer vacation. Summer break had already begun when the researcher began the interview phase of the data collection process. Fortunately, the research site served as a summer school site, thus allowing the researcher to recruit participants who met the selection criteria from the Cisneros Elementary School summer school teaching staff.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

This study was conducted in a South Texas school district at an elementary campus with a predominately Latino, low socioeconomic population. The purpose of this study was to investigate the existing application of funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) that occur within Latino families along the Texas-Mexico border to enable partnerships between home and school to subsequently influence teaching and learning. Data was collected over a twenty-three week timeframe. The data collected included observations, documents and archival data, interviews, and questionnaires. Data was analyzed using a two phase process. Multiple findings emerged as a result of this study.

To gain a different perspective, this study should be replicated in a different area of the United States with a different population. This study was conducted in South Texas with a Latino population. Every participant involved in this study was Latino. Therefore, the information shared by the participants was told from a Latino lens with a Latino perspective. The findings that emerged from this study and the El Sur community were unique to the area and to the environment. For that reason, research should be conducted in another community with a different population. Conducting this research study in another location with a different ethnic group might yield alternate results.

Moreover, this study involved the perceptions of four levels of stakeholders: administrators, teachers, parents, and students. The purpose of involving four levels of stakeholders was to obtain a more informed and comprehensive view of one school's efforts to promote parental involvement. Each level provided a different perspective of establishing home school connections to promote teaching and learning. Conducting this study with different levels of stakeholders could provide findings that are inconsistent with those obtained throughout the course of this study. For instance, a study only involving Latino students could have different results. Latino students tend to straddle two worlds. During the day, they participate in an academic system that relies on individualistic nuances to educate students. On the other hand, Latino students are part of a Latino culture that values collectivism. A research study that examines students' perceptions of parental involvement, the existence of community cultural wealth, and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) within their communities and their use in the academic system could be investigated.

Finally, this study was conducted as a single case study at one elementary school in South Texas. This study could be conducted within a school district at multiple research sites. Then, a cross-case analysis of the selected schools within the district could be carried out. Comparisons could be made of campuses with similar or differing demographics to ascertain the funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) prevalent within the community. Levels of parental involvement at each campus could be explored. Observations could also be conducted in classrooms to determine whether funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) are actually implemented within the classroom setting.

As previously mentioned, this study could be replicated by changing the location. Different participants could be sought for involvement in the study. A study involving multiple study sites and conducting a comparison of findings between the sites could also be performed. All in all, manipulating the methodological processes utilized in this study may offer alternate findings.

### Conclusion

As the Latino population grows, so does the need to ensure that Latino students are properly educated. Research suggests that families are integral components in the lives of Latino students (Ayon & Aisenberg, 2010; Durand, 2010; LaRoche & Schriberg, 2005; Rudolph, et al., 2011). For this reason, it is necessary for schools to establish partnerships with parents that serve to support teaching and learning.

To accomplish this task, schools should work with parents to identify the unique skillsets that are available within their communities. As previously noted, communities of color possess community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) that, when

harnessed, can be used in the classroom by teachers to form connections between students' home lives and academics. However, to do this, teachers need to become knowledgeable about their students' backgrounds. As indicated by Hogg (2011), "To support the learning of ethnically diverse students successfully, teachers clearly need to build their knowledge of students" (p. 667). Along those same lines, as teachers become cognizant of their students' backgrounds, they must make an effort to look beyond cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic differences that exist between their students and mainstream society. For, people's backgrounds should not dictate the levels of education afforded to them.

Moreover, educators should also make an effort to work with parents. All parents have the capacity to provide their children with the needed support to ensure that they become successful, productive adults. However, sometimes parents do not possess the skills necessary to provide their children with academic reinforcement. By creating welcoming school environments and establishing opportunities for parents to engage in parental engagement sessions designed to support teaching and learning, parents can eventually become more familiarized with strategies and techniques to work with their children at home.

Finally, if changes are to be made to the educational system in an effort to create inclusive opportunities for all students, then districts and schools alike must recognize that educators are in need of more adequate professional development. To successfully engage parents and students in the learning process, teachers and administrators must know how to interact with all demographic populations. Educators cannot assume that all strategies and techniques work in the same fashion for all populations. Instruction is expected to be tailored to meet the needs of

all students. Parental involvement initiatives should also be tailored to meet the needs of the various populations that visit the campus.

The education of children is not a task that should solely be left to the school system. Parents should be partners in education along with the school and, if possible, with the community as well. The education of today's children will influence the future. Therefore, it is imperative that all stakeholders be informed participants in the education of students.



## References

- Amanti, C. (2005). Beyond a beads and feathers approach. In N. Gonzalez, L. C. Moll & C. Amanti (Eds.). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms* (pp. 131-141). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ayon, C., & Aisenberg, E. (2010). Negotiating cultural values and expectations within the public child welfare system: A look at familismo and personalismo. *Child and Family Social Work, 15*, 335-344.
- Auerbach, S. (2007). From moral supporters to struggling advocates: Reconceptualizing parent roles in education through the experience of working-class families of color. *Urban Education, 42*(3), 250-283. doi: 10.1177/0042085907300433
- Becerra, D. (2012). Perceptions of educational barriers affecting the academic achievement of Latino K-12 students. *Children & Schools, 34*(3), 167-177.
- Bobbitt, F. (1918). Scientific method in curriculum making. In D. Flinders, & S. Thorton, *The curriculum studies reader* (pp. 52-61). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Boykin, A. W., & Noguera, P. A. (2011). *Creating the opportunity to learn: Moving from research to practice to close the achievement gap*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Bryant, M. T. (2004). *The portable dissertation advisor*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Carlisle, E., Stanley, L., Kemple, K. M., (2005). Opening doors: Understanding school and family influences on family involvement. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 33*(3), 155-162.

- Casas, J. F. & Ryan, C. S. (2010). How Latinos are transforming the United States policy. *Journal of Social Issues* 66(1), 1-10.
- Cerna, O., Perez, P., & Saenz, V. (2009). Examining the precollege attributes and values of Latina/o bachelor's degree attainers. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 8(2), 130-157.
- Children's Defense Fund. (2014). Child poverty in America 2013: National analysis. Retrieved from Children's Defense Fund website: <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/child-poverty-in-america-2013.pdf>
- Clayton, J. K. (2011). Changing diversity in U.S. schools: The impact on elementary student performance and achievement. *Education and Urban Society*, 43(6), 671-695.
- Contreras, F. (2011). *Achieving equity for Latino students*. New York City, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Cucchiara, M. B., & Horvat, E. M. (2009). Perils and promises: Middle-Class parental involvement in urban schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 46(4), 974-1004.
- Dance, L. J. (2002). *Tough fronts: The impact of street culture on schooling*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Daniel, G. (2011). Family-school partnerships: Towards sustainable pedagogical practice. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*. 39(2), 165-176.
- DeCuir-Gunby, J. T., DeVance Taliaferro, J., & Greenfield, D. (2009). Educators' perspectives on culturally relevant programs for academic success: The American Excellence Association. *Education and Urban Society*, 42(2), 182-204.

- De Gaetano, Y. (2007). The role of culture in engaging Latino parents' involvement in school. *Urban Education, 42*(2), 145-162. doi: 10.1177/0042085906296536.
- de la Piedra, M. T. (2010). Adolescent worlds and literacy practices on the United States-Mexico border. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 53*(7), 575-584.
- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1992). School matters in the Mexican American home: Socializing children to education. *American Educational Research Journal, 29*(3), 495-513.
- Dewey, J. (1929). My pedagogic creed. In D. Flinders, & S. Thorton, *The curriculum studies reader* (pp. 24-41). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Durand, T. M. (2011). Latina mothers' cultural beliefs about their children, parental roles, and education: Implications for effective and empowering home school relationships. *Urban Review, 43*, 255-278.
- Dworin, J. E. (2006). The family stories project: Using funds of knowledge for writing. *The Reading Teacher, 59*(6), 510-520.
- Ellis, A. (2004). *Exemplars of curriculum theory*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.
- Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I., & Shaw, L.L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Ennis, S. R., Rios-Vargas, M., & Albert, N. G. (2011). The Hispanic population: 2010. Retrieved from United States Census website: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov): <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf>.
- Epstein, J. L., & Sanders, M. (2006). Prospects for change: Preparing educators for school, family, and community partnerships. *Peabody Journal of Education, 81*(2), 81-120.

- Esposito, J., & Swain, A. N. (2009). Pathways to social justice: Urban teachers' uses of culturally relevant pedagogy as a conduit for teaching for social justice. *Perspectives on Urban Education*, Spring, 38-48.
- Flynn, G., & Nolan, B. (2008). What do school principals think about current school-family relationships? *NASSP Bulletin*, 92(3), 173-190.
- Fram, M. S., Miller-Cribbs, J. E., & Van Horn, L. (2007). Poverty, race, and the contexts of achievement: Examining educational experiences of children in the U.S. South. *National Association of Social Workers*, 52(4), 309-319.
- Gardiner, M.E. & Enomoto, E. (2006). Urban school principals and their role as multicultural leaders. *Urban Review*, 41(6), 560-584.
- Gándara, P. C., & Contreras, F. (2009). *The Latino education crisis: The consequences of failed social policies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. New York, NY: Teachers' College Press.
- Goldenberg, C., Gallimore, R., Reese, L., & Garnier, H. (2001). Cause or effect? A longitudinal study of immigrant Latino parents' aspirations and expectations, and their children's school performance. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 547-582.
- González, N. (2005). Beyond culture: The hybridity of funds of knowledge. In N. González, L. Moll, & C. Amanti (Eds.). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms* (pp. 29–46). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Good, M. E., Masewicz, S., & Vogel, L. (2010). Latino English language learners: Bridging achievement and cultural gaps between schools and families. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 9(4), 321-339.

- Gordon, M. F., & Louis, K. S. (2009). Linking parent and community involvement with student achievement: Comparing principal and teacher perceptions of stakeholder influence. *American Journal of Education, 116*(1), 1-31.
- Gregg, K., Rugg, M., & Stoneman, Z. (2012). Building on the hopes and dreams of Latino families with young children: Findings from family member focus groups. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 40*, 87-96.
- Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Noguera, P. A. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational Researcher, 39*(1), 59-68.
- Groulx, J. G. (2001). Changing preservice teacher perceptions of minority students. *Urban Education, 36*, 60-92.
- Guinn, R., Vincent, V., Lin, W., & Villas, P. (2011). Acculturation tendencies in a border Latino population. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 33*(2), 170-183. doi: 10.1177/0739986311398209.
- Haack, L. M., Gerdes, A. C., & Lawton, K. E. (2012). Conducting research with Latino families: Examination of strategies to improve recruitment, retention, and satisfaction with an at-risk and underserved population. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 20*, 410-421.
- Hill, N. E., & Torres, K. (2010). Negotiating the American dream: The paradox of aspirations and achievement among Latino students and engagement between their families and schools. *Journal of Social Issues, 66*(1), 95-112.
- Hogg, L. (2011). Funds of knowledge: An investigation of coherence within the literature. *Teacher and Teacher Education, 27*(3), 666-677.

- Hughes, C., Hollander, M. J., & Martinez, A. W. (2009). Hispanic acculturation in a predominately Black high school: Application of an adapted model. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 31*(32-56). doi: 10.1177/0739986308329031
- Hughes, C., Page, A., & Ford, D. Y. (2011). Cultural dynamics in an economically challenged, multiethnic middle school: Student perceptions. *Journal of At-Risk Issues, 16*(1), 9-16.
- Jasis, P. M., & Ordonez-Jasis, R. (2012). Latino parent involvement: Examining commitment and empowerment in schools. *Urban Education, 47*(1), 65-89.
- Keis, R. (2006). From principle to practice: Using children's literature to promote dialogue and facilitate the "coming to voice" in a rural Latino community. *Multicultural Perspectives, 8*(1), 13-19.
- Kiyama, J. M. (2010). College aspirations and limitations: The role of educational ideologies and funds of knowledge in Mexican American families. *American Educational Research Journal, 47*(2), 330-356.
- Lamont, M., & Lareau, A. (1988). Cultural capital: Allusions, gaps, and glissandos in recent theoretical developments. *Sociological Theory, 6*, 153-168.
- La Roche, M. J., & Shriberg, D. (2004). High stakes exams and Latino students: Toward a culturally sensitive education for Latino children in the United States. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 15*(2), 205-223.
- LaRocque, M., Kleiman, I., Darling, S. M. (2011). Parental involvement: The missing link in school achievement. *Preventing School Failure, 55*(3), 115-122.
- LeFevre, A. L., & Shaw, T. V. (2012). Latino parent involvement and school success: Longitudinal effects of formal and informal support. *Education and Urban Society, 44*(6), 707-723.

- Luna, N. A., & Martinez, M. (2013). A qualitative study using community cultural wealth to understand the educational experiences of Latino college students. *Journal of Praxis in Multicultural Education*, 7(1), 1-18.
- Mandell, C. J., & Murray, M. M. (2009). Administrators' understanding and use of family-centered practices. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 32(1), 17-37.
- Marquez, R. R., & Romo, H. D. (2008). Introduction. In R. R. Marquez & H. D. Romo (Eds.). *Transformations of La Familia on the U.S.-Mexico border* (pp. 1-28). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Marschall, M. (2006). Parental involvement and educational outcomes for Latino students. *Review of Policy Research*, 23(5), 1053-1076.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2011). *Designing qualitative research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Marshall, E., & Toohey, K. (2010). Representing family: Community funds of knowledge, bilingualism, and multimodality. *Educational Review*, 80(2), 221-241.
- Martinez-Cosio, M. (2010). Parents' roles in mediating and buffering the implementation of an urban school reform. *Education and Urban Society*, 42(3), 283-306.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- McKenzie, K. & Scheurich, J. (2004). Equity traps: A useful construct for preparing principals to lead schools that are successful with racially diverse students. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 40(5), 601-632.
- McKown, C., & Weinstein, R. (2008). Teacher expectations, classroom context, and the achievement gap. *Journal of School Psychology*, 46, 235-261.

- Mena, J. A. (2011). Latino parent home-based practices that bolster student academic persistence. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 33(4), 490-506.
- Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Milner, H. R. (2010). *Start where you are, but don't stay there: Understanding diversity, opportunity gaps, and teaching in today's classrooms*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Moll, L. C. (1992). Bilingual classroom studies and community analysis: Some recent trends. *Educational Researcher*, 21(2), 20-24.
- Moll, L. C., & Diaz, S. (1987). Change as the goal of educational research. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 18(4), 300-311.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.
- Moll, L. C., Velez-Ibanez, C. G., & Greenberg, J. B. (1990). *Community knowledge and classroom practice: Combining resources for literacy instruction*. Arlington, VA: Development Associates.
- Monkman, K., Ronald, M., & Théràmène, F. (2005, May). Social and cultural capital in an urban Latino school community. *Urban Education*, 40(1), 4-33.
- Moreno, G., & Gaytan, F. X. (2013). Focus on Latino learners: Developing a foundational understanding of Latino cultures to cultivate student success. *Preventing School Failure*, 57(1), 7-16.



- National Council of La Raza. (2014). *New data show that Latino poverty is improving but remains alarmingly high*. Retrieved from National Council of La Raza website:  
<http://www.nclr.org/images/uploads/publications/2013DataLatinoPovertyAnalysis.pdf>
- Nelson, S. W., & Guerra, P. L. (2013). Educator beliefs and cultural knowledge: Implications for school improvement efforts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*. doi:  
10.1177/0013161x13488595.
- Niemeyer, A. E., Wong, M. M., & Westerhaus, K. J. (2009). Parental involvement, familismo, and academic performance in Hispanic and Caucasian adolescents. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 11(3), 613-632.
- Olmedo, I. M. (2009). Blending borders of language and culture: Schooling in La Villita. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 8(1), 32-37.
- Ortiz, A. M., & Santos, S. (2009). *Ethnicity in college: Advancing theory and improving diversity practices on campus*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Padilla, R. V. (2000). Chicano pedagogy: Confluence, knowledge, and transformation. *Perspectives in Mexican American Studies*, 7, 91-110.
- Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Pemberton, K. D., & Miller, S. (2013). Building home-school relationships to enhance reading achievement for students from families with limited financial resources. *Education and Urban Society*, 20(10), 1-23.
- Ramirez, A. D. (2012). Latino cultural knowledge in the social studies classroom. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 11(2), 213-226.

- Rios-Aguilar, C., Kiyama, J. M., Gravitt, M., & Moll, L. C. (2011). Funds of knowledge for the poor and forms of capital for the rich? A capital approach to examining funds of knowledge. *Theory and Research in Education, 9*(2), 163-184.
- Rodriguez, M. A. (2012). "But they just can't do it:" Reconciling teacher expectations of Latino students. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership, 15*(1), 25-31. doi: 10.1177/1555458912442605.
- Romo, H., & Falbo, T. (1996). *Latino high school graduation: Defying the odds*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Rudolph, B., Chavez, M., Quintana, F., & Salinas, G. (2011). Filial responsibility expectations among Mexican American undergraduates: Gender and biculturalism. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 10*(3), 168-182.
- Sanchez, C. (2009). Learning about students' culture and language through family stories elicited by dichos. *Early Childhood Educational Journal, 37*(2), 161-169.
- Schubert, W. (2010). Outside Curricula and Public Pedagogy. In J. Sandlin, B. Schultz, & J. Burdick, *Handbook of Public Pedagogy* (pp. 469-480). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Shah, P. (2009). Motivating participation: The symbolic effects of Latino representation on parent school involvement. *Social Science Quarterly, 90*(1), 212-230.
- Shapleigh, E. (2009). *Texas Borderlands: Frontier of the future* (5th ed.). Retrieved from Shapleigh.org website:  
[http://www.epcc.edu/AboutEPCC/Documents/Texas\\_Borderlands.pdf](http://www.epcc.edu/AboutEPCC/Documents/Texas_Borderlands.pdf)
- Smith, D. L., & Smith, B. J. (2008). Urban educators' voices: Understanding culture in the classroom. *The Urban Review, 41*(4), 334-351. doi: 10.1007/s11256-008-0108-8

- Spillane, J. P., Healey, K., & Mesler Parise, L. (2009). School leaders' opportunities to learn: a descriptive analysis from a distributed perspective. *Educational Review*, 61(4), 407-432.  
doi: 10.1080/00131910903403998
- Spradley, J. (1980). *Participant observation*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Sugarman, S. (2010). Seeing past the fences: Finding funds of knowledge for ethical teaching. *The New Educator*, 6, 96-117.
- Texas Education Agency. (2013). *2013 Accountability reports*. Retrieved from Texas Education Agency website:  
<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2013/srch.html?srch=C>
- Texas Education Agency. (2013). *2012-2013 School report card*. Retrieved from Texas Education Agency website:  
<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/src/2013/campus.srch.html>
- Texas Education Agency. (2013). *2013 Texas academic performance report*. Retrieved from Texas Education Agency website:  
<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/tapr/2013/srch.html?srch=C>
- Trumbull, E., Rothstein-Fisch, C., & Hernandez, E. (2003). Parent involvement in schooling: According to whose values? *The School Community Journal*, 13(2), 45-72.
- United States Census Bureau. (2014). *State & county quickfacts* Retrieved from United States Census website: <http://quickfacts.census.gov>.
- Upadhyay, B. (2005). Using students' lived experiences in an urban science classroom: An elementary school teacher's thinking. *Science Education*, 90(1), 94-110.

- Valenzuela, A. (2005). Subtractive schooling, caring relations, and social capital in the schooling of U.S.-Mexican youth (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). In D. J. Flinders, & S. J. Thornton (Eds.). *The curriculum studies reader* (pp. 336-347). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Varelas, M., & Pappas, C. C. (2006). Intertextuality in read-alouds of integrated science-literacy units in urban primary classrooms: opportunities for the development of thought and language. *Cognition and Instruction*, 24(2), 211-259.
- Vargas-Valle, E. D. (2012). Transborder links and formal education of urban youth on the northern border. *Frontera Norte*, 24(7), 35-61.
- Velez-Ibanez, C. G., & Greenberg, J. B. (1992). Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge among U.S.-Mexican households. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 23(4), 313-335.
- Verdugo, R. R., & Flores, B. (2007). English-language learners: Key issues. *Education and Urban Society*, 39(2), 167-193. doi: 10.1177/0013124506294852
- Weisman, E., & Garza, S. (2002). Preservice teacher attitudes toward diversity: Can one class make a difference? *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 35(1), 28-34.
- Williams, T. T., & Sanchez, B. (2012). Parental involvement (and uninvolvement) at an inner-city high school. *Urban Education*, 47(3), 625-652.
- Yin, R.K. (2009). Case study research: Design and methods. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Yosso, T. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, 8(1), 69-91.

## Appendices

## Appendix 1: Questions for District Administrator

1. Can you tell me the goals of the enrichment program?
2. How does this enrichment program support and promote parental engagement?
3. Which five schools, taking part in the enrichment program, have the highest levels of parental involvement?
4. What do these schools do differently to promote parental involvement and increase the levels of parental engagement on their campuses?
5. Of the five schools that you identified, is there one school that stands out from the rest?  
What does this school do differently than the others?
6. What roles do administrators, teachers, and parents play in relation to this enrichment program?

## Appendix 2: Teacher Focus Group Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself and your professional experience.
2. Describe the experiences that you have had working with parents.
3. How does your school promote parental engagement?
4. Describe the ways that parents are involved at your school.
5. What are your thoughts on establishing home-school partnerships? What do you feel is your role in promoting parental involvement?
6. How do you encourage parents to become active in their child's education?
7. What do students tell you about how their parents support their education?
8. Do you acknowledge cultural differences or similarities in your classroom? How so?
9. Describe the community's effort to establish partnerships with the school.
10. How can parents reinforce their child's educational attainment?

### Appendix 3: Parent Questionnaire

1. How many people reside in your household?  
*¿Cuántas personas residen en su hogar?*
2. How many are adults over 18?  
*¿Cuántos son adultos mayores de 18 años?*
3. How many are children under 18?  
*¿Cuántos son niños menores de 18 años?*
4. Do you and/or the adults who reside in your household work outside the home?  
*¿Acerca de los adultos que residen en su hogar, tienen trabajos fuera de la casa?*
5. Please describe the occupations of each adult residing in your home.  
*Por favor describa las ocupaciones de cada adulto que residen en su hogar.*
6. Where did you attend school? What is your highest level of education?  
*¿Dónde fue usted a la escuela? ¿Cuál es su nivel más alto de educación?*
7. Where did the adults residing in your household attend school? What are their highest levels of education?  
*¿Donde asistieron la escuela los adultos que residen en su hogar? ¿Cuáles son sus niveles más altos de educación?*
8. Where do the children in your household attend school? What grades are they in?  
*¿Dónde asisten los niños que residen en su hogar a la escuela? ¿En qué niveles de grado permanecen?*
9. How long has your family lived in this area?  
*¿Cuánto tiempo ha vivido su familia en esta área?*
10. What languages are spoken in your home? *¿Cuales idiomas se hablan en su hogar?*



#### Appendix 4: Parent Interview Questions

1. What is the most important/significant lesson that your parents taught you?  
*¿Cuál es la lección más importante que sus padres le enseñaron?*
2. Do you try to instill morals and values in your children? How?  
*¿Cómo trata de inculcar morales y valores en sus hijos?*
3. What do you try to teach your children?  
*¿Qué intenta enseñarles a sus hijos?*
4. Could you describe any traditions that your family honors?  
*¿Podría describir las tradiciones que su familia honra?*
5. What activities does your family/family members participate in outside of the home?  
*¿Qué actividades participa su familia/miembros de su familia fuera del hogar?*
6. Describe your family's daily connections with each other. What activities or habits does your family engage in on a daily basis?  
*Puede describir las conexiones diarias en que su familia participa uno con el otro.*  
*¿En qué actividades o hábitos interactúa su familia diariamente?*
7. As a parent, what do you believe is your responsibility regarding your child's education?  
*¿Como padre, qué cree que es su responsabilidad respecto a la educación de su hijo?*
8. What should students learn at school?  
*¿Que deben de aprender los estudiantes en la escuela?*
9. In your home, how do you reinforce the school's efforts to educate your children?  
*¿En su casa como refuerza las destrezas de la escuela para educar a sus hijos?*

10. Do you participate in any school events? If so, which types of events do you participate in?  
*¿Participa en los eventos de la escuela? ¿Si es así, en cuales tipos de eventos participa?*
11. Is there anything at your child's school that needs to be improved?  
*¿Hay algo en la escuela de su hijo que necesita ser mejorado?*
12. Describe a time when you encountered a positive parental involvement experience at your child's school.  
*¿Puede describir un momento cuando usted encontró una experiencia positiva acerca de la participación de los padres en la escuela de su hijo?*
13. Could you describe a time when the involvement at your child's school was not positive?  
*¿Podría describir un momento cuando la participación en la escuela de su hijo no era positiva?*
14. How often do you visit your child's school? How do you feel when you are there?  
*¿Con qué frecuencia visita la escuela de su hijo? ¿Cómo se siente cuando está ahí?*
15. Describe parental involvement at your child's school.  
*¿Puede describir la participación de los padres en la escuela de su hijo?*
16. What is your ideal parent-teacher-school partnership?  
*¿Qué cree usted que es una asociación ideal entre padre, maestro, y escuela?*
17. How can your child's school increase the levels of parental involvement?  
*¿Cómo puede aumentar la escuela los niveles de participación de los padres?*

Appendix 5: School Administrator Questionnaire

*Please answer the questions below to the best of your ability.*

1. Tell me about yourself and your background.

---

---

---

---

---

2. What is your district's policy regarding parental involvement and promoting connections between home-school-community?

---

---

---

---

---

3. What is your opinion regarding your district's policies?

---

---

---

---

---

4. To what extent are principals guided by federal, state, and/or local policies regarding promoting connections between home-school-community?

---

---

---

---

---

5. What is your view on parental involvement?

---

---

---

---

---

6. How do you promote parental engagement on your campus?

---

---

---

---

---

7. When it comes to supporting their child's education, what role do you believe that your students' parents should assume?

---

---

---

---

---

8. What are the common questions that parents generally have regarding their child's education?

---

---

---

---

---

9. When it comes to promoting parental involvement, what role do you believe that you as the campus leader should assume?

---

---

---

---

---

10. To promote familial engagement, what role should your campus teachers assume?

---

---

---

---

---

11. How does your campus incorporate students' cultural background into the educational setting?

---

---

---

---

---

12. How does your school involve the community in the education of your students?

---

---

---

---

---

13. What programs or activities are available at your campus to foster connections between home and school?

---

---

---

---

---

14. What are the biggest advantages and challenges associated with parental involvement?

---

---

---

---

---

15. Do you welcome parents to visit your school? Why? Why not?

---

---

---

---

---

16. Summarize your thoughts about parental involvement, establishing connections between home & school, and/or incorporating students' culture into the learning process.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Appendix 6: Student Questionnaire

1. How old are you? What grade are you in?

---

---

---

2. Tell me about your school. What is it like?

---

---

---

---

---

3. What is your favorite part about your school? What is your least favorite part?

---

---

---

---

---

4. Tell me about your teacher(s) and your class(es).

---

---

---



---

---

5. What is your favorite subject? What makes it your favorite?

---

---

---

---

---

6. What is your least favorite subject? Why don't you like it?

---

---

---

---

---

7. What types of activities do you do in your class(es)?

---

---

---

---

---

8. Do you talk to your parents about what happens at school? Your grades? Your school work?

---

---

---

---

---

9. Tell me about a time when your parents gave you advice about school.

---

---

---

---

---

10. What do you do when you get home from school?

---

---

---

---

---

11. Are you involved in any activities in school? How about within the community?

---

---

---

---

---

12. Do you talk to your parents about what you want to do when you grow up?

---

---

---

---

---

13. What kinds of activities do you and your family do together?

---

---

---

---

---

14. What can you tell me about your culture? What does your culture mean to you?

---

---

---

---

---

15. Can you think of any activities that your school does to recognize your culture?

---

---

---

Appendix 7: Discussion Notes Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Informant: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Time</b>	<b>Notes</b>

Appendix 8: Observation Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lay of the Land**

<b>Description of Location</b>	
<b>Individuals Present</b>	
<b>Languages Spoken</b>	

Appendix 8: Observation Form Continued

<b>Time</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Interpretation/ Analysis/Code</b>

Appendix 9: School District Approval Form

February 21, 2014

Cynthia A. Lopez

[REDACTED]

Brownsville, Texas 78521

Re: Application for Research Study

Dear Ms. Lopez:

Please be advised that your application for Research Study has been approved. The research ID number assigned to your request is 2014-03-2.

Attached you will find a Principal Agreement to Participate Form, please return this completed form once the campuses you select in your study have agreed to participate.

We are respectfully requesting that you forward your research results and/or a copy of the publication, if any, to our office upon completion of the project.

Identifying information has been cropped to maintain school district confidentiality.

## Appendix 10: University IRB Approval



### Research Integrity and Compliance

The University of Texas at Brownsville

*Matthew Johnson, Ph.D.*  
IRB Chair

February 28, 2014

Ms. Cynthia Lopez  
The University of Texas at Brownsville  
One West University Blvd.  
Brownsville, Texas 78520  
RE: IRB-HS Approval

Study Title: "Stakeholders' Perceptions of Parental Involvement and Home-School Connections in a South Texas Border Town"

Protocol #: 2014-024-IRB

Dear Ms. Lopez,

In accordance with Federal Regulations for review of research protocols, the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects of The University of Texas at Brownsville has reviewed your study as requested.

The IRB-HS grants its approval for this project contingent on compliance with the following items. You may make as many copies of the stamped consent form as are necessary for your activity. All consent forms MUST bear the UTB IRB stamp indicating approval.

Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator also include:

- Inform the IRB-HS in writing immediately of any emergent problems or proposed changes.
- Do not proceed with the research until any problems have been resolved and the IRB-HS have reviewed and approved any changes.
- Report any significant findings that become known in the course of the research that might affect the willingness of the subjects to take part.
- Protect the confidentiality of all personally identifiable information collected.
- Submit for review and approval by the IRB-HS all modifications to the protocol or consent form(s) prior to implementation of any change(s).
- Submit an activity/progress report regarding research activities to the IRB-HS on no less than an annual basis or as directed by the IRB-HS through the Continuing Review Form.
- Notify the IRB-HS when study has been completed through submission of a Project Completion Report.

Should you have any questions or need any further information concerning this document please feel free to contact me at (956) 882-8888 or via email at [Matthew.Johnson@utb.edu](mailto:Matthew.Johnson@utb.edu).

Sincerely yours,

*Matthew Johnson, Ph.D.*

Matthew Johnson, Ph.D.  
IRB – Chair

#### Approval Type:

- Full Board Review
- Designated Member Review
- Continuing Review
- Change request/Modification/Amendment
- Exempt Category
- Expedited Category 7

#### Approval Period:

**Start Date:** February 28, 2014

**End Date:** February 27, 2015

One West University Blvd. • BRHP 2.210 • Brownsville, Texas 78520 • 956-882-7731 • [research.compliance@utb.edu](mailto:research.compliance@utb.edu)



## Appendix 11: English Consent Form

1

Consent Form-English

**Project Title:** Stakeholders' Perceptions of Parental Involvement and Home-School Connections in a South Texas Border Town

- 1. Invitation to Participate:** You are invited to participate in a study as part of a research project about parental involvement and connections between home and school within a school district in South Texas. This research project is being conducted by doctoral candidate, from the University of Texas at Brownsville.
- 2. Basis for Subject Selection:** You have been selected because you fit at least one of the categories listed below:
  - You are a district administrator with professional expertise, knowledge, and experience regarding the school district's efforts to promote parental engagement and/or involvement.
  - You are a school administrator at a campus designated as having a parental involvement rate higher than other campuses within the district.
  - You are a teacher with more than three years of experience at a campus designated as having a parental involvement rate higher than other campuses within the district.
  - You are the parent of a student who attends a campus designated as having a parental involvement rate higher than other campuses within the district and have participated in at least one parental engagement activity throughout the year.
- 3. Overall Purpose of Study:** The purpose of this study is to explore the current application of the available knowledge, skills, and assets that exist within Latino families along the Texas-Mexico border to can be used to enable partnerships between home and school. Through this research, we will be able to understand how schools can open the lines of communication between students' homes and schools to support teaching and learning.
- 4. Explanation of Procedures:** If you decide to participate, you will be asked to share documents such as letters, forms, flyers, or other artifacts that show evidence of communication between parents and the school. Also, if you participate you will be asked to take part in a discussion, a one to one interview, or a focus group interview. The discussion, interviews, and focus group sessions will each take approximately thirty minutes to two hours to complete and will consist of questions related to your perceptions of parental involvement, your experiences with interacting with the local school system, and your efforts in reinforcing education for Latino students along the Texas-Mexico border. The researcher will also conduct observations of parental engagement sessions held at the school site. It is possible that you might be present during the observation sessions.
- 5. Potential Risks and Discomforts:**

There may be some questions that may make you uncomfortable or upset. If certain interview or focus group interview questions seem very personal, you may feel that your privacy has been violated, even though your participation is anonymous. You do not have

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez  
Approval Date 2/28/2014  
Expiration Date 2/27/2016

## Consent Form-English

to respond to any questions that you do not want to answer. You are always free to decline to answer any question or to stop your participation at any time.

6. **Potential Benefits:** There is no direct benefit to you; however, your participation will contribute to our understanding of how to improve communication between educators, parents, and students. Additionally, by participating in this study, you will have a chance to share your experiences and insight with others.
7. **Compensation for Participation:** No compensation for participation will be provided.
8. **Assurance of Confidentiality:** Information obtained from interviews, focus groups, document collection, and observations will be kept anonymous to protect your privacy and confidentiality. A pseudonym will be used in place of your real name. All data, including data with identifiable personal information (audio recordings of interviews, focus group sessions, documents, discussion notes, and observation field notes), will be kept on a password-protected hard drive in a locked file cabinet in the office of the principal investigator, Cynthia Lopez, for three years after study completion.
9. **Drug Investigation:** This research study does not require the consumption or use of drugs in participants.
10. **Withdrawal from the Study:** Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to.
11. **Offer to Answer Questions:** You should feel free to ask questions now or at the any time during the study. If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact the principal investigator. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, you can also contact the UTB Office of Research Integrity and Compliance- BRHP 2.210 at 956-882-7731.

**Consent Statement:**

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that, having read and understood the information provided above, you have decided to participate. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness (if project involves more than minimal risk)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez  
Approval Date 2/28/2014  
Expiration Date 2/27/2018



## Appendix 12: Spanish Consent Form

1

Consent Form-Spanish

**Project Title:** Stakeholders' Perceptions of Parental Involvement and Home-School Connections in a South Texas Border Town

**Título de Proyecto:** Percepciones de las partes interesadas de participación de los padres y las conexiones de hogar y la escuela en un pueblo fronterizo de South Texas

**1. Invitación a participar:** Te invitamos a participar en un estudio como parte de un proyecto de investigación sobre la participación de los padres y las conexiones entre el hogar y la escuela dentro de un distrito escolar en el sur de Texas. Este proyecto de investigación se está realizando por candidata doctoral, Cynthia A. López, de la Universidad de Texas en Brownsville.

**2. Base para la selección de participante:** Usted ha sido seleccionado porque pertenece al menos una de las categorías que se enumeran a continuación:

- Usted es un administrador de distrito con experiencia profesional, conocimiento y experiencia con respecto a los esfuerzos del distrito escolar para promover el participación de los padres.
- Usted es un administrador de escuela en un campus señalado como teniendo un nivel de participación de los padres más alta que otras escuelas dentro del distrito.
- Usted es un maestro con más de tres años de experiencia en un campus señalado como teniendo un nivel de participación de los padres más alta que otras escuelas dentro del distrito.
- Usted es el padre de un estudiante que asiste a un campus señalado como teniendo un nivel de participación de los padres más alta que otras escuelas dentro del distrito y ha participado en al menos una actividad de padres durante el año.

**3. Propósito general de estudio:** El propósito de este estudio es explorar la aplicación actual de los conocimientos disponibles, habilidades, y activos que existen dentro de las familias latinas a lo largo de la frontera de Texas y México que pueden usarse para formular asociaciones entre hogar y escuela. A través de esta investigación, seremos capaces de entender cómo las escuelas pueden abrir las líneas de comunicación entre hogares y escuelas para apoyar la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de los estudiantes.

**4. Explicación de los procedimientos:** Si usted decide participar, se le pedirá compartir documentos tales como cartas, formularios, folletos o otros artefactos que muestran evidencias de comunicación entre los padres y la escuela. Además, si participa se le pedirá tomar parte en una discusión, una entrevista uno a uno o una entrevista de grupo de enfoque. Las sesiones de discusión, entrevistas y grupos focales tomaran aproximadamente treinta minutos a dos horas para completar y consisten en preguntas relacionadas con sus percepciones de la participación de los padres, sus experiencias con

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez  
Approval Date 2/28/2014  
Expiration Date 2/27/2015

## Consent Form-Spanish

interacción con el sistema escolar local y sus esfuerzos en fortalecer la educación para los estudiantes latinos a lo largo de la frontera de Texas y México. El investigador también llevará a cabo observaciones de sesiones de compromiso parental en el plantel escolar. Es posible que usted pudiera estar presente durante las sesiones de observación.

- 5. Potenciales riesgos e incomodidades:** Puede haber algunas preguntas que pueden hacerle sentir incómodo o molesto. Aunque su participación es anónima, no tiene que responder a cualquier pregunta que no desea responder. Siempre es libre de negarse a contestar cualquier pregunta o parar su participación en cualquier momento.
- 6. Beneficios potenciales:** No hay ningún beneficio directo a usted. Sin embargo, su participación contribuirá a nuestra comprensión de cómo mejorar la comunicación entre educadores, padres y estudiantes. Además, al participar en este estudio, usted tendrá la oportunidad de compartir sus experiencias y conocimiento con otros.
- 7. Compensación por participación:** No se proporcionará ninguna compensación por la participación en el estudio.
- 8. Garantía de confidencialidad:** Información obtenida de entrevistas, grupos focales, colección de documentos y observaciones se mantendrá anónimas para proteger su privacidad y confidencialidad. Se utilizará un seudónimo en lugar de su nombre verdadero. Todos los datos, incluyendo datos con información personal identificable (grabaciones de audio de entrevistas, sesiones de grupo de enfoque, documentos, notas de discusión y notas de observación), se mantendrá en un disco duro protegido por código privado en un gabinete de archivo con candado en la oficina del investigador principal, Cynthia López, por tres años después de la terminación del estudio.
- 9. Investigación de drogas:** Este estudio de investigación no requiere que los participantes consuman o usen drogas de ningún tipo.
- 10. Retiro del estudio:** Su participación es voluntaria. Si usted decide participar, usted es libre de retirar su consentimiento y suspender su participación en cualquier momento. No tiene que participar en este estudio, si no quiere.
- 11. Oferta responder preguntas:** Debería sentirse libre para hacer preguntas ahora o en el algún momento durante el estudio. Si usted tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud, puede contactar con el investigador principal, Cynthia López. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Si usted tiene preguntas acerca de sus derechos como participante en un estudio de investigación, también puede contactar a la oficina de integridad de investigación UTB y el cumplimiento (UTB Research Integrity and Compliance Office – BRHP 2.210,) en el 956-882-7731.

## Consent Form-Spanish

**Declaración de consentimiento:**

Voluntariamente está cometiendo una decisión de participar o no. Su firma indica que haber leído y comprendido la información proporcionada anteriormente, han decidido participar. Se le dará una copia de este formulario de consentimiento para mantener.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre (letra de molde)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del participante

Fecha \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del investigador

Fecha \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Testigo (si proyecto lleva mas que mínimo riesgo)

Fecha \_\_\_\_\_

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez  
Approval Date 2/28/2014  
Expiration Date 2/27/2015

# Appendix 13: English Student Assent Form

1

Child Assent Form

## Assent Form For Child or Minor Subject

Dear Student:

You are being asked to participate in a study about school administrators', teachers', parents', and students' views about parental involvement and communication between home and school. For this study, you will be given the chance to answer questions on a questionnaire where the researcher will ask you about your home life and your school experiences.

The questionnaire should take you about 30 minutes to complete. The answers that you provide will be confidential. This means that your answers will be kept private. Your real name will not be used at any time during this study.

Participating in this questionnaire is voluntary which means that you do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you do choose to participate, you do not have to answer any questions that might make you feel uncomfortable or upset. You may also choose to stop participating at any time. Before participating in the study, you do have to discuss your involvement in the questionnaire with your parents and obtain their permission.

There are no benefits to participating in this study. Your participation will help us learn more about how to improve communication between parents and educators to make teaching and learning better for other students.

If you have any questions, you may contact the researcher, Ms. Cynthia Lopez at [REDACTED]. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, you can also contact the UTB Office of Research Integrity and Compliance-BRHP 2.210 at 956-882-7731.

### Consent Statement:

I understand that:

- My participation is voluntary, and I can withdraw at any time.
- By signing below, I have decided to participate in the research study.
- My parents have to give me permission to be take part in the questionnaire.
- I will be given a copy of this form to keep.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness (if project involves more than minimal risk)

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez  
Approval Date 2/28/2014  
Expiration Date 2/27/2015

## Appendix 14: Spanish Student Assent Form

1

Child Assent Form-Spanish

### Formulario de Consentimiento

#### Para un Niño Participante de Menor Edad

Estimado estudiante:

Se les ha pedido a participar en un estudio sobre los percepciones de administradores de escuelas, maestros, padres y de los estudiantes sobre la participación de los padres y la comunicación entre el hogar y la escuela. Para este estudio, se le dará la oportunidad de responder a preguntas en un cuestionario donde el investigador le preguntará sobre su vida y experiencias de su escuela.

Se llevará unos 30 minutos para completar el cuestionario. Las respuestas que usted proporcione serán confidenciales. Esto significa que sus respuestas se mantendrán privadas. Su verdadero nombre no se utilizará en cualquier momento durante este estudio.

Participar en este cuestionario es voluntario que significa que usted no tiene que participar si no quiere. Si usted elige participar, no tiene que contestar a cualquier pregunta que pueda hacerle sentir incómodo o molesto. También puede dejar de participar en cualquier momento. Antes de participar en el estudio, tendrá que hablar de su participación en el cuestionario con sus padres y obtener su permiso.

No hay ningún beneficio para participar en este estudio. Su participación nos ayudará a saber más acerca de cómo mejorar la comunicación entre padres y educadores para mejorar la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de otros estudiantes.

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta, puede comunicarse con la investigadora, la Sra. Cynthia López en [REDACTED]. Si usted tiene preguntas acerca de sus derechos como participante en un estudio de investigación, también puede contactar UTB Office of Research Integrity and Compliance- BRHP 2.210 en el 956-882-7731.

#### Declaración de consentimiento:

Entiendo que:

- Mi participación es voluntaria y puedo retirar en cualquier momento.
- Al firmar abajo, he decidido participar en el estudio de investigación.
- Mis padres tienen que darme permiso para participar en el cuestionario.
- Se dará una copia de este formulario para mantener.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre (letra de molde)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del participante

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del investigador

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Testigo (si proyecto lleva mas que mínimo riesgo)

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez  
Approval Date 2/28/2014  
Expiration Date 2/27/2016

## Appendix 15: English Parent Consent Form

1

Consent Form-Parents-English

**Project Title:** Stakeholders' Perceptions of Parental Involvement and Home-School Connections in a South Texas Border Town

- 1. Invitation to Participate:** Your child has been invited to participate in a study as part of a research project about parental involvement and connections between home and school within a school district in South Texas. This research project is being conducted by doctoral candidate, Cynthia A. Lopez, from the University of Texas at Brownsville.
- 2. Basis for Subject Selection:** Your child has been selected because he or she attends school at the research site selected for the study based on its levels of parental involvement and because you have opted to participate as a parent in the study as well.
- 3. Overall Purpose of Study:** The purpose of this study is to explore the current application of the available knowledge, skills, and assets that exist within Latino families along the Texas-Mexico border to can be used to enable partnerships between home and school. Through this research, we will be able to understand how schools can open the lines of communication between students' homes and schools to support teaching and learning.
- 4. Explanation of Procedures:** If you decide to allow your child to participate, he or she will be given an open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete and will consist of questions related to your child's experiences within the school system, home efforts to reinforce education within the home, and experiences at home. The researcher will also conduct observations of parental engagement sessions held at the school site. It is possible that your child might be present during the observation sessions.
- 5. Potential risks and discomforts:** There may be some questions that may make your child uncomfortable or upset. Even though his or her participation is anonymous, your child does not have to respond to any questions that he or she does not want to answer. Your child is always free to decline to answer any question or to stop participation at any time.
- 6. Potential Benefits:** There is no direct benefit to your child; however, your child's participation will contribute to our understanding of how to improve communication between educators, parents, and students. Additionally, by participating in this study, your child will have a chance to share your experiences and insight with others.
- 7. Compensation for Participation:** No compensation for participation in the study will be provided.
- 8. Assurance of Confidentiality:** Information obtained from the questionnaire and observations will be kept anonymous to protect your privacy and confidentiality. A pseudonym will be used in place of your child's real name. All data, including data with

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez  
Approval Date 2/28/2014  
Expiration Date 2/27/2015



## Consent Form-Parents-English

identifiable personal information (audio recordings of interviews, questionnaire responses, documents, discussion notes, and observation field notes), will be kept on a password-protected hard drive in a locked file cabinet in the office of the principal investigator, Cynthia Lopez, for three years after study completion.

- 9. Drug Investigation:** This research study does not require the consumption or use of drugs in participants.
- 10. Withdrawal from the Study:** Your child's participation is voluntary. If your or your child decides to participate, you are free to withdraw your child's consent and discontinue participation at any time. Your child does not have to be in this study if he or she does not want to.
- 11. Offer to Answer Questions:** You or your child should feel free to ask questions now or at the any time during the study. If either of you have any questions or concerns, you can contact the principal investigator, Cynthia Lopez at [REDACTED]. If either of you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, you can also contact the UTB Office of Research Integrity and Compliance– BRHP 2.210, at 956-882-7731.

**Consent Statement:**

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to allow your child or legal ward to participate. Your signature indicates that, having read and understood the information provided above, you have decided to permit your child or legal ward to participate. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.


\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Relationship to Subject Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Relationship to Subject Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Signature of Investigator Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(if project involves more than minimal risk)

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez  
Approval Date 2/28/2014  
Expiration Date 2/27/2015



## Appendix 16: Spanish Parent Consent Form

1

### Consent Form-Parents-Spanish

**Project Title:** Stakeholders' Perceptions of Parental Involvement and Home-School Connections in a South Texas Border Town

**Título de Proyecto:** Percepciones de las partes interesadas de participación de los padres y las conexiones de hogar y la escuela en un pueblo fronterizo de South Texas

- 1. Invitación a participar:** Su niño ha sido invitado a participar en un estudio como parte de un proyecto de investigación sobre la participación de los padres y las conexiones entre el hogar y la escuela dentro de un distrito escolar en el sur de Texas. Este proyecto de investigación se está realizando por candidata doctoral, Cynthia A. Lopez, de la Universidad de Texas en Brownsville.
- 2. Base para la selección de participantes:** Su hijo ha sido seleccionado porque él asiste a la escuela en el sitio de investigación seleccionado para el estudio basado en los niveles de participación de los padres en la escuela y porque usted optó por participar como un padre en el estudio también.
- 3. Propósito general de estudio:** El propósito de este estudio es explorar la aplicación actual de los conocimientos disponibles, habilidades, y activos que existen dentro de las familias latinas a lo largo de la frontera de Texas y México que pueden usarse para formular asociaciones entre hogar y escuela. A través de esta investigación, seremos capaces de entender cómo las escuelas pueden abrir las líneas de comunicación entre hogares y escuelas para apoyar la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de los estudiantes.
- 4. Explicación de los procedimientos:** Si usted decide permitir que su hijo participe, él tomará parte en un cuestionario. El cuestionario llevará aproximadamente 30 minutos para completar y consiste de preguntas relacionadas a las experiencias de su hijo dentro del sistema escolar, esfuerzos que implementan los padres de familia para reforzar la educación en el hogar y experiencias en el país. El investigador también llevará a cabo observaciones de juntas de padres en el plantel escolar. Es posible que su niño puede estar presente durante las sesiones de observación.
- 5. Riesgos y molestias:** Puede que haya algunas preguntas que pueden hacer que su hijo se sienta incómodo o molesto. Aunque su participación es anónima, su hijo no tiene que responder a las preguntas que él no quiere responder. Su hijo siempre es libre de negarse a contestar cualquier pregunta o parar su participación en cualquier momento.
- 6. Beneficios:** No hay ningún beneficio directo a su hijo. Sin embargo, la participación de su hijo contribuirá a nuestra comprensión de cómo mejorar la comunicación entre educadores, padres y estudiantes. Además, al participar en este estudio, su hijo tendrá la oportunidad de compartir sus experiencias y conocimiento con otros.

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez  
Approval Date: 2/28/2014  
Expiration Date: 2/27/2015

## Consent Form-Parents-Spanish

7. **Compensación por participación:** No se proporcionará ninguna compensación por la participación en el estudio.
8. **Garantía de confidencialidad:** Información obtenida de entrevistas, cuestionarios, y observaciones se mantendrá anónimas para proteger su privacidad y confidencialidad. Se utilizará un seudónimo en lugar del nombre real de su hijo. Todos los datos, incluyendo datos con información personal identificable (grabaciones de audio de entrevistas, cuestionarios, documentos, notas de discusión, y notas de observación), se mantendrá en un disco duro protegido por código privado en un gabinete de archivo con candado en la oficina del investigador principal, Cynthia López, por tres años después de la terminación del estudio.
9. **Investigación de drogas:** Este estudio de investigación no requiere que los participantes consumen o usen drogas de ningún tipo.
10. **Retiro del estudio:** la participación de su hijo es voluntaria. Si tu o tu hijo decide participar, eres libre de retirar su consentimiento de su hijo y suspender la participación en cualquier momento. Su hijo no tiene que participar en este estudio si él no quiere.
11. **Ofrecer a responder preguntas:** Usted o su hijo deben de sentirse libre de hacer preguntas ahora o en el algún momento durante el estudio. Si cualquiera de ustedes tienen preguntas o dudas, pueden comunicarse con el investigador principal, Cynthia Lopez en [REDACTED]. Si cualquiera de ustedes tienen preguntas acerca de sus derechos como participante en un estudio de investigación, también puede contactar a la oficina de integridad de investigación UTB y el cumplimiento (UTB Research Integrity and Compliance Office – BRHP 2.210.) en el 956-882-7731.

**Declaración de consentimiento:**

Voluntariamente está haciendo usted una decisión de permitir que su hijo o pupilo legal participe en el estudio o no. Su firma indica haber leído y comprendido la información establecido anteriormente, usted ha decidido permitir que su hijo o pupilo legal pueda participar. Se le dará una copia de este formulario de consentimiento para mantener.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre (favor de escribir en molde)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma Relación al participante Fecha

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma Relación al participante Fecha

\_\_\_\_\_  
Testigo (si proyecto lleva mas que minimo riesgo) Firma de investigador(a) Fecha

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez

## Appendix 17: UTB IRB Modification Approval Form



### Research Integrity and Compliance The University of Texas at Brownsville

Matthew Johnson, Ph.D.  
IRB Chair

May 12, 2014

Ms. Cynthia Lopez  
The University of Texas at Brownsville  
One West University Blvd.  
Brownsville, Texas 78520  
RE: IRB-HS Approval

Study Title: "Stakeholders' Perceptions of Parental Involvement  
and Home-School Connections in a South Texas  
Border Town"

Protocol #: 2014-024-IRB

Dear Ms. Lopez,

In accordance with Federal Regulations for review of research protocols, the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects of The University of Texas at Brownsville has reviewed your study as requested.

The IRB-HS grants its approval for this project contingent on compliance with the following items. You may make as many copies of the stamped consent form as are necessary for your activity. All consent forms MUST bear the UTB IRB stamp indicating approval.

Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator also include:

- Inform the IRB-HS in writing immediately of any emergent problems or proposed changes.
- Do not proceed with the research until any problems have been resolved and the IRB-HS have reviewed and approved any changes.
- Report any significant findings that become known in the course of the research that might affect the willingness of the subjects to take part.
- Protect the confidentiality of all personally identifiable information collected.
- Submit for review and approval by the IRB-HS all modifications to the protocol or consent form(s) prior to implementation of any change(s).
- Submit an activity/progress report regarding research activities to the IRB-HS on no less than an annual basis or as directed by the IRB-HS through the Continuing Review Form.
- Notify the IRB-HS when study has been completed through submission of a Project Completion Report.

Should you have any questions or need any further information concerning this document please feel free to contact me at (956) 882-8888 or via email at [Matthew.Johnson@utb.edu](mailto:Matthew.Johnson@utb.edu).

Sincerely yours,

*Matthew Johnson, Ph.D.*

Matthew Johnson, Ph.D.  
IRB – Chair

#### Approval Type:

- Full Board Review
- Designated Member Review
- Continuing Review
- Change request/Modification/Amendment
- Exempt Category
- Expedited Category

#### Approval Period:

Start Date: May 12, 2014

End Date: February 27, 2015

## Appendix 18: Revised English Consent Form

1

Consent Form-English

**Project Title:** Stakeholders' Perceptions of Parental Involvement and Home-School Connections in a South Texas Border Town

1. **Invitation to Participate:** You are invited to participate in a study as part of a research project about parental involvement and connections between home and school within a school district in South Texas. This research project is being conducted by doctoral candidate, Cynthia Lopez, from the University of Texas at Brownsville.
2. **Basis for Subject Selection:** You have been selected because you fit at least one of the categories listed below:
  - You are a district administrator with professional expertise, knowledge, and experience regarding the school district's efforts to promote parental engagement and/or involvement.
  - You are a school administrator at a campus designated as having a parental involvement rate higher than other campuses within the district.
  - You are a teacher with more than three years of experience at a campus designated as having a parental involvement rate higher than other campuses within the district.
  - You are the parent of a student who attends a campus designated as having a parental involvement rate higher than other campuses within the district and have participated in at least one parental engagement activity throughout the year.
3. **Overall Purpose of Study:** The purpose of this study is to explore the current application of the available knowledge, skills, and assets that exist within Latino families along the Texas-Mexico border that can be used to enable partnerships between home and school. Through this research, we will be able to understand how schools can open the lines of communication between students' homes and schools to support teaching and learning.
4. **Explanation of Procedures:** If you decide to participate, you will be asked to share documents such as letters, forms, flyers, or other artifacts that show evidence of communication between parents and the school. Also, if you participate you will be asked to take part in a discussion, a one to one interview, a focus group interview, or complete a questionnaire. The discussion, interviews, focus group sessions, and questionnaire will each take approximately thirty minutes to two hours to complete and will consist of questions related to your perceptions of parental involvement, your experiences with interacting with the local school system, and your efforts in reinforcing education for Latino students along the Texas-Mexico border. The researcher will also conduct observations of parental engagement sessions held at various locations throughout the school district. It is possible that you might be present during the observation sessions.
5. **Potential Risks and Discomforts:**

There may be some questions that may make you uncomfortable or upset. If certain interview, focus group, or questionnaire questions seem very personal, you may feel that your privacy has been violated, even though your participation is anonymous. You do not

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez  
Approval Date 5/12/2014  
Expiration Date 2/27/2015

D

## Consent Form-English

have to respond to any questions that you do not want to answer. You are always free to decline to answer any question or to stop your participation at any time.

6. **Potential Benefits:** There is no direct benefit to you; however, your participation will contribute to our understanding of how to improve communication between educators, parents, and students. Additionally, by participating in this study, you will have a chance to share your experiences and insight with others.
7. **Compensation for Participation:** No compensation for participation will be provided.
8. **Assurance of Confidentiality:** Information obtained from interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, document collection, and observations will be kept anonymous to protect your privacy and confidentiality. A pseudonym will be used in place of your real name. All data, including data with identifiable personal information (audio recordings of interviews, focus group sessions, questionnaires, documents, discussion notes, and observation field notes), will be kept on a password-protected hard drive in a locked file cabinet in the office of the principal investigator, Cynthia Lopez, for three years after study completion.
9. **Drug Investigation:** This research study does not require the consumption or use of drugs in participants.
10. **Withdrawal from the Study:** Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to.
11. **Offer to Answer Questions:** You should feel free to ask questions now or at the any time during the study. If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact the principal investigator. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, you can also contact the UTB Office of Research Integrity and Compliance- BRHP 2.210 at 956-882-7731.

**Consent Statement:**

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that, having read and understood the information provided above, you have decided to participate. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez  
Approval Date 5/12/2014  
Expiration Date 2/27/2015



## Appendix 19: Revised Spanish Consent Form

1

Consent Form-Spanish

**Project Title:** Stakeholders' Perceptions of Parental Involvement and Home-School Connections in a South Texas Border Town

**Título de Proyecto:** Percepciones de las partes interesadas de participación de los padres y las conexiones de hogar y la escuela en un pueblo fronterizo de South Texas

**1. Invitación a participar:** Te invitamos a participar en un estudio como parte de un proyecto de investigación sobre la participación de los padres y las conexiones entre el hogar y la escuela dentro de un distrito escolar en el sur de Texas. Este proyecto de investigación se está realizando por candidata doctoral, Cynthia A. López, de la Universidad de Texas en Brownsville.

**2. Base para la selección de participante:** Usted ha sido seleccionado porque pertenece al menos una de las categorías que se enumeran a continuación:

- Usted es un administrador de distrito con experiencia profesional, conocimiento y experiencia con respecto a los esfuerzos del distrito escolar para promover el participación de los padres.
- Usted es un administrador de escuela en un campus señalado como teniendo un nivel de participación de los padres más alta que otras escuelas dentro del distrito.
- Usted es un maestro con más de tres años de experiencia en un campus señalado como teniendo un nivel de participación de los padres más alta que otras escuelas dentro del distrito.
- Usted es el padre de un estudiante que asiste a un campus señalado como teniendo un nivel de participación de los padres más alta que otras escuelas dentro del distrito y ha participado en al menos una actividad de padres durante el año.

**3. Propósito general de estudio:** El propósito de este estudio es explorar la aplicación actual de los conocimientos disponibles, habilidades, y activos que existen dentro de las familias latinas a lo largo de la frontera de Texas y México que pueden usarse para formular asociaciones entre hogar y escuela. A través de esta investigación, seremos capaces de entender cómo las escuelas pueden abrir las líneas de comunicación entre hogares y escuelas para apoyar la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de los estudiantes.

**4. Explicación de los procedimientos:** Si usted decide participar, se le pedirá compartir documentos tales como cartas, formularios, folletos o otros artefactos que muestran evidencias de comunicación entre los padres y la escuela. Además, si participa se le pedirá tomar parte en una discusión, una entrevista uno a uno, una entrevista de grupo de enfoque, o tomar parte en un cuestionario. Las sesiones de discusión, entrevistas, grupos focales, y cuestionarios tomaran aproximadamente treinta minutos a dos horas para completar y consisten en preguntas relacionadas con sus percepciones de la participación

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez  
Approval Date 5/12/2014

## Consent Form-Spanish

de los padres, sus experiencias con interacción con el sistema escolar local y sus esfuerzos en fortalecer la educación para los estudiantes latinos a lo largo de la frontera de Texas y México. El investigador también llevará a cabo observaciones de sesiones de compromiso parental en varias locales del distrito. Es posible que usted pudiera estar presente durante las sesiones de observación.

- 5. Potenciales riesgos e incomodidades:** Puede haber algunas preguntas que pueden hacerle sentir incómodo o molesto. Aunque su participación es anónima, no tiene que responder a cualquier pregunta que no desea responder. Siempre es libre de negarse a contestar cualquier pregunta o parar su participación en cualquier momento.
- 6. Beneficios potenciales:** No hay ningún beneficio directo a usted. Sin embargo, su participación contribuirá a nuestra comprensión de cómo mejorar la comunicación entre educadores, padres y estudiantes. Además, al participar en este estudio, usted tendrá la oportunidad de compartir sus experiencias y conocimiento con otros.
- 7. Compensación por participación:** No se proporcionará ninguna compensación por la participación en el estudio.
- 8. Garantía de confidencialidad:** Información obtenida de entrevistas, grupos focales, cuestionarios, colección de documentos, y observaciones se mantendrá anónimas para proteger su privacidad y confidencialidad. Se utilizará un seudónimo en lugar de su nombre verdadero. Todos los datos, incluyendo datos con información personal identificable (grabaciones de audio de entrevistas, sesiones de grupo de enfoque, cuestionarios, documentos, notas de discusión y notas de observación), se mantendrá en un disco duro protegido por código privado en un gabinete de archivo con candado en la oficina del investigador principal, Cynthia López, por tres años después de la terminación del estudio.
- 9. Investigación de drogas:** Este estudio de investigación no requiere que los participantes consumen o usen drogas de ningún tipo.
- 10. Retiro del estudio:** Su participación es voluntaria. Si usted decide participar, usted es libre de retirar su consentimiento y suspender su participación en cualquier momento. No tiene que participar en este estudio, si no quiere.
- 11. Oferta responder preguntas:** Debería sentirse libre para hacer preguntas ahora o en el algún momento durante el estudio. Si usted tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud, puede contactar con el investigador principal, Cynthia López en [REDACTED]. Si usted tiene preguntas acerca de sus derechos como participante en un estudio de investigación, también puede contactar a la oficina de integridad de investigación UTB y el cumplimiento (UTB Research Integrity and Compliance Office – BRHP 2.210.) en el 956-882-7731.

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez  
Approval Date 5/12/2014  
Expiration Date 2/27/2015



Consent Form-Spanish

**Declaración de consentimiento:**

Voluntariamente está cometiendo una decisión de participar o no. Su firma indica que haber leído y comprendido la información proporcionada anteriormente, han decidido participar. Se le dará una copia de este formulario de consentimiento para mantener.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre (letra de molde)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del tema

Fecha \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del investigador

Fecha \_\_\_\_\_

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp  
2014-024-IRB Lopez  
Approval Date 6/12/2014  
Expiration Date 2/27/2015