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Involving Latino Parents in the Middle-Level School: A Study of First Generation and Second Generation Mexican and Mexican American Parents

by

Elva Hernández Mora

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

University of San Diego

1996

Dissertation Committee

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Dr. Thomas Baker, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

INVOLVING LATINO PARENTS IN THE MIDDLE-LEVEL SCHOOL: A STUDY OF FIRST GENERATION AND SECOND GENERATION MEXICAN AND MEXICAN AMERICAN PARENTS

MORA, ELVA HERNANDEZ. , Ed. D.

University of San Diego, 1996. 250 pp.

Director: Susan M. Zgliczynski, Ph. D.

The middle school level years demand critical attention in educational reform. Culturally diverse students in the United States show levels of academic achievement which are lower then those of other students. Children from oppressed minority groups often show high rates of dropping out as well as poor academic achievement. They are often profiled as students who are unmotivated and who have parents that are unresponsive to their growth and development in terms of educational attainment. However, this conception of poor academic achievement and lack of parental involvement is unfounded since research indicates that culturally diverse parents value education and have high standards for academic excellence in student performance.

The purpose of this study was to examine factors that promote Hispanic parent involvement at the middle school level. A triangulation analysis was used as a guiding methodology for the development of a conceptual framework for a Hispanic parent involvement model at the middle school level. The triangulation analysis was accomplished through a methodological mix by using strategies that identified the factors that promoted Latino parent involvement at the middle school level. Three goals were achieved in the triangulation analysis: (1) the current review of the literature was studied in order to analyze successful parent involvement models for Latino parents; (2) interviews were conducted with expert panel members in the content area and analyzed to yield themes that emerged from the study; and (3) Mexican and Mexican American parents participated in focus group interviews. Mexican and Mexican American parents were interviewed concerning their needs in the development of a Hispanic parent involvement.

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A collaborative Hispanic parent involvement model was developed. The results of the study showed that in order to implement a Hispanic parent model at the middle level, there were critical themes which emerged including parent development, communication development, cognitive development, decision making, and social and cultural processes. These critical components used can be applied to culturally diverse parent typologies.

The development of a collaborative model for Latino parents engages students, parents, and staff members to become active constituents and become empowered in a democratic participatory process. Mexican and Mexican American parents become change agents in socio-political and cultural contexts for systemic change in order to improve educational reform. Epstein's typology of "overlapping spheres of influence of family, school, community on children's learning" has major impact in school improvement and in the effectiveness of reaching out to parents in home-school collaboration.

The results of the qualitative study indicated that in order to work effectively with culturally diverse parents, educators need to understand and be aware of the socio-political and cultural aspects of culture sensitivity, family values, language, belief system, and traditions. Culturally diverse parents are unique constituents that are powerful stakeholders in their children's education. The basic implications for this study are that the collaborative model may be used as a practical application model at the K-12 grade level, to understand adolescent development, to improve and increase parent participation, and to empower parents to be partners in education. This Hispanic model can be used as a formative evaluation to improve the instructional services to all constituents since the model will have a profound impact on parental participation and a direct influence on student achievement.

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Writing this dissertation was unlike anything I had ever experienced before. It was at times both exhilarating and exhausting. It has been a community in action, and it is to that community that I wish to express my sincere appreciation. I have many people to thank for supporting me through this marathon effort.

First, I would like to thank my friend and confidant, my mother, Amparo Hernández Barrios, for her unfailing love, prayers, support, trust, throughout my life and her continuing faith in my tenacity to pursue the quest for higher learning in Educational Leadership.

Those long hours of mental stimulus and laborious long weekends has made a difference in my professional development to withstand pain, endurance, and overcome challenges that may seem impossible at the moment; however, strength and power will prevail.

I gratefully acknowledge the guidance and support I received from my committee members. Dr. Susan M. Zgliczynski, my chairperson, my advisor, professor, colleague, and friend, provided an environment for my creativity to sparkle, to develop, and to emerge as she guided me in this experience. Her caring wisdom, encouragement, and mentorship have been an invaluable experience throughout our relationship. Her positive attitude is inspiring and gave me strength to believe that personal values always motivate the individual. There aren't enough words to describe the respect I have for her, especially for her extraordinary inspiration, wisdom, and intellectual talent to see the completion of this study.

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a practitioner in parent involvement, has touched my heart as a leading scholar but especially by his readily available support when I needed encouragement. I appreciate the way my committee worked with each other and with me. Their professional, but cooperative and friendly natures, made this experience a challenge while maintaining a spiritual and intellectual focus on completing the dissertation.

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Therefore, it is with gratitude that I thank these people who have touched my heart and have made a significant impact in my professional development. "*Somos una familia whose traditions and customs shape the very soul of our new and most prized gold, our children.*" These people have made me more tenacious to search for the impossible dream and to look forward to the *challenges* in Educational Leadership.

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CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Introduction

Nineteen hundred ninety-six marked the thirteenth year anniversary of the publication of A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), the precursor of our current education reform movement. Since 1983, the United States has struggled to reform schools as a means of increasing student achievement and improving the quality of the educational services of schools. This focus has been even more intense in schools with large minority populations. Although increasing student achievement has been the ultimate goal of educational reform, Garza-Lubeck (1992) noted that high educational outcomes for all students are not being achieved, especially by minority students. One of the reasons suggested has been the perceived noninvolvement on the part of minority parents.

Parent involvement plays a crucial role in linking the child's home-school collaboration and increasing student achievement (Costas, 1991). In order to accomplish this, well developed programs are needed. However, there are obstacles that need to be addressed concerning the involvement of minority parents in middle-level schools. Costas (1991) indicated that there are schools whose personnel do not have a desire to have parents present, and there are parents reluctant to become involved.

Other educators encourage parents to become involved in the life of the schools, but do not give parents the opportunity to play a meaningful role in the school. In some schools, parents are asked to come to school only when a problem arises with their child. Other parents recall difficulties they had as students and are not eager to be involved.

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Yet, others are afraid their child will perform poorly, and therefore, be a reflection on them as parents (Comer, 1986).

Although many educational practitioners assume that minority parents do not want to become involved in their children's middle-school education, this concern has been refuted by researchers who have found that, in general, these parents do wish to become involved, but often lack the information needed to do so (Epstein and Becker, 1982). In fact, Lightfoot (1975) found that not only do these parents value education, but they also view schooling as an avenue to economic and social success. Continued involvement by minority parents can contribute to an increase in educational achievement and influence their children's perception of the value of education. This study was a response to the researcher's awareness of the need to investigate an area of growing importance, involving minority parents in the middle-level school.

In general, minority parents can be productively involved in their children's education and increase student achievement throughout their children's educational development. However, despite an extensive and growing literature which documents the importance of school and family connections for increasing student success in school, few studies have focused on the relationship of home-school collaboration by Hispanic parents to their students' educational achievement in middle schools (Epstein, 1992). Hispanic parents who become active participants in their children's education can make a difference in the middle schools. Although middle-level schools have been making considerable efforts to involve minority people in parent involvement programs, Moles (1987) indicated that there is a precipitous decline in parental involvement during the middle-level grades. One of the major difficulties has been the differing perceptions as to how to go about involving parents. It appears that both parents' and teachers' misperceptions can be corrected, and home-school collaboration increased. When mutual interests are shared, they can become the catalyst for change in school reform.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Educational practitioners in the 1990s are faced with many challenges: (1) an increase of culturally diverse students, (2) greater diversity in the school community, (3) decreasing Hispanic student achievement, (4) a high dropout rate for Hispanic students, and (5) a surprising lack of parental involvement at the secondary level, a direct contrast to high parental involvement during the primary grades. As the population increases and the communities become more diverse, this last challenge needs to be addressed in order to fully achieve desired educational outcomes for all students. Promoting mutual home-school collaboration among culturally diverse parents will become a more critical issue as the change process evolves in education reform.

Many barriers to positive connections among family, community, and school occur in the middle-school years. There is considerable evidence that a major impediment to home-school collaboration results from teachers' and parents' stereotypes, misperceptions, and lack of understanding of mutual needs (Epstein, 1992). "Diversity within family, community and economic systems, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, cultures, and language barriers also have direct effects on parent involvement" (p. 24).

Researchers and practitioners acknowledge the importance of understanding the social contexts of students' education and learning. Families and communities, in addition to schools, are important arenas in which students learn and are educated. Involving parents in the education of their children has positive outcomes not only for students but also for parents, teachers, schools and districts (Becker and Epstein, 1982; Comer, 1986; Epstein, 1991). These outcomes include increased student achievement, increased student attendance, lower dropout rates, increased interaction between parents and their children at home, increased home-school collaboration, and increased positive attitudes by teachers toward parents being involved.

In spite of considerable efforts on the part of schools and school districts to encourage participation in effective parent involvement programs, not all of them have

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achieved this desired goal. Some parents do not become involved, and perceptions as to why they do not differ among noninvolved parents. Nevertheless, attempts continue to be made to involve parents in the educational process of their children.

Latino parents face many challenging issues in order to enhance their children's educational achievement. These issues include poverty, limited time, dysfunctional family structure, low level coping skills, and feelings of inadequacy (Soriano, Soriano, and Jiménez, 1994). However, it is essential that they participate in their children's education and become more knowledgeable about their adolescents' schools. Henderson (1988) asserted that parents who acquire an understanding of the school system become more involved in their children's education. Research shows that as Latino parents overcome challenging societal demands and interact in their children's growth and development, they become empowered to affect change in school reform. Understanding the complexities their children encounter during their middle school education enables Latino parents to influence their children in developing positive learning attitudes. It is essential that parents recognize the importance of school and family connections for increasing student success and become involved in parent involvement programs which will enable them to make a difference in their children's education. Through increased mutual home-school collaboration, Latino parents can become the catalyst for parent efficacy in school reform and contribute to their own children's academic success.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine factors that promote Hispanic parent involvement at the middle school level and based on these findings, to develop a parent involvement model. This model enabled Latino parents to increase and to enhance the quality of their participation in home-school collaboration.

The researcher investigated the changes in parent involvement programs which Mexican/Mexican American parents perceived as important for improving home, family, and school collaboration. A research-based parent involvement model was developed to

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assist Latino parents and educators in improving the home-school relationship and to guide other researchers who would like to implement it for increasing parent involvement behaviors. This study served as a framework for increasing home-school collaboration and overcoming the challenges and barriers which have impeded effective Latino parent participation.

Based on the data that the investigator compiled, effective strategies for improving home-school collaboration among Latino parents were identified. The investigator made recommendations for effective parent involvement programs which assist Latino parents at the middle-level school to become more responsive to their children's educational needs.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To address the purpose of the study, the researcher sought to investigate the following questions in the review of the literature:

1. What types of programs are offered in parent involvement at the middle school level?

2. What are the components of successful parent involvement programs for the general population?

3. How are existing Latino parent involvement programs unique or different from parent involvement programs for the general population?

The researcher interviewed panel experts in the area of home-school collaboration specifically with Latino parents to ascertain answers to the following questions:

4. What are key characteristics of model approaches and/or the necessary components of parent involvement programs?

5. What parent involvement strategies work best with Latino parents and how do these differ from strategies used within general populations?

6. What are the components of an ideal model for Latino parent involvement?

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Latino parents were surveyed and focus group interviews were held to determine answers to the following questions:

7. What perceptions of parent involvement programs do Latino parents have?

8. What concerns do Latino parents have regarding parent involvement?

9. What roles would Latino parents like to assume in the education of their children?

10. What do parents see as the main purpose and benefits of home-school collaboration?

11. Are there ways the school could assist Latino parents in coping with life stress issues which inhibit their involvement in parent/school programs?

12. What roles would Latino parents like to play in parent involvement programs?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ISSUE

This study increased the research base for parent involvement by adding to the understanding of what parents and educators in middle schools need to know to improve home-school collaboration including types of parent involvement programs available for culturally diverse parents.

While there is a strong commitment to meet the needs of student outcomes, there is also a challenging demand to assist parents through parent involvement. It is important that school personnel be committed to provide opportunities that enhance communication, trust based collaboration, conferencing skills, and home learning among parents and staff so that parents can take an active role in the educational process and improve the quality of educational services.

The literature on parent involvement is extensive, and researchers presented comprehensive parent involvement models. However, there are few empirical research studies on Hispanic parent involvement and, therefore, a need for research in this area exists. Costas (1991) pointed out that "The United States Census Bureau reported

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Hispanics are disproportionately young and constitute a large share of students in many school systems. At this rate, Hispanics could overtake blacks (30 million) as the largest United States minority by the year 2015" (p. 18). Curiel (1993) noted that within the next decade, there will be more culturally diverse students attending schools in which the ethnic demographics will change. With the increase of student diversity in the school system, the problem of educational equity in student achievement will be an issue in educational reform. A commonly held perception of California society is that it consists of an Anglo majority population and a small ethnic minority. The reality is that during the 1990s, less than 50% of the state population will be classified as Anglo. In fact, there was a decline in San Diego County from 59% to 47. 2% between 1985 and 1994 for Anglo students, while the largest enrollment increase during these years was 10% for Latino students (San Diego County Office of Education, 1995). Furthermore, the challenges of changing demographics and increased student diversity, requires more attention to higher levels of student performance. Parents are faced with creating and processing information in order to construct both personal meaning and shared understanding of school reform issues.

Sotomayor (1991) suggested that since the demographics in America are changing because of an influx of immigrants into the country due to political pressures, economic hardships, and failing governments, minority populations will be increasing in population and schools will be impacted by student diversity. Clearly, there will be major implications for culturally diverse parents as they are faced with a myriad of roles to meet the challenging societal needs of their children's education. There is also a need for research into social mores of the various cultures in which parent involvement programs operate. It is important to separate one minority group from another rather than combining different ethnic groups under one artificial group called minorities.

For decades, institutionalized education for the most part kept all parents and particularly minority parents at bay. Parents' roles were limited in school reform. However, this trend is changing and parents are increasingly becoming more active in

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educational issues. In fact, the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which parents are able to create a home environment that encourages learning; to express high expectations for their children's achievement and future career paths; and to become involved in their children's education at school and in the community. Henderson and Berla (1994) asserted that when schools support families to develop these conditions, children from low-income families and diverse cultural backgrounds are more likely to take advantage of a full range of educational opportunities and are able to function in society. Moreover, parents who play an active role in school reform contribute to positive student academic performance.

Increasingly, parents are confronted by the challenge and paradox children face during their adolescent years. During middle adolescence, all parents and particularly culturally diverse parents face the most difficult and rapid developmental changes with their children. Baker and Baker (1993) noted that the intense drive toward independence, the adoption of new behaviors and identities, the questioning of values, and the desire for peer approval are all normal adolescent behaviors that children are experiencing in their adolescent growth and development. Culturally diverse parents will need parental strategies in order to play the various roles that are expected in their children's education. They are the strong force that advocates a quality education for their children and need to assume responsibility in exercising their power in a participatory democratic process.

In general, parents need a major voice in the quality of education their children receive. It is vital for home-school collaboration that all parents and particularly minority parents and school personnel foster a strong home-school collaboration in order to succeed in trust and mutual collaboration. Since parents play a vital role in student achievement, they have a vested interest to contribute and create a successful and life-long collaboration to help their children succeed in school.

Educational practitioners have indicated that they need training in interacting with culturally diverse families because the family structure is radically changing in society.

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Social condition indicators such as poverty, educational deprivation, language barriers, cultural issues, socioeconomic issues, and ethnic-identity conflicts are variables and/or indicators that educators face as they work with diverse students and with their parents. Moreover, as the family structure changes, educators are faced with families who are having multiple social and economic problems and have different perceptions of education. The evidence shows that parents have the power to make a difference in their children's education when they are provided with the necessary parental strategies and support services, to collaborate with school personnel which, in turn, has a profound impact on parental participation and a direct influence on student achievement.

Sotomayor (1991), noted that some Latino parents are faced with environmental stressors that have long been identified as sources of psychosocial dysfunction among Latino children, adolescents, and their families; however, in practice, Latino parents are exercising their rights and are empowering their children to earn an education by encouraging them to excel in student achievement and to further promote their education despite differences in political and socioeconomic status.

The fact remains that although there have been constraints in socioeconomic and political issues, such as Proposition 187, a statutory initiative of 1994, not a constitutional one, which if enacted, would require California school districts to verify the legal residency or citizenship status of children enrolling for the first time and require school districts to report suspected undocumented students and parents to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (Melendez, 1995). Despite the voters' passing of this initiative, Latino parents maintained and voiced their participatory power in advocating a quality education for their children in student achievement. In fact, the researcher found that they encouraged their children to attain their education regardless of the political implications of this statutory initiative.

As an educator who has taught at inner city schools and worked with culturally diverse parents, the researcher realized that it was important to further her knowledge in

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developing a model for Latino parents. The increasing Latino population has major implications as educators are challenged by student diversity and the necessity for collaborating with Latino parents at the middle school level. The researcher is committed to achieve this goal since she has assumed a leadership role in working with Latino parents at the middle school level with the San Diego Unified School District Parent Involvement Task Force and Second Language Department Educational Services.

The researcher is committed to promote home/school collaboration and work with families to assist their children in furthering their education by building the confidence required for the formation of intimate relationships and positive self-esteem. The researcher noted that educators must be able to work with culturally diverse parents and a varied student population in order to increase and to improve student outcomes as we deal with the complexity of educational issues and school reform.

Another reason that separate studies on these groups are important is that studies performed on one group may not be generalized to other groups. Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins (1988) noted that various means of parent involvement must be studied with different ethnic groups. Caucasian, Asian, African-American, and Latino parents differ in parent involvement perception and attitudes.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

In order to avoid any misinterpretation of terms that are of central importance to this study, the following definitions are offered:

Attitude Epstein (1992) defined attitude as the "awareness, manners of one's disposition and acceptance of one's opinion for certain expected outcomes" (p. 7). It is an organized set of beliefs directed toward an object and consists of emotional, behavioral and cognitive components. This same definition can also be applied to an individual's perceptions of his/her beliefs and cultural system.

Hispanic Nieves-Squires (1990) reported that the U. S. government describes Hispanics as persons of Cuban, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, South or

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Central American, or other Spanish ancestry or descent. These groups, though originally from different geographical regions, share the common bond of language, culture, religion, and history. In this country, Hispanics share the experience of being treated as a minority group. In this study, the terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably for Mexican and Mexican American parents.

Home learning This term refers to programs or activities in which parents and family members may engage to help their children succeed academically by using multiple methods in monitoring the learning process of their children. The elements of home learning take many forms but most commonly include homework, leisure reading, family discussion, educational games, and enrichment activities (Epstein, 1992).

Home-school collaboration The relationship between parents and schools for increasing an understanding of schools as complex social organizations shaped by the realities of specific contexts is referred to as home-school collaboration (Epstein, 1992).

Middle-Level School A middle-level school is defined as a school which provides students in grades six, seven, and eight with a common, comprehensive, academically oriented core curriculum that prepares them for success in high school. A middle-level school is designed to provide students with the foundation required to exercise future academic and career options (California State Department of Education, 1987).

Parent Involvement Jehl and Preston (1987) define parent involvement as a program in education which embraces two major elements. One is advisory in nature and the other collaborative, seeking to promote home-school cooperation. Advisory roles have generally been tied to federal and state mandates designed to give parents a voice in decision making at schools. Collaborative models of parent participation have parents involved as partners in their children's education. These partnerships may be school-based or home-based with parents working to support the academic achievement of their children.

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Proposition 187 An initiative passed in the State of California on November 8, 1994, which prohibits the provision of health services, welfare, and education to illegal immigrants. This initiative requires police, school officials, and health providers to ask people about their citizenship or immigration status and to report those they suspect of being illegal to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (Mills, 1994). At present, the initiative is facing federal court action and is not being implemented.

Triangulation The strategy of triangulation involves the collection of data from varied sources and subsequent cross-validation (Guba, 1981).

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

A key assumption of this study was that the components which constitute the complexity of parent involvement have been correctly identified as seen in the literature review, the use of an expert panel, and Hispanic focus group interviews. This study examined factors that promote Hispanic parent involvement and identified a set of key concepts in developing a Hispanic parent involvement model at the middle school level. It was assumed that a research-based parent involvement model would assist Latino parents and educators in improving home-school relations and increase parents' advocacy in school reform.

Through the use of an expert panel, this study identified specific factors in developing a model for Hispanic parent involvement at the middle school level. In specifying these concepts, there was the assumption that there are key elements that would encompass a comprehensive model for Hispanic parent involvement. There was also the assumption that these concepts could be identified by using an expert panel in conjunction with a literature review.

There was the assumption that the scholars or practitioners who were selected as panel members had expertise in the field of parent involvement. It was also assumed that there are common concepts of parent involvement that could be derived from these

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scholars who have done extensive work in parent involvement by improving home-school collaboration.

Another assumption of this research was that first generation and second generation Mexican and Mexican American parents who served as participants in the focus group interviews voiced their honest perceptions and attitudes toward the development of a Hispanic parent involvement model. These first and second generation parents are influential primary forces for the creation and maintenance of the values, skills, and disciplines with which children improve their opportunities for educational excellence. The focus group parents assumed responsibility in exercising power in a participatory democratic process. They voiced their concerns and became responsive agents in education. Latino parents reflected on their perceptions, beliefs, and understanding of the values of parent involvement. They provided key elements/concepts in the process of a Hispanic parent model in which they interacted with other parents and asserted leadership practices in student achievement.

There were four major limitations to this study. First, the finding from Latino parents varied between first generation and second generation parents. First generation parents took more interest in the study, and they reflected a more knowledgeable perspective on parent involvement than second generation parents. Education plays a critical role in social and economic development with first generation parents. However, some second generation parents, had negative perceptions and attitudes toward the educational system. Furthermore, they saw parent participation as irrelevant due to their own negative perceptions or experiences in education. They often had ensuing family pressures related to their life experiences and had a sense of cynicism towards education.

The sample of Latino parents chosen for this study were first and second generation Mexican/Mexican American parents who have children attending an inner city middle-school in San Diego, California. The issue of gender equity was a limitation in the focus group interviews because there was not a true sample of representation of Latino

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parents. Most of the participants were Mexican/Mexican American women who assumed the responsibility of overseeing the educational process of their children. Furthermore, their level of parent participation and educational interest in home-school collaboration may have differed from that of other culturally diverse groups such as persons of Cuban, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish ancestry or descent.

The sample of Mexican/Mexican American parents totaled 52 volunteers. Cultural tradition manifested itself in Hispanic parent reluctance to volunteer opinions in an academic setting; therefore, this study was necessarily limited to only those parents who were willing to volunteer. Having a valued personal interest in parent involvement was a key factor in this study. Mexican/Mexican American parents are hesitant to voice their perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs because culturally diverse parents often play a passive role in the educational process. Moreover, they have not been given the opportunity to engage in critical dialogue or share mutual collaboration in their previous home-school community experience.

Communication and interpersonal skills were established for the focus group interviews. The focus group parents were assured that they played an integral part in the study. Mutual trust and personal contact were established in order to assure the sample parents that it was important to be engaged in a participatory research project.

Some Hispanic parents were not able to do the open-ended questionnaire due to their limited education, lack of involvement in parent programs, and lack of understanding of the relevancy of the study. Often Latino parents did not feel comfortable participating in focus groups because of language barriers and their existing negative attitudes toward the educational system. Second, as a result of the fear of Proposition 187, which was designed to deny health and educational services to undocumented immigrants, some Mexican parents were reluctant to participate in the focus group interviews because of the fear of deportation, being penalized, and having privileges denied to their children such as "the right to a public education" if they chose to participate in the study.

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The use of data analysis results as one of the primary sources to measure Hispanic parent satisfaction with the middle-level school climate limited the potential for making inferences about cause and effect relationships in the triangulation analysis as the third limitation of the study. Restrictions in generalizing the findings in the survey administered to Hispanic parents occurred since some of the concerns and priorities that parents revealed would not necessarily apply to other Hispanic parents in other areas of the country. For example, some parents brought up ensuing family pressures related to their socioeconomic conditions while others were concerned with personal, social, or academic issues. As Guba and Lincoln (1981) have pointed out, there is the danger of oversimplifying or exaggerating the situation, "leading the reader to erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs" (p. 377).

A fourth limitation was that qualitative research could have presented problems in developing an emergent inquiry since it depends heavily on the interviewing and interpretive skills of the researcher. However, she viewed the study objectively and did not solicit ideas from expert panel members and focus group participants in order to identify the factors and/or components which promote a successful parent involvement model. The researcher chose this emergent process because it allowed for the research techniques utilized to take on a degree of flexibility and openness. Such a design was the method of choice for this study because it provided research versatility which is not possible with other quantitative scientific methods of research. The emergent process method employed by this study facilitated a "discovery oriented approach" which allowed for the Hispanic parent involvement model to emerge (Patton, 1990, p. 41).

Finally, this study has evolved from the researcher's active participation in parent involvement programs. The researcher believes it is important that parent voices regarding educational and/or community concerns be heard; that cooperative collaborative efforts to increase and promote home-school collaboration be used, and that a critical reflection of parents' wishes advocating quality education for their children be incorporated

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in school/home collaboration plans. The social benefits of connecting and empowering ethnically diverse parents in the education of their children are many. Among the most salient are to "increase student achievement and to improve the quality of life of families and communities; and to increase community participation in our democratic process" (Ochoa, 1995, p. 5).

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theoretical and Empirical Triangulation

The purpose of this study was to review theoretical and empirical literature related to parent involvement. This study examined factors that promote Hispanic parent involvement at the middle school level, and based on these findings the researcher developed a parent involvement model. In order to illustrate a conceptual parent involvement model, an extensive review of the literature was conducted. The methodology followed in this study relied on qualitative emergent methods of research as described in Guba and Lincoln (1981), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Patton (1990). These research methods relied on a comprehensive literature exploration.

The objective of the literature review was to summarize the literature found in the areas being investigated. Although the nature and quality of children's educational experience and development are influenced by factors as diverse as government policy relating to educational provision and embedded values, the two institutions that impinge most directly on children are their home and their school. The researcher identified the context within which parent involvement programs are created and operate, and investigated frameworks of parent involvement programs for culturally diverse parents in middle level schools.

The literature showed that since the turn of the century, school reform has demanded more accountability in education. For the last several years the focus of educational reform has been on increasing student achievement and improving the quality of educational services for all children. As the population increased and the communities

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became diverse, home-school collaboration became more vital. Because parents represent an important citizen group in terms of school support, their endorsing the importance of a particular innovation or practice has catalytic results in terms of generating school support in the general population. America 2000 goals state that every school will strive to increase parental involvement. "A systematic approach that includes analysis of how to bring about more parent involvement in the school is mandatory" (Winlock, 1994).

Through an extensive investigation of parent involvement at the middle school level, the specific areas of investigation were identified. Winlock (1994) noted that parents' roles are critical to any consideration of systemic change as it relates to student achievement. As we approach the challenges of changing demographics and increased student diversity, and we focus upon higher levels of student performance, a home-school collaboration approach is crucial to forge parent involvement at the middle school level.

Before discussing what can be done to facilitate the involvement of Hispanic parents and citizens in the educational process, a philosophical foundation about parental involvement in diverse communities needs to be established. Casas and Furlong (1994) have pointed out that Hispanic parents value education and want their children to succeed. "In a democratic society, public schools belong to the parents and citizens of the community" (p. 139). From this perspective, educators have an obligation to help the community build effective schools and increase Hispanic parent participation in the educational process. It is increasingly clear that if Latino parents are to become more fully involved in educational reform, "schools will need to reevaluate systematically their commitment to parent participation and take a strong advocacy position for ongoing parent participation" (p. 140).

Understanding the roles of parents and school constituents is of utmost importance in school reform. The role of parent efficacy, helping children thrive academically, is fundamental in the development of policies concerning parent involvement. A historical

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review of this role revealed the policies and factors which have a direct impact on parent involvement. The literature review summarized the studies found concerning parent involvement programs for the general populace and for culturally diverse parents that operate to increase home-school collaboration.

The Historical Perspective of School, District, State, and Federal Policies

Historical influences provide an insight into the role of schools and local, state, and federal agencies in the development of policies concerning parent efficacy. The designers of the Constitution felt strongly that education should not be the domain of the federal government, and ultimately gave the responsibility for educating the nation's youth to the states. Snider's (1990a) historical review of the role of parents and community in school decision-making portrayed a long, and often embittered, struggle between politicians, practitioners, and parent/communities. Attempts to consolidate control over schools in the mid-1800s, and a rising dissatisfaction in the 1960s with the quality of education in some of the nation's largest urban areas, often referred to as the "community-control movement," were two notable examples of disagreement (Epstein, 1992).

In the next four sections, four contemporary policy levels: school, district, state, and federal are explored. This examination lent understanding to the ways policy may facilitate and/or inhibit the involvement of parents and communities in educational processes, programs, and practices.

Current school-level policies and expectations tend to center on what parents can provide for teachers and schools, rather than what teachers and schools can provide for parents. Studies of 171 teachers from Title 1 elementary and middle schools in Baltimore, Maryland, for example, showed that teachers expect parents to fulfill a range of different responsibilities including teaching their children appropriate behaviors, knowing what children are supposed to learn at any given grade, and helping them with homework. Few teachers could point to comprehensive programs in their classes or schools to help parents attain these skills (Dauber & Epstein, 1991).

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There is evidence that policies and resource constraints in the schools themselves may inhibit parent involvement. For example, in the absence of a homework policy or failure by teachers to adhere to a consistent homework policy, parent involvement in home learning may be hindered. Conflicting expectations for the student may surface between parents and teachers. A similar problem occurs if there is a lack of materials or other resources for teachers to use to design or implement home learning activities (Chrispeels, 1991). Schools need to implement home learning policies that provide sufficient resource funds, time, staff, and training to enable teachers to be more effective in these areas (Chrispeels, 1990; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; McLaughlin & Shields, 1987; Zeldin, 1989).

District-level policy initiatives mirror federal and state initiatives. Chavkin and Williams (1987) surveyed educators, school board members, and parents and found that parent involvement policies at the district level were virtually nonexistent as of 1983. This condition existed in spite of the fact that educators and parents desired more school policies about parent involvement. Since that time, examples of successful initiatives have begun to surface.

In 1988 the San Diego Unified School District adopted a district parent involvement policy that closely parallels the State of California's policy. This policy addresses the roles of parents, communication, strategies and structures for effective parent involvement, supports for both teachers and parents, and the use of schools to connect families and students with community resources (Chrispeels, 1991).

Warner (1991) pointed out that in the Indianapolis Public Schools, parent involvement is an important component of the district's school improvement plan. The Parents in Touch program, the umbrella program for all parent involvement activities, emphasizes two-way communication on matters related to student success. Epstein (1992) conducted a study in the Indianapolis elementary schools on parent involvement activities which showed that parents make a difference in district policy when they

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become active participants in school governance. She suggested that a comprehensive model to increase parent involvement in school reform needed to include developing parenting skills, communication, the use of parent volunteers, home learning, and parental participation in decision making. Using a wide variety of communication strategies, the educators of the Indianapolis schools have operationalized this model.

The development of policy by state departments of education stems from the acknowledgement that schools alone cannot ensure that all students are successful, and that additional resources of the home and the community also need to be brought to bear on the task at hand (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1991). Additionally, parent and community involvement policy may serve to provide state education administrators with evaluative information on educational practices (Nardine, Chapman, & Moles, 1989).

Nardine and Morris (1991) surveyed state legislation and state department guidelines concerning parent involvement and found that 20 states had enacted parent involvement legislation, 6 states had written guidelines, and 21 states had neither legislation nor written guidelines governing parent involvement. The authors concluded that legislation on parent involvement was not a high priority, and that a wide diversity existed from state to state in the decisions about policies and guidelines.

The first active intervention in parent involvement by the federal government came with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965. Title 1 of the ESEA was created as much to empower poor communities to solve their own problems as it was to provide funding for the education of disadvantaged children (Snider, 1990b). Legislative requirements for the establishment of parent advisory councils at the district and local levels were enacted by 1978. With the 1981 reauthorization of Title 1 as Chapter 1 of the Educational Consolidation and Improvement Act, parent advisory councils were no longer required and parents and community members were given minimal responsibility as "advisors" to Title 1 programs. Without

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federal regulation of parent involvement, most state and local education agencies chose to give little more than lip service to parent and community participation in schooling (Nardine and Morris, 1991).

The 1988 reauthorization of Chapter 1 included the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Federal requirements concerning parent involvement were reinstated, not in the form of parent advisory councils, but in the development of parent-involvement policies. Parent and community members now have a formal advisory role, and local educators can decide how best to use the resources in designing and implementing Title 1 programs.

Henderson and Marburger (1990) described six federal educational programs, in addition to Chapter 1 legislation that include policies pertaining to parent involvement: the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education of 1965, as amended); the Education of the Handicapped Act, P. L. 94-142 (1974); the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, 1974); Even Start (Part B of the Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988); Head Start (1965); and FIRST (Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools, authorized in the Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendment of 1988).

In fact, as the earlier concern with bringing excluded groups into the political process of educational decision making waned during the 1980s, policymakers showed a renewed interest in involving parents more directly in their children's education, especially in support roles at home (Shields, 1992). Thus, each of these programs targeted parent involvement as a necessary component for successful educational outcomes.

For years, research has shown that home-school collaboration resulted in improved student achievement. As a result, new opportunities for parent involvement have been created by changes in Title 1 program requirements. Each school and each local education agency must have a written parent involvement policy created jointly with and approved by parents. Working together, parents and school staff must share

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responsibility for ensuring that students meet state standards. School districts receiving over $500,000. 00 of Title 1 funds must spend at least 1% of the money to support parent involvement (Baker and Rojas, 1995).

In some circumstances, Title 1 funds can be used to increase a school's overall parent involvement. Schools with 50% low-income students can operate school-wide programs in which Title 1 funds can be used to benefit the entire student population (p. 7). Regardless of the level of low-income families and Title 1 funding, the goal is for the school community to become fully engaged in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Title 1 programs.

The literature revealed that school, district, state, and federal policies concerning parent involvement play roles in parent efficacy. Epstein (1992) reported that researchers and policymakers argue that policy plays a critical role in parent involvement and should be a priority for policymakers. Oakes and Lipton (1990) believed that public commitment to education can be mobilized through the key role that policymakers can play.

The Challenges of Empirical Research in Parent Involvement

Recently there has been an increase in the literature that underscores the importance of parental participation in secondary schools that has come into its own as a special topic of research (Henderson, 1987). In earlier years the preponderance of research has focused on parental involvement at the prekindergarten, kindergarten, or elementary schools with very few studies focused on the secondary level (Gotts & Purnell, 1985). The majority of the studies addressed the more traditional roles that were once believed to be the roles of parents such as "school advocates" or "audience at school functions" to be important. That is not the role that parents play in today's school reform.

Parent involvement has gained much attention in the political and social arena, especially in the educational challenges that continue to confront the education reform

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movement. Parent participation in their children's education has become a political and social issue in the nation's public schools. Education research suggests that children whose parents are involved in their schools have better rates of academic success than do children whose parents are not so involved (Delgado-Gaitán, 1990; Maeroff, 1992). This concept is being applied to parents of culturally diverse children in an effort to improve student achievement.

Two arenas of parent involvement were explored to develop clarity concerning the role that parents play in education. The first concerns the direct effect that parents have on the child, while the second concerns the role that the parent plays in the production of education at the school.

Wide documentation is available concerning the "pervasive influence of the family environment on its members, both young and old. . . " (Boger, Richter & Paoulucci, 1986). Parents are the first teachers of their children (McKnight, 1990). Epstein (1990) noted that "all the years that children attend school they also attend home" (p. 99). Moreover, evidence indicates that early, positive parent to child "transactions" produce positive parent-teacher postures, while conversely, early, negative relations will decrease the effectiveness of the parent as a teacher (Bronfenbrenner, 1974). Boger, Richter & Paoulucci (1986) argued that "the nature of the home environment is the crucial factor, and as such is more important than the schooling in determining children's overall achievement--adjusted gains in achievement were closely related to the measure of parental encouragement and stimulation of adolescents" (p. 73).

Notwithstanding the importance of the parent in the home environment, it is parent involvement in the schools, rather than in the home alone, that is the important factor in the child's education. Empirical evidence supports the proposition that parent involvement in the education of their child improves the effectiveness of that education (Boger, Richter & Paoulucci, 1986). Cummins (1986) argued that parents that are involved as partners in their children's education develop a sense of efficacy that translates into positive

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academic development. The benefits of parent involvement accrue to everyone and in particular their children. Furthermore, research strongly suggests that there is no one best way, for parents to be involved. Instead, evidence supports the perspective that what works best is for parents to be involved in a variety of ways over a period of time (Casas and Furlong, 1994).

The other issue that is a stereotype is that since there is a low degree of parent involvement in some schools, parents do not care or they won't participate. A typical pattern in parent participation is that better off and well-educated parents are the ones that participate, and it is popularly felt that "less-educated parents cannot or do not want to be involved in their children's education" (Epstein, 1990, p. 122). Negative stereotypes characterizing low-income and culturally diverse communities as "apathetic, unrealistic, cynical, hostile, uninformed or unreasonable" arise to explain this phenomenon (Lynch, 1981).

Parents and parent advocates counter these stereotypes by pointing out that minority parents, in fact, do want to participate in schools but often face almost insurmountable barriers to participation. Negative stereotypes are countered by parent responses which charge that schools are "negative, intimidating, uncaring, and unresponsive" and present these reasons for their lack of participation (Lynch, 1981). Further, some culturally diverse parents such as Latino parent are intimidated by the educational system, by how the school functions and have been at times, excluded from participation in home-school relations.

Comer (1988a), documented that culturally diverse families "differ from others in that they have experienced the most cultural discontinuity and destruction of their organizing and stabilizing institutions and practices, as well as forced exclusions from education and other developmental opportunities" (p. 65). An incongruence exists between the views that minority parents have and the views that the schools have. For example, Latino parents basically leave the task of teaching intellectual subjects to the

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schools feeling that they are the authority and maintain the expertise on the subject. Respect for authority, a deeply ingrained value in Latino cultures, is reflected in respect for the schools (Phenice, Martínez, & Grant, 1986). This view often leads Latino parents to "leave the teaching to the school." The school, on the other hand, interprets this as disinterest in education on the part of parents. In spite of the high aspirations they have for their children, Latino parents often do not know how to help them. They are not aware of how the school functions and are intimidated by it (Núñez, 1994). Moreover, "the barriers that face bicultural families are encountered by all people, but are intensified in low-income, bicultural families" (Lynch, 1981).

Brandt (1989) indicated that parents of all races and social classes want their children to succeed in school and that parents are interested in working with schools, but many are so preoccupied with the demands, life stressors and/or distractions of modern life that they are not doing enough. For example, Latino families hold occupational attainment in higher value than educational attainment; nonetheless, their aspirations for their children's educational attainment was found to be significantly important (Phenice, Martínez, & Grant, 1986). Clearly, all parents, regardless of their socioeconomic and educational attainment, want their children to become contributing citizens and receive a quality education.

The kind of parental involvement that forges a strong home-school collaboration requires understanding the nature of home-school relations. Parents want their children to succeed, but they need help from the schools to know what to do (Comer, 1988a). Participation occurs when parents are supported and encouraged and rewarded for their involvement (Lynch, 1981).

The general conclusion emanating from the studies was that parent participation is important in improving and increasing home-school collaboration. The empirical research also suggested that "creating a positive learning environment at home, including encouraging positive attitudes toward education and high expectations of children's

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success, has a powerful impact on student achievement" (Henderson, 1987, p. 2). Parent participation has a tremendous impact on student learning/student outcomes, and therefore, parent involvement is essential. If parents show an interest in their children's education and have high expectations for their educational accomplishments, they can nurture the kinds of attitudes that are pivotal to high achievement. These attitudes can be nurtured and developed independent of social class or other external circumstances (Casas and Furlong, 1994). Parents do make a difference in school reform as the key ingredient to student performance (Henderson, 1987).

Creating A Comprehensive Parent Involvement Typology

Although policy leaders, educational practitioners, and theorists have begun to discuss and identify restructuring efforts for school reform and school effectiveness for the middle level grades, the nature and the quality of all institutions in every child's world are of major importance to the child's successful development. Burch and Palanki (1995) noted that parents play significant roles as collaborators when they are empowered in home-school collaboration. In fact, Burch and Palanki (1995) have indicated that positive effects of parent involvement are essential features which contribute to student achievement. They found that "parents contribute to and influence policies and decisions which affect them to function independently and effectively as community citizens in a democratic society" (p. 7). Home-school collaboration increases student success when parents are involved in their children's education and there is a linkage to school reform.

The development and implementation of parent and community involvement programs encompass activities that promote strong partnerships between schools and the constituents they serve: students, parents, families, and the larger community. Educational outcomes may be strengthened through these partnerships. Although these partnerships may assume various configurations, the most widely disseminated parent involvement model that has provided school improvement as a starting point for reaching out to families in parent involvement is Epstein's typology (1987) which focused upon

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student achievement and involving families to collaborate as a "community" in student learning and development (see Table 2. 1).

Epstein (1992) suggested that there are three critical roles that parents may assume in the education of their children. Parents are the primary resource in their children's education through home learning activities. In this role, parents may have the most direct effect on student achievement. The second role is that parents and community members are advocates in educational reform. The roles of parents and community members are facilitated by the organizational structures of schools that have changed to enable parents and families to better support education. The third role is that parents and community members participate in the education of all children. This role broadens the scope of both the partnership and the effects of the partnership. Each of these roles is actualized in different ways; however, the primary focus of these roles is on organizational structure to facilitate parent and community involvement in issues of change and empowerment. Parent involvement can improve school programs and school climate, provide family service and support, increase parents' skills and leadership, and connect families with others in the school and in the community (Epstein, 1995).

Many theorists have identified the various configurations of parent involvement for improving school, family, and community partnerships. These types of parent involvement improve school programs and school climate. Epstein's model illustrated a theoretical framework which focused the attention on student development and ensured collaboration among its constituents: school, family, and the community. The unarguable fact is that "students are the main actors in their education, development, and success in school" (p. 702). Moreover, she indicated that "in a caring school community, participants work continually to improve the nature and effects of partnerships so that student learning reflects the evolving goals of achieving high performance levels, continuous learning, and ongoing commitment to academic excellence in a global society" (p. 703). It challenges

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Table 2.1 Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement and Sample Practices

Type	Definition	Sample Practices
Parenting	Help families establish home environments to support children as students.	• Suggestions for home conditions that support learning at each grade level. • Family support programs to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services. • Home visits at transition points to pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school. Neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families.
Communicating	Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.	• Weekly or montly folders of student work sent home for review and comments. • Clear information on choosing schools or courses, programs, and activities within schools. • Clear information on all school policies, programs, reforms, and transitions.
Volunteering	Recruit and organize parent help and support.	• School and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents. • Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, resources for families. • Class parent, telephone tree, or other structures to provide all families with needed information.
Learning at Home	Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities. decisions, and planning.	• Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade. • Information on how to assist students to improve skills on various class and school assessments. • Regular schedule of homework that requires students to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class. • Family participation in setting student goals each year and in planning for college or work.
Decision Making	Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.	• Active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation. • District-level councils and committees for family and community involvement. • Networks to link all families with parent representatives.
Collaborating with Community	Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.	• Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs or services. • Service integration through partnerships involving school; civic, counseling, cultural, health, recreation, and other agencies and organizations; and businesses. • Service to the community by students, families, and schools.

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constituents to work together and examine practices for building a caring learning community or caring communities.

Diversity within family, community, and economic systems and the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of the constituents of schooling have direct effects on parent and community involvement programs regardless of the organizational structure of the school. Many factors influence the development of programs specifically at the middle grades.

Although there are other scholars who have illustrated theoretical frameworks of parent involvement, Epstein's model is a research-based model for assisting schools in building a strong partnership in home-school collaboration and for creating more systematic connections with families and communities. Clearly, the purpose of this parent involvement typology is to identify practices designed to forge a strong partnership between the school and the home. Epstein's framework illustrates the six major types of involvement that may be used as a guideline for programmatic efforts to improve adolescents' performance in school through learning activities to meet the needs of students, parents, families and the community at large.

Epstein (1987) identified the first typology for home-school collaboration as parents teaching and building positive home conditions which support school learning and behavior. Parents have the basic obligation of raising their children to grow, to develop, and to learn in their life span development. At this developmental stage parents oversee the basic needs such as the physiological and psychological needs which children must have met in order to be fully developed individuals. For example, parents provide children's health and safety which includes establishing a positive home environment to support children and teach and prepare them with life skills through their formative years (Epstein, 1995, p. 705). Moreover, in order for children to be powerful learners, they need the nurture and care that are essentially provided in the home environment in order to have a sense of a positive self-esteem and value as individuals. Thus in the first

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typology of parent involvement, parents provide their children positive home conditions that support school learning and behavior.

The second element of Epstein's framework is communication. She stated that schools have an obligation to communicate effectively with parents about school programs and children's progress. Epstein (1995) suggested that schools design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programs and children's progress. For example, she indicated that ideally schools would have conferences with every parent at least once a year, with follow-ups as needed. In addition, she noted that it is desirable that schools "establish clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home" (p. 705). Educators must be able to communicate with parents in order to inform them about their children's progress, school policies and programs, and opportunities for involvement (Winlock, 1994). Communications include notices, telephone calls, visits, report cards, and conferences with parents that most schools provide. Epstein explained that "just about all students at all levels--elementary, middle, and high school--want their families to be more knowledgeable about schooling and are willing to take active roles in assisting communications between the home and school" (p. 703). School personnel need to provide opportunities for useful home-school collaboration and for mutual effort to support students' success in school.

Epstein's third type of parent involvement practice is without doubt, a collaborative effort. She identifies this element as "volunteering." Swap (1993) indicated that volunteering is a joint mission that demands collaboration among parents, community representatives, and school personnel. Increasingly, in order to empower parents to become important constituents in schools, school personnel need to encourage and recognize that volunteering services are essential in schools in order to generate active parent participation. Parents and educational practitioners are aware of the unique

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contributions that constituents bring to school practice and the diverse experiences and expertise that volunteers bring to a school environment.

Parents are influential in making a difference in such services. For example, as an educator, the researcher facilitated the process of parent volunteers to increase parent participation at the middle level school. She implemented a parent volunteer service in which parents assisted educators in their professional fields. This support can be expressed through raising funds for the school, volunteering to assist the school in clerical or chaperoning tasks, serving as a room representative, and/or participating in social activities and school events. School events that bring school personnel and families together are important for building home-school relations. Epstein (1995) found in her research studies that parents engage in meaningful volunteering when school personnel assure them that their expertise such as skills, talents, occupations, and contributions are valued and most importantly, that volunteers support student outcomes and student learning.

The fourth component in Epstein's typology is home learning. Many research studies confirm that parents are the most influential teachers children have. Parents are considered their childrens' first educators in their development and are the most influential in student success. They provide the building blocks that make learning in school possible (Epstein, 1991). Involving parents in home learning activities vastly improves students' productivity. Programs and activities that may be called "home learning" take many forms, but most commonly include homework, leisure reading, family discussion, educational games, and enrichment activities (Moles, 1991).

Dauber and Epstein (1991) pointed out that regardless of parent education, family size, student ability, or school level, parents are more likely to become partners in their children's education if they perceive that the schools have strong practices to involve parents at school, at home on homework, and at home on reading activities. Researchers have also found that for parent involvement programs to be successful in home learning,

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educators must utilize the strengths of all parents, regardless of parental income, level of education, or social status.

Parents play a key role in their children's education by monitoring home learning. They can establish ongoing communication with their students' teachers, encourage and motivate their children to pursue their educational career paths, assist their children with decisions that affect their personal and social development, and understand the adolescent growth process. Epstein and Salinas (1990) indicated that the major emphasis of home-learning activities in the middle-level grades include helping parents: (1) become partners with teachers in encouraging children with their school work; (2) interact with their children at home to support school goals and programs; (3) understand early adolescence and middle grade programs; and (4) assist children with decisions that affect their own and the family's future. Parents can also assist in home learning activities by modeling the importance of education and having high expectations for student achievement.

One of the most vital aspects of Epstein's framework in parent involvement is the decision-making powers that parents play in school reform. She referred to this element as decision-making or shared decision-making in school governance. Epstein (1995) asserted that parents' voices are important in school policies pertaining to policy development and decisions. She explained that "decision making is a process of partnership, of shared views and actions toward shared goals, not just a power struggle between conflicting ideas" (p. 706). This process in turn, enables parents to serve as representatives and to voice their opinions about school policy, curriculum, instructional materials, staff scheduling, discipline, and other programs.

As mentioned, one of the most familiar aspects of parent-school collaboration is involvement in decision making in school governance--the establishment of school-based decision-making councils. For example, with the restructuring efforts in the San Diego Unified School District in San Diego, California, schools are required to involve parent

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participation in the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of programs. Title 1 schools who receive federal assistance monies for example, are mandated to have parents serve on the school-site management councils for determining the effectiveness of Title 1 programs. The school site council is composed of parents, certificated staff, and students to give input to the site principal on curriculum, instructional materials, budget allocations, staffing, parent involvement activities, and other school policies that pertain to the effectiveness of the school and how it is directly related to student achievement (External Funding Department, San Diego Unified School District, 1991). In fact, councils are empowered to make school policy about personnel, curriculum, instructional materials, staff scheduling, use of space, discipline and extracurricular programs. The school councils have been established in order to create a learning environment consistent with the goals set by the school board.

By involvement in decision making, parents voice their concerns in school policy. Parents and certificated staff determine what changes need to be implemented so that students are being challenged by a more thinking meaning-centered education. Thus "parents and others in the community serve in participatory roles and are contributors to schools decisions and by providing information to community advocacy groups so that they may be knowledgeable and address issues of school improvement" (Epstein, 1992, p. 75).

Finally, in Epstein's typology there is the element of family and community collaboration with community organizations. Schools collaborate with agencies, businesses, cultural organizations, and other groups to share responsibility for children's education and future success. Epstein (1995), explains that collaboration includes school programs that provide or coordinate children's and families' access to community and support services, such as before and after school care, health services, cultural events, and other programs. Schools assist families with information on community resources that help strengthen home conditions and assist children's learning and development. Epstein

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(1995) indicated that schools vary in how much they know about and draw on community resources to enhance and enrich the curriculum and other student experiences (see Table 2. 2).

For example, in the La Mesa-Spring Valley School District in San Diego, California, great efforts have been implemented to work with the community in order to be truly successful in the attempt to involve the community in a collaborative effort. School personnel were challenged to clarify the role of the school in a changing social environment by assisting the community at large. A project the district recently sponsored was the Neighborhood Volunteer Corps, "a project to do with people, not for them." Its goal is to identify natural helpers within the community and train them to make positive changes to benefit children in the neighborhood (Daleo, 1994). Its primary focus is on training corps participants to develop skills to improve the local community and to be people who want to make a difference in the community." Daleo (1994) indicated that the Neighborhood Volunteer Corps has made a difference. The Neighborhood Volunteer Corps has included neighborhood watch programs, outreach programs, literacy story-telling night, community clean-ups which all emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts established by the district to assist the community but primarily to help themselves (p. 9). Moreover, the district provides outreach resources to the community and assists to engage families in a "learning community" and to create a dependency system of community involvement.

The six types of involvement stated may guide the development of a balanced, comprehensive program of partnerships, including opportunities for family involvement at school and at home, with potentially important results for students, parents, and teachers. The research on parent involvement has identified a number of key elements of a comprehensive home-school partnership plan, and the kinds of actions that are necessary at each grade level to implement such a plan. Obviously, more collaborative work needs to be done to identify the most effective types of home-school partnership

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Table 2.2 Epstein's Challenges and Redefinitions for the Six Types of Involvement

Type	Challenges	Redefinitions
Parenting	Provide information to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building. Enable families to share information with schools about culture, background, children's talents and needs.	• "Workshop" to mean more than a meeting about a topic held at the school building at a particular time. • "Workshop" may also mean making information about a topic available in a variety of forms that can be viewed, heard, or read anywhere, any time, in varied forms.
Communicating	Establish clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home.	• "Communications about school programs and student progress" to mean two-way, three-way, and many-way channels of communication that connect schools, families, students, and the community.
Volunteering	Organize volunteer work; provide training; match time and talent with school, teacher, and student needs; and recognize efforts so that participants are productive.	• "Volunteer" to mean anyone who supports school goals and children's learning or development in any way, at any place, and at any time -- not just during the school day and at the school building.
Learning at Home	Design and organize a regular schedule of interactive homework that gives students responsibility for discussing important things they are learning and helps families stay aware of the content of their children's classwork.	• "Homework" to mean not only work done alone, but also interactive activities shared with others at home or in the community, linking schoolwork to real life. • "Help" at home to mean encouraging, listening, reacting, praising, guiding, monitoring, and discussing -not "teaching" school subjects.
Decision Making	Include parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups in the school. Offer training to enable leaders to serve as representatives of other families, with input from and return of information to all parents.	• "Decision making" to mean a process of partnership, of shared views and actions toward shared goals, not just a power struggle between conflicting ideas. • Parent "leader" to mean a real representative, with opportunities and support to hear from and communicate with other families.
Collaborating with Community	Inform families of community programs for students, such as mentoring, tutoring, business partnerships. Assure equity for students and families to participate in community programs or to obtain services.	• "Community" to mean not only the neighborhoods where students' homes and schools are located but also any neighborhoods that influence their learning and development. • "Community" rated not only by low or high social or economic qualities, but by strengths and talents to support students, families, and schools. • "Community" means all who are interested in and affected by the quality of education, not just those with children in the schools.

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practices. Epstein (1995) emphasized a partnership that views the schools as "homeland." The conditions and relationships in this kind of environment invite power sharing and mutual respect and allow energies to be directed toward activities that foster student learning and development.

A tabular summary of Epstein's typology (see Table 2. 1) provides a synthesis of the types of parent practices that reflect an effective parent involvement program. The sample practices are designed as guidelines for schools and family partnerships to emulate so that a strong collaborative partnership may emerge. Each type presents particular challenges that must be considered in effective school improvement in order to involve all families and shift the present paradigms to new needed redefinitions of some basic principles of involvement (see Table 2. 2 and Table 2. 3). Finally, each type is likely to lead to different results for the different constituents to emerge so that sample practices will achieve important educational outcomes for students. The tables provide examples of practices, challenges for successful implementation, and redefinitions for understanding the needs of families and students (p. 707).

The works by Lyons, Robbins, & Smith (1982), Epstein (1987, 1995), Chrispeels (1987), and Ochoa (1995) presented a typology of home-school partnerships roles in the many different practices of partnership. These roles form a scaffolding on which to build a home-school partnership program. While not every role has been shown to have a direct influence on student achievement, there is some evidence that the more comprehensive and long lasting the partnership efforts, the more likely student motivation and achievement will be positively affected (Chrispeels, 1992). Communication serves as the primary foundation for the other roles.

The first role is home and school as co-communicators in a home-school partnership typology. Chrispeels (1992) suggested that this role serves as the foundation of any parent involvement partnership program. Swap (1990a) indicated that all families and school personnel must be involved in this process. It must be a two-way

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Table 2.3
Expected Results of the Six Types of Involvement for Students, Parents, and Teachers

Type	Results for Students	For Parents	For Teachers
Parenting	Awareness of family supervision; respect for parents. Positive personal qualities, habits, beliefs, and values, as taught by family. Awareness of importance of school.	Understanding of and confidence about parenting, child and adolescent development, and changes in home conditions for learning as children proceed through school.	Understanding families' backgrounds, cultures, concerns, goals, needs, and views of their children.
Communicating	Awareness of own progress and of actions needed to maintain or improve grades. Understanding of school policies on behavior, attendance, and other areas of student conduct. Awareness of own role in partnerships, serving as courier and communicator.	Understanding school programs and policies. Interactions with teachers and ease of communication with school and teachers.	Increased diversity and use of communications with families and awareness of own ability to communicate clearly. Increased ability to elicit and understand family views on children's programs and progress.
Volunteering	Skill in communicating with adults. Increased learning of skills that receive tutoring or targeted attention from volunteers. Awareness of many skills, talents, occupations, and contributions of parents and other volunteers.	Understanding teacher's job, increased comfort in school, and carry-over of school activities at home. Self-confidence about ability to work in school and with children or to take steps to improve own education.	Readiness to involve families in new ways, including those who do not volunteer at school. Greater individual attention to students, with help from volunteers.
Learning at Home	Gains in skills, abilities, and test scores linked to homework and classwork. View of parent as more similar to teacher and of home as more similar to school. Self-concept of ability as learner.	Know how to support, encourage, and help student at home each year. Understanding of instructional program each year and of what child is learning in each subject.	Better design of homework assignments. Recognition of equal helpfulness of single parent, dual-income, and less formally educated families in motivating and reinforcing student learning.
Decision Making	Awareness of representation of families in school decisions. Specific benefits linked to policies enacted by parent organizations and experienced by students.	Input into policies that affect child's education. Awareness of parents' voices in school decisions. Shared experiences and connections with other families.	Awareness of parent perspectives as a factor in policy development and decisions. View of equal status of family representatives on committees and in leadership roles.
Collaborating with Community	Increased skills and talents through enriched curricular and extracurricular experiences. Awareness of careers and of options for future education and work. Specific benefits linked to programs, services, resources, and opportunities that connect students with community.	Knowledge and use of local resources by family and child to increase skills and talents or to obtain needed services. Interactions with other families in community activities. Awareness of school's role in the community and of community's contributions to the school.	Awareness of community resources to enrich curriculum and instruction. Openness to and skill in using mentors, business partners, community volunteers, and others to assist students and augment teaching practices.

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effort in which the school and parents need to exchange information about student progress and satisfaction with school. Often, communication tends to be one way, from the school to the home, with little effort made by school staff to listen to important information parents have about their children, their aspirations for their children, their culture and traditions, or their views on education (Chrispeels, 1992). Accordingly, both parents and teachers need to be involved in the assessment process so that schools and families form a stronger partnership and establish a clear two-way channel for communications from home to school and from school to home. This, in turn, connects schools, families, and the community in home-school collaboration.

In order to strengthen home-school partnerships, Chrispeels and others suggest that it is important for schools to begin examining current communication strategies, explore other practices, and ensure implementation of new approaches in communication. Effective communication may lead to improved school achievement for students. "Parents and school staff convey to each other that both parties are working together for home-school connections and therefore, effective school practice may be ensured" (p. 18).

The second role is home and school as co-supporters in home-school partnership. In their role as co-supporters, school staff and families need to be involved in support activities, just as in communication. This role has three critical dimensions. The first dimension, highlighted in the typology developed by Epstein (1987), encompasses parents meeting the basic obligation of child-rearing in providing for their children's psychological and physiological needs. The second dimension of support represents the typical concept of family support for the school. This support is expressed through raising funds for the school, volunteering to assist the school in clerical or chaperoning tasks, serving as a room representative, and/or participating in social activities and school events. School activities that bring school personnel and families together are important for building home-school relations.

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A third dimension of co-supporters is evolving as schools realize they play a critical role in supporting families. This restructuring of the support role to include school support for families is one of the more dramatic changes affecting home-school connections. It is important that school officials recognize that they need to provide a safe, positive learning environment not only during school hours, but also before and after school to meet the needs of working families who cannot afford independent child care.

While community education and community schools are not new concepts, they have resurfaced with new meaning and are pervasive as some neighborhoods have disintegrated. There is a critical need for schools, social service and government agencies to collaborate to provide assistance to children and families (Heath & McLaughlin, 1987; Kagan, 1989; Schorr, 1988; Williams, 1989). One of the major findings of the *Schools Reaching Out* projects sponsored by the Institute for Responsive Education is that almost all these schools formed partnerships with outside agencies, businesses, or institutes of higher education (Swap, 1990b; Krasnow 1990a, 1990b) as a way of enhancing the cultural capital for children (Lareau, 1989). For example one of the *Reaching Out* schools, Montgomery Junior High in the Sweetwater School District, California, has formed a partnership with five social service agencies. Each agency adopts the school one day a week. Agency staff come to the school to counsel students, and sometimes parents, and to offer parenting workshops (Chrispeels, 1992).

A more extensive community-business-school-and university partnership is represented by Coalition for PRIDE in San Marcos, Texas (Chavkin, 1990). Social workers contact and work with families whose children have been referred to them, usually because of poor school performance and attendance. Through a case management approach, social workers solve problems by serving as a critical communication link between family, school, and other social agencies. A local university is a key partner that provides teacher training and social interns for the program. PRIDE seems to be making a difference; attendance rates are up, school performance is improving, and families are

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receiving needed counseling to solve problems (p. 23). There are considerable efforts made by school support organizations to enhance the safety, security and well-being of families. Moreover, one of the goals of school support is to coordinate and even reallocate resources to better meet the needs of families.

The third and fourth types of home-school partnership roles are as co-learners and as co-teachers in parent involvement programs. The term "co-learners," according to Chrispeels (1990), implies that both parents and staff have an opportunity to learn in formal and informal ways. Home-school communication plays an important part in the learning process as do the more formal learning opportunities provided by school-sponsored workshops. The communication process, as discussed earlier, usually enables parents to learn about the school, but does not provide enough opportunities for school staff to learn from parents. Similarly, most workshops tend to be sporadic in nature and include sessions, presentations, and/or activities on "parent communication, discipline, self-esteem, decision-making and are often not tied to the school curriculum in systematic ways" (p. 25). In addition, if home-school partnerships are to flourish, parents are not the only ones who need learning opportunities.

Teachers also have much to learn if new partnerships are to be forged. Few teachers and administrators have taken or been offered courses that prepare them for working with parents (Chavkin & Williams, 1987). Staff development that focuses on how to build home-school partnerships has not been a priority for schools. Most parent involvement initiatives have focused on "fixing" parents, not rethinking how teachers need to restructure their actions and relationships with parents and develop staff skills. The work of Cochran (1990) and the staff at the Family Matters Projects at Cornell University was one of the first pioneering efforts to organize workshops for teachers and parents to enhance collaboration. A new initiative by the Office of Educational Research of the U.S. Department of Education to publish a series of staff development workshops for school staff, *Schools and Families: Helping Children Learn More* (Moles 1992),

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represents another step. The topics addressed by this series of workshops includes working with families from diverse backgrounds, developing and implementing school/district/parent involvement policies, developing schoolwide parent involvement plans, teacher communication practices to engage families, and homework and home learning practices to engage families. Teachers need to be learners and increase the ability to elicit and understand the family structure as it directly applies in home-school collaboration.

Epstein (1995) pointed out that staff development must be restructured and redefined in order to assist teachers on how to work with and involve parents. The expected results for teachers include not only improved parent/teacher conferences or school/home communications, but also better understanding of families, new approaches to developing strong school and classroom practices that inform and involve families, and other connections with families and the community. Clearly, it is important for school personnel staff "to work together and with parents to develop, implement, evaluate, and continue to improve practices of partnership" (p. 710).

The fifth type of home-school partnership typology in parent involvement is parents as the decision makers in the decision-making process. While all parents and teachers can be advocates for children, this role is typically interpreted in a formal way such as serving on school advisory or decision-making committees. In ideal situations parents serve in leadership positions and are actively engaged in making meaningful decisions on critical issues of curriculum-related academic achievement. They give input into policies that affect their children's education; are aware of parents' voices in school decisions; share experience and voice their opinions of school, district, and state policies. These advocates and decision-maker parents are viewed as parents that make a difference in the community. They share the voices of the community, are the representative of the community, and accomplish important school goals to augment effective school practices.

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As Epstein did, Chrispeels also recommended her sixth and final type of home-school partnership as collaboration with the community. This type of partnership seeks ways to address the needs of children and families and to coordinate the human services resources that are available to children and families. In restructuring efforts, schools have sought ways to develop community partnerships that can address the needs of unique and diverse populations. Davies (1994) indicated that schools need a comprehensive approach to partnerships that is built into the school's plans for reform and/or restructuring in order to promote the social and academic success of all the students. Studies have shown that "schools that are reaching out for partnerships will recognize that helping parents be better parents and helping families function better helps children contributes directly to children's academic success" (p. 89).

Stone (1995) pointed out that in San Diego, California, as part of a program known as "New Beginnings," the planning of institutional links between schools and social services has been under way since 1988, giving an opportunity to study a comprehensive vision of school/community collaboration. This "vision includes improving the school/community human service delivery by reducing fragmentation and increasing the system's responsiveness to client needs" (p. 794). The goal is to help people in the neighborhoods of schools to organize and develop resources that will reduce dependence on public assistance. A central strategy in this effort is to weave together the resources of schools, the communities surrounding schools, county social services and health services. This type of collaboration assists children and families to explore the many challenges of school/community collaboration. In addition, this collaborative partnership leads parents to meaningful and productive forms of public engagement.

A Visionary Model for Culturally Diverse Children in Home-School Collaboration

The Comer process and the Accelerated Schools Program illustrate recent partnership models which lead to meaningful home-school collaboration. They are described as visionary programs for home-school collaboration. The Comer process

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requires structural changes in the school that support school improvement. The School Planning and Management Team is a structural innovation in which parents, administrators, and staff are responsible for initiating and monitoring school-wide policies and structures that offer comprehensive, interdisciplinary support and problem-solving to meet the needs of children and staff. Parents participate on the School Planning Management Team, and parent support and involvement, considered essential to the model, are vigorously sought through a variety of additional roles and activities at school and at home. Because the Comer process is a transforming process that affects attitudes, philosophy, structures, and day-to-day practices, it is not an innovation that has a short life in schools (Swap, 1993, p. 10).

Comer's philosophy of school improvement makes parent involvement in schools indispensable. He believes that the goal of school reform is to improve the quality of relationships among children, teachers, parents, and educational practitioners (p. 51). In Comer's view, learning is not a mechanistic process, but a relational one, an emotional attachment in bonding, initiation, identification, and internalization of the attitudes and values of adults that enable children to succeed academically (Comer, 1988). Children will be able to learn only when teachers and parents become allies in a common mission, and teachers are able to respond comprehensively to the "whole" child.

The most widely known parent involvement program model that has made significant difference in educational reform for improving student achievement for minority students is the Comer Model. Clearly, the purpose of this model has been to increase parent involvement in terms of school improvement in the elementary, and most recently in the middle and high schools (Comer, 1988a). This model has been initiated in over 375 schools in 19 states (Baker and Rojas, 1995). It has increased parent participation and Swap (1993) reported that in "many of the poor inner city schools that use the School Development Program or Comer process, achievement scores have reached or

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surpassed the national average, and students have maintained those gains over several years" (p. 53).

The other model that has gained wide school practice is the Accelerated Schools Model according to Swap (1993). Levin (1987, 1988a, 1988b; Hopfenberg et al. , 1990) initiated this experimental program that offers another comprehensive approach to school reform and parent involvement. This model was launched in 1986 in two schools in low-income communities in San Francisco. The "program has as its mission to accelerate the learning of children 'At-Risk' so that they perform at grade level by the end of the sixth grade" (p. 54).

The assumptions of the Accelerated Schools model include:

1. An interdisciplinary accelerated curriculum emphasizing language-rich classrooms, problem-solving, and higher-order analytical skills.
2. Instructional practices that promote active learning experiences, peer tutoring, cooperative learning strategies, and focus on the teacher as a facilitator and communicator of information.
3. An organizational model that is characterized by the broad participation of administrators, teachers, and parents.

The Accelerated model rejects a technocratic approach to using any remedial strategy that is focused on mechanics and repetition for teaching children at risk, and a bureaucratic approach to school organization that relies on mandates and regulation from above.

The school of the Accelerated model seeks to create a culture in which there is a "common mission defining common goals among adults and students; whose principles include unity of purpose and empowerment coupled with responsibility" (p. 55). The values the model strives to embody include equity for all students, participation, open communication, reflection, experimentation, trust, and risk-taking.

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Swap (1993) posited that the Accelerated Schools program places more emphasis on curriculum than does the Comer process, and that the Comer process places more emphasis on a developmentally based, coordinated program of support services for children and parents. She stated that the Student Staff Support Team is a structure developed by Comer that has no analogue in Levin's model.

Although much emphasis is placed on a developmental base as noted in this model, both programs' goals are on school improvement. A true partnership according to Swap (1993), is a transforming vision of school culture based on collegiality, mutual support and joint problem solving. It is based on the assumption that parents and educational practitioners are members of a partnership who have a common goal which is student achievement. Swap (1993) noted that reframing the school culture as a community of learners dedicated to success for all children creates a context in which many new insights can be generated. Swap (1993) contended that the Partnership model is the model that will most clearly emerge in response to the crises in American education. This model describes "an alliance between parents and school practitioners to encourage better schools, and success for all students" (p. 168).

The models mentioned serve as a basis of theoretical frameworks which have contributed to student achievement and parent involvement. Because schools are restructuring across the country, there has been systemic change in school reform. Even though there is a "paradigm shift," in some schools, and the shift is toward establishing two-way communication, providing mutual support, enhancing learning at home and school, making joint decisions, and collaboration, not all schools have accomplished this goal. Swap (1993) maintained that there is a disequilibrium in school reform. She remarked that the focus must be on student learning and increasing levels of commitment in establishing (1) limited partnerships for student learning, (2) building comprehensive networks of services for families, and (3) restructuring schools for partnership and student

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learning. Therefore, a visionary model will not only improve student achievement but will increase parent involvement.

While the research on parent involvement has identified a number of key components of a comprehensive home-school partnership plan, and the kinds of actions that are necessary at each level of schooling to implement such a plan, it is clear that much more collaborative work needs to be done to identify the most effective types of home-school partnership practices. Epstein (1995) emphasized a partnership that views the school as a "homeland." The conditions and relationships in this kind of environment invite power sharing and mutual respect and allow energies to be directed toward activities that foster student learning and development.

Parents as Advocates for Education in School Reform In Middle Level Schools

Parent involvement programs require that parents and community members become strong supporters and advocates for the education of children especially during middle level school years. Studies emphasized that schools strive to promote contact with all parents, to help parents learn more about their children's school program and progress, to help them gain information on home learning activities and home support for education, and to incorporate other ways to assist parents in helping their children learn (Epstein, 1992). As with home learning, schools may assume an active role to ensure that parents have a variety of ways to become involved in their children's education.

The research literature on the Effective Schools Movement emphasized the importance of developing the abilities of all children regardless of their current achievement level or their cultural, ethnic, or socioeconomic background (Epstein, 1992). The concept of teaching the whole child has extended upward from the elementary level and provides a balance to the historically heavy academic emphasis at the secondary level. The middle grade student is not just an intellect to be developed; educators must consider the child's social, emotional, and physical development as well (Davies, 1991).

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Although, students in the middle grades assume the roles of young adults, parent involvement is more critical than ever during this "rite of passage" period. During these years, adolescents are beginning to exert their own independence by breaking away from some parental controls and society in general. Berla, Henderson, and Kerewsky (1989) remarked that parents become less involved during this period of transition while still holding high expectations.

Educators in middle schools, who understand young adolescents often work actively to keep parents informed and involved. Considerable efforts are made to welcome parents and provide opportunities to involve parents in curriculum and instruction, school activities, parent-teacher conferences, parent training inservices, and other community services to assist parents in home-school collaboration.

Even though some parents may struggle with inadequate resources and may not want to be involved in parent-involvement programs, Epstein (1995), Ochoa (1995) and others suggested that all efforts must be made by middle school educators so that parents become involved and participate in the learning process regardless of the barriers that may exist.

This holistic and developmental approach to learning has implications for the involvement of families. Parents want information not only about how to help their children do well in school academically but how to help them with their social, emotional, and physical growth as their children face the problems of adolescence. Additionally, the changing structure of the family and its related needs must be considered in relationship to the school and its available resources (Epstein, 1986). Schools have begun to move beyond the informational phase with parents to modeling, guiding, and assisting them with becoming more effective in dealing with their children's development and learning. Thus, schools and families can work together to increase parent participation that leads to success for all students.

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Family settings can provide a social and behavioral backdrop that helps ensure the success of children in the school environment. Families can also provide home learning activities that accelerate the process of acquiring skills and content that lead to higher student achievement. Schools must take the lead in helping families acquire the knowledge and skills to provide this crucial support to their children (Moles, 1990). According to Purnell and Gotts (1985), teachers need training to become more effective in their communication with parents and to have specific practices to suggest to parents as they become more actively involved with their children's educational progress. Thus, schools need to insure that parent and community involvement is a high priority for school staff, parents, and the community.

The works of Epstein (1992, 1995), Chrispeels (1992), Comer (1986) noted that effective schools point to the importance of parent and community involvement in the reform of schools. Parents and community members need to voice their issues concerning the education of their children. Furthermore, studies have shown that schools have the obligation to encourage parent-community involvement in all phases of site-based management and district policy (Epstein, 1992). Parent involvement programs may incorporate and share knowledge with parents and community members regarding issues such as curriculum and instruction, administration and governance, and policies concerning educational reform.

While there are many other districts that encourage involvement in all phases of site-based management, the San Diego Unified School District in San Diego, California, is a district which has made considerable efforts in encouraging parents to voice their concerns in educational practices. For example, in 1994, the San Diego Unified School District surveyed parents as a part of the plan to improve student achievement and organizational effectiveness. Parents were provided with the opportunity to inform the district and the school's governance team about the school that their child attended. The Survey of Parent Satisfaction (see Appendix I, The Survey of Parent Satisfaction), was

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developed in the Planning, Assessment and Accountability Division; and reviewed by the members of the Parent Involvement Task Force. The survey consisted of eleven questions, using a Likert-type scale, with four possible responses for each question. The survey was translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, Lao, Hmong, and Cambodian, and all parents received copies of the survey in all six languages.

Jehl and Carstens (1994) reported that a total of 23,070 surveys were returned, for a 29 percent overall response rate. The ethnic distribution of respondents varied from the ethnic distribution of the district's students, with White parents somewhat over represented among survey respondents and other major ethnic groups somewhat underrepresented. Overall, parents indicated that they were satisfied with student achievement (see Appendix J, The Survey of Parent Satisfaction: Overall Satisfaction for Middle/Junior High Schools). White parents indicated satisfaction at the 75-80 percentile, while Latino parents indicated satisfaction almost at the 90 percentile. Furthermore, this survey indicated the areas where the district needed to focus and to raise expectations for achievement among students, parents, and all members of the community. Staff at individual schools and at the district level worked to communicate the need for increased efforts and higher levels of achievement.

While the survey indicated that Hispanic parents were satisfied with the overall student achievement, it appears that there is a discrepancy in the results of the data. From the researcher's perspective and field work experience, Latino parents do not like written questionnaires. In fact, out of 52 parents that were given questionnaires, only 4 were returned to the researcher. Clearly, the researcher questioned the validity of the data for Latino parents since she knew from experience that not all Latino parents respond to a written questionnaire.

As the district strives to improve home-school collaboration, this survey indicated that parents are satisfied with their children's overall education. However, the fact remains that in order to fully implement home-school partnership, changes are needed at

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all levels of the educational decision making system in order to forge a strong home-school collaboration.

Involving parents and community members in school programs forges a strong bond and establishes a trusting and supportive environment between the home and school (Winlock, 1994). Provision of opportunities for all parents to become informed about how the parent involvement programs are designed and implemented in schools may result in their active participation in parent and community programs. This review of the literature showed that the role of parents as the primary resource in their children's education creates a strong home/school partnership relationship, and involves parents and community members in parent involvement programs as linkages that strengthen home-school collaboration.

Parent Involvement for Culturally Diverse Parents

Few empirical studies on parent involvement programs for culturally diverse parents exist. While generic models for parent involvement are available, there has been minimal research in home-school involvement programs for Latino parents.

Costas (1991) pointed out that Hispanic parents value education and want to become active participants in their children's education. However, there are cultural and socioeconomic issues that impede Latino parents from forging a strong home-school collaboration. When Hispanic children enter school, parents do not expect to take a significant role in their children's education. Due to their cultural background, Latino parents give their authority to the teachers who are considered their children's "second parents" and feel they should not interfere with their children's education (p. 18).

Another obstacle that some members of the Hispanic community encounter is limited experience with education. Not only do they feel uncomfortable dealing with educators, but often they do not understand the educational process. Many Hispanic parents as "children suffered racial discrimination in the classroom and a rejection of their

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native language and culture" (p. 17). Finally, there are illegal immigrants who might not be active school participants because they may be worried about public exposure (Dewind, 1982).

Increased parent-school involvement is a much needed change for Hispanic parents. Nicolau and Ramos (1990) indicated that in order to develop a strong partnership with Hispanic parents there are several factors involved. Keys to reaching Hispanic parents are strong "personal outreach, warm, non-judgmental communication, and the ability to convey respect for the parents' feelings and concerns" (p. 17). Lack of sensitivity to social factors of Hispanic parents and of awareness of the social and cultural conditions they face may prevent educators from understanding the needs of Hispanic parents.

Casas and Furlong (1994) have discussed a variety of innovative programs which have made efforts to enhance the quality of Hispanic parent participation. In their studies of Hispanic parent involvement model programs, they described a few programs as representative of different approaches used to address the needs of Hispanic parental involvement.

Casas and Furlong (1994) suggested the following specific steps for increasing Hispanic parent participation. First, it is important that all key school and community personnel be identified. Efforts must be expended to reach as many of the segments as possible. These researchers indicated that a personal contact is appropriate for important cultural or social community events. "Suffice to say, the broader the base of parent participation and the stronger the spirit of community involvement, the greater likelihood of success in attaining parent participation goals" (p. 141).

The second step is to assess and develop a positive climate for parent participation. Developing such a climate will require that personnel take the necessary steps to establish open communication and a trust level that is conducive to both team and consensus building. Casas and Furlong (1994), stated that in order to attain

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successful outcomes for desired parental involvement programs, it is essential that key players identify where they fall on the type of involvement they desire to promote in their school. Open communication should be established and maintained between the home and the school.

Once the climate has been assessed and the parameters established for the type of parental involvement desired, it is necessary to identify and pay close attention to "attitudinal barriers that impede attaining desired objectives" (p. 143). With some educators it may be necessary to challenge any preconceived notions regarding the interests of Hispanic parents and what they are capable of doing. It is essential to help the school community identify the level at which parents feel most comfortable and to provide them with various participation options.

As the third step, Casas and Furlong (1994) also posited that the focus of schools is to dispel certain beliefs about parent involvement and to empower parents with the attitude that they are capable of getting involved in school reform. "Focusing on the Hispanic parents themselves, given their level of education and frequently less than positive past experiences with the educational system, and their self-perception may be that they lack the necessary knowledge and skills to become active partners in their children's education" (p. 143). However, these parents can make a difference in school reform and be involved in their children's academic achievement.

The fourth step is to address parental participation within existing school improvement efforts. Attempts need to be made to encourage collaborative planning. According to Casas and Furlong (1994), a primary issue is to reach out to those parents who are underrepresented. As noted with respect to nonparticipating Hispanic parents, it is recommended that they be invited to join all kinds of ongoing efforts, but in particular those in which they feel most comfortable. It is important to solicit broad parental participation and to integrate such participation with other school planning efforts.

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The fifth step is to collect and analyze data. The collection of data should be used as a needs assessment which can directly focus on the particular needs of the school. The needs assessment should identify areas of pride and strength in addition to specifying areas for improvement and change in some of the existing components in parent involvement (p. 139).

As soon as there is a clear understanding about the areas that require change or improvement, it is important "to list the high priority concerns and needs, explore possible barriers to parental participation, and identify the resources needed and those available to respond to these needs" (p. 144). After issues are discussed, a specific action plan should be developed which includes strategies for implementation, evaluation criteria, and reasonable time lines.

Casas and Furlong (1994) further asserted that part of the planning process involves the specific programs that will be used to increase parent participation. Model programs certainly provide inspiration, motivation to take action, and direction. However, for the sake of effectiveness, each community needs to develop its own unique plan of action. They suggested that "specific strategies and actions for facilitating parental participation should include (1) proposed time lines and completion dates; (2) assigned responsibilities among staff, parents, and community; and (3) a process to monitor progress" (p. 145).

The final step to insure parent participation is evaluation of the plan to increase parent participation. Systematic efforts to elevate and maintain high levels of parent participation never end. This ongoing process continually seeks to make the school more responsible to the needs of the community. At this stage of the planning cycle, it is critical to determine if parental participation has actually increased in quantity and quality. Staff and parents can be surveyed about their attitudes and perceptions of the school in general and parent participation in particular. Parents and staff need to discuss the

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successes and difficulties of the program and explore ways that it can be strengthened or revised.

From a pragmatic perspective, programs which will increase parent involvement need to be comprehensive, ongoing, dynamic, culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of Hispanic parents. Programs that have been noted for their considerable efforts have been given attention in the literature review for Hispanic parent involvement.

Casas and Furlong (1994) have pointed out three programs that have increased Hispanic parent involvement and based on their findings, show that Hispanic parents do value education, want increased levels of participation in their children's schooling process, and express a willingness to become involved.

The "Say Yes to a Youngster's Future" program was developed by the National Urban Coalition and funded by Shell Oil Company in selected public schools in Houston, Washington, and New Orleans. Its goal is to motivate youngsters to stay in school and at the same time to nurture an interest and develop the skills needed to pursue studies and work in high-technology industries. To attain this end, the program focuses on increasing parental involvement in their children's education, especially in the areas of mathematics and science.

Activities are designed so that parents and children work together on mathematics and science projects and participate in enrichment activities. According to Seamón (1990), "Students and parents learn together from kitchen chemistry, performing simple experiments which can be duplicated at home. The parents have learned methods which have increased their parenting skills and participated in effective home learning activities for themselves and their children" (p. 8).

The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), a parent leadership program is in its second year of operation in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Seamón (1990) noted that the goal of this parent leadership program is to empower parents by having them empower themselves. The concept is to bring parents

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and interested families together to discuss issues and/or concerns about the educational system, make recommendations, and formulate a plan of action based on their recommendations, and therefore, implement a plan of action and address parents' concerns. This program was designed and implemented in response to the low level of educational achievement within the Hispanic community. It was rooted in the belief that the goal of educational equity for the Hispanic community can be attained only through community involvement.

The major focus of this program as mentioned, is to empower parents to participate as leaders in their school communities. To this end, the "participating parents were provided with information about how the school functions; in addition, they were provided with experiences to help them develop the necessary skills to effectively address concerns relative to their children's education" (p. 137).

After the first year of operation, "the consensus of the program participants, school staff, and MALDEF was that the program was successful in attaining its goals" (p. 137). Parents were satisfied with what they learned and the school staff was pleased with the improvement in parent participation.

Another program that assists parents and facilitates the transition of Hispanic students from elementary to junior high school is the Parent Empowerment Program-Student Included/Padres en Poder-Sí (Pep-sí), a joint program by the University of Santa Barbara and the Santa Barbara School District. This program facilitates the transition of at-risk students from elementary to junior high school. This program addresses the needs of at-risk students by working directly with the students and by systematically reaching out to encourage the participation of parents in the educational process. The program was based on the belief that meaningful change in the educational careers of at-risk students is more likely to occur when a comprehensive intervention and prevention model is used (Casas, Furlong, & Solberg, 1988).

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In this program four components are included which increased parent participation directly. They involved direct support services to students and parents. These are: "student development, parent outreach, tutorial services and community-oriented services. The outcomes of the program were positive, and parents involved in the program expressed a desire to have the program continue as well as a willingness to help their children succeed in school" (p. 139).

Delgado-Gaitán (1991), a leading scholar in ethnographic research on Latino family practices, suggested that an ongoing process of family school relationships assists parents in a context for learning and empowerment. With dialogue about educational issues through increased parent-child communication, parents have become more efficacious advocates in school reform. Delgado-Gaitán posited that Latino parents are able "to exercise their rights and become more active participants if they make a conscientious effort to take action in school reform by participation in their children's education" (p. 17).

Delgado-Gaitán (1991) has also compared the specific nature of the relationship between literacy acquisition processes in children with their parents' process of empowerment to function effectively in the education process. A literacy program was designed to assist Latino parents in which parents could collaborate with the school and assist their children with literacy activities "in terms of incorporating children's cultural knowledge, values and language to enable them to learn by building on their own knowledge" (p. 19).

In 1985 the Comité de Padres Latinos (COPLA), a literacy program, was designed by Delgado-Gaitán and associates to serve low-income Latino children and their families in grades K-6 (Delgado-Gaitán & Trueba, 1991) in the Carpinteria School District in Santa Barbara, California. Generally speaking, parents were trained in literacy skills by which they as parents might teach their children using effective and clear implications of the acquisition of learning skills acquired in the literacy program.

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The program has four goals to assist Latino parents (1) to recognize that literacy is a basic tool and vehicle that enables parents to participate in society; (2) to recognize that the cultural power and strengths Latino parents have to help their children succeed in their education development; (3) to increase communication through an empowerment process; and (4) to have active COPLA leaders reach out to parents to assist and encourage family members to maintain active dialogue on educational issues, and to understand the educational school system in order to support their children.

Parents were trained in family literacy sessions on a daily basis for a duration of eight monthly sessions. The goal was to have third and fourth graders read with their parents at home and as a family report back to the classroom teacher to evaluate and/or improve children's academic literacy performance.

In the last several years, Delgado-Gaitán & Trueba (1991) have reported that Latino parents have indicated that the literacy program has been "meaningful, congruent with family priorities, and has been very useful in their personal and social development. In fact, the COPLA program has made some progress in increasing student achievement" (p.139).

Burch and Palanki (1995) found in their research studies on family involvement in the development of school-linked services a program that assists primarily Mexican immigrants in Las Cruces, New Mexico. They indicated that community members worked together to provide services to families who needed educational, health and social services which benefit the students. Burch and Palanki (1995) explained that students at Picacho Middle School, could schedule health screening, talk to trained counselors about drug and alcohol problems, and learn decision-making skills through the school's Wellness Center. Additionally, they noted that for the growing number of homeless children and families in Las Cruces, the school district supports a full-time outreach worker to provide services to families moving through the shelter system (p. 27). Clearly, there are efforts to assist Latino parents with home-school collaboration.

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The emotional and cultural hindrances that discourage Hispanic parents from participating in the educational system are not insurmountable. Consequently, if school personnel assure Hispanic parents that they are valued and respected, parents will feel increasingly more comfortable in collaborating with the school. In turn, Hispanic parents who feel they are valued can encourage the importance of academic achievement in their children (Casa and Furlong, 1994). Berla et al. (1989) pointed out that "parents and school staff must work together to determine parents' needs and provide necessary services. Moreover, parents whose primary language is not English must be made to feel welcome at the school, and a translator must be provided to help them communicate" (p. 36).

Because there are only a few models for Hispanic parental involvement, development of other models may help to empower and enable Latino parents to fulfill their role and their opportunities and responsibilities with regard to their children's future. Effective strategies presented in the literature include interaction between the home and school, parent-teacher contact, and parent leadership workshops (Epstein, 1992).

Synthesis of the Literature Related to Parent Involvement

As the structure of school reform changes, educators and parents are faced with complex accountability issues which involve increasing student achievement and improving the quality of education for all children. National assessments reveal an increasingly urgent need for the improvement of educational outcomes for our nation's children. Moreover, Casa and Furlong (1994), Epstein (1995), Ochoa (1995) and others agreed that increased parent involvement will contribute to the improvement of the quality of education for their students. One requisite is that parents build on the idea that the education of their children should be viewed as a partnership between the school and the home and that efforts are being made by the school to increase student achievement with their help.

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Epstein (1991) asserted that parents are the primary educators and greatest influence in their children's education. As such, parents play a vital role in the psychological and social development of their children. Epstein's (1991) parent involvement model suggested that in order to involve parents actively in this process, parental-involvement programs which include communication, developing parenting skills, the use of parent volunteers, home learning, and parental participation in school decisions in school, district, and state policies are imperative in order to built strong collaborative systems.

A home-school typology of partnership roles illustrated key components for effective types of home-school partnership practices. Epstein's (1995) six types of involvement guide the development of a balanced, comprehensive program of partnerships, including opportunities for family involvement at school and at home with potentially important results for students, parents, and teachers. Epstein (1995) explained that the results will depend on the particular types of involvement that are implemented, as well as on the quality of implementation. Therefore, it is vital to integrate and to interconnect all types of involvement for more positive school/family/community connections in the home-school partnership. This process would, in turn, be a critical reflection and an integral avenue to participation and empowerment by giving parents equal access to valued resources and an opportunity to voice their concerns in home/school collaboration. In brief, ongoing efforts in strengthening a partnership continuum, forge a strong partnership in home-school collaboration.

As noted, the work by Lyons, et al., (1982), Epstein (1987, 1995), Chrispeels (1987), and Ochoa (1995) suggested that various configurations of partnerships may be established in order to engage families in home-school collaboration. The partnership relationship must invite power sharing and mutual respect and allow energies to be directed toward activities that foster student learning and development. As such, mutual

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collaboration, critical reflection, trust, and respect contribute to the development of empowering students, parents, and teachers in school/home community partnership.

When educators and parents strive to increase student achievement and improve the quality of education, constituents are forced to work together and become a partnership. Comprehensive programs of partnership in the middle grades can be developed if all constituents collaboratively design, select, implement, and assess practices to accomplish the goals they set together for improving school programs for involving parents and community members. Parents have unprecedented powers to become active participants and to change school reform (Macleod, 1989).

The researcher addressed the research questions through a review of what the literature stated on the historical influence of parent involvement including the role of parent efficacy, creating a partnership between the home and school, Epstein's theoretical framework, and the importance of forging a shared responsibility between the school and the home to increase and improve home-school collaborations.

Programs that are comprehensive, ongoing, dynamic, culturally sensitive, and responsive to the needs of Latino parents were presented. Social and cultural indicators were examined in programs for culturally diverse parent involvement. A research-based theory and a framework of practices for enabling middle-level parents to implement useful practices during the adolescent period were reviewed.

As culturally diverse parents become more active in school policy and are empowered in shared decision making, there will be an increase in parent involvement regardless of cultural and language barriers. School personnel need to be able to accommodate culturally diverse parents through knowledge of cultural nuances and the provision of necessary services in the event that there is a language barrier. When it is possible to engage parents in active support of the education of their children, students experience educational success. Comer (1986) noted in his studies of parent involvement that parent participation restores trust, mutual respect, and agreement among

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parents and educators. It brings parents into the school at times other than when their children are in trouble. "It uses parents as their strengths permit and develops in them a sense of responsibility for its outcomes" (p. 446).

The programs for Latino parents were examined and it was noted that regardless of socioeconomic background, culturally diverse parents want their children to succeed. Swap (1993) indicated that the evidence is clear that parental encouragement, activities, and interest at home and participation in schools and classrooms affect children's achievement and aspiration. Students gain in "personal and academic achievement if their families emphasize schooling, let the children know they do, and do so continually over the school year" (p. 120).

Although the programs profiled are making strides in terms of the restructuring efforts to create more comprehensive services to meet the challenging needs of children and families, they focus on the need for more collaboration and family empowerment required to make integrated services more responsive to the needs of children and families. The programs demonstrate a different kind of leadership in their efforts to link health and social service to schools. Moreover, culturally diverse parents are acquiring leadership skills that can be applied in various settings (Burch and Palanki, 1995). The programs illustrated for Hispanic parents are programs that empower parents with values and practices in students' achievement. Latino parents need to maintain that they have a significant voice and that through participation in home-school collaboration, systemic changes will result in school's, more responsive to the needs of children and families.

Reform and innovation, to enable society to cope with the world-wide problems created by incessant waves of immigrants in search of economic and cultural survival, are in the hands of policy leaders and school personnel (Delgado-Gaitán, 1991). As a result, schools have the obligation to ensure that all efforts are made for parents to forge a strong partnership in home-school collaboration and integrate the resources to improve and increase parent participation in middle schools.

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With the heightened awareness of the importance of the shared responsibilities of schools and families in the education and development of adolescents, and with advances in theories, research, policies, and practices of partnership, "we must be much more systematic in trying to develop a sense of cooperation at the building level than those in other cultures need be. Active and meaningful participation by parents is an important way of developing that cooperation" (Comer, 1986, p. 446).

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CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Qualitative research makes possible a systematic means for the researcher to gather information, reflect on meaning, arrive at and evaluate conclusions, and put forward an interpretation of human interactions (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggested that "qualitative methods can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is known" (p. 19). Since a new phenomenon will emerge in the research, a qualitative study was used.

The terms qualitative study and naturalistic inquiry are used interchangeably. Guba and Lincoln (1982) referred to naturalistic inquiry as an "alternate paradigm to the positivistic which is essentially analytic, reductionist, empiricist, associationist, reactivist, nomological, and monistic. . . . . This posture is inconsistent with the characteristics of many social/behavioral phenomena" (p. 23). Merriam (1988) offered additional support to the Guba and Lincoln rationale: "Naturalistic inquiry, which focuses meaning in context requires a data collection instrument sensitive to underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data. Humans are suited for this task and best when using methods that make use of human sensibilities such as interviewing, observing and analyzing" (p. 3).

This study examined the factors that promote Latino parent involvement at the middle school level and serve as a framework for increasing home-school collaboration. Components of successful parent involvement models were examined based on triangulation analysis of the research questions. The research questions guided the investigative research and served as a guide to analyze the importance of school and

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family connections for increasing student success. Theoretical definitions for the components of this framework emerged in this naturalistic inquiry and themes such as parenting, communication, culture and language acquisition, empowerment, home-learning, shared decision making, and home-school collaboration were some of the prevalent elements that emerged in the study. The triangulation analysis involved the current literature review, interviews of expert panel members, and interviews of Latino focus groups. A parent involvement model was developed to assist Latino parents and educators to improve home-school collaboration.

In designing a triangulated naturalistic inquiry, a multimethod or mixed design was used. The current literature on parent involvement was the first piece of the triangulation analysis. The researcher analyzed the literature and reported on the variety of theories or perspectives on parent involvement. Patton (1990) called this process a "theory/perspective triangulation."

Patton (1990) noted that qualitative designs are naturalistic in that the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the research setting. He indicated that "the research setting is a naturally occurring event, program, community relationship, or interaction that has no predetermined course established by and for the researcher. Rather, the point of using qualitative methods is to understand naturally occurring phenomena in their naturally occurring states" (p. 39). A naturalistic inquiry helped the researcher to understand how educators can assist Hispanic parents become more responsive to their children's educational needs and to create positive connections between the school and parents through parent involvement programs. A qualitative research design provided the researcher with choices in how to develop the Hispanic parent involvement model. Patton (1990) advocated using the design of choice in research methods, recognizing that different methods of research are appropriate for different situations. He noted that "there is no rule of thumb that tells a researcher precisely how to focus a study," and that

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choices on the researcher's part should not be viewed as good or bad, "but choices among alternatives, all of which have merit" (p. 38).

THE TRIANGULATION ANALYSIS

First Phase of a Triangulation Analysis

Review of Current Literature on Parent Involvement

A triangulation analysis design was used in this study. It is a method by which the researcher used multiple types of data. The investigative research study included analyzing empirical research on current literature review of parent involvement, interviewing expert panel members in the area of parent involvement, and interviewing first and second generation parents on attitudes, perceptions, or concerns that Mexican and Mexican American parents had on a collaborative Hispanic parent involvement model. The model was specifically designed for middle school levels. This type of methodological triangulation analysis was used in order to find out if the current literature review, expert panel member responses, and first and second generation parents validated the results that a comprehensive parent involvement model could be used for all parents including culturally diverse parents, or if it differed in terms of what constituted a successful parent involvement model for culturally diverse parents. Patton (1990) pointed out that triangulation is ideal. He noted that:

> A variety of mixes are possible--mixes of measurement, design, and analysis. At this point these mixes may seem abstract. In order to make choices available more concrete, and to illustrate the creative possibilities that can emerge out of a flexible approaches to research design, it may be helpful to examine alternative mixes of measurement, design, analysis for a single program of evaluation.

For the researcher it was a method used for generalizability and validity of the various aspects of empirical reality, employed to determine if there existed a specific model for Latino parents to be used in home-school collaboration. Furthermore, it was a method of investigative research to find out if there were specific models that addressed Hispanic parent involvement for Latino parents. In addition, it validated the researcher's

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findings that a collaborative theoretical model exists for Latino parents, a need to built on Epstein's (1995), typology, and be adaptable to address the needs of culturally diverse parents. Other indicators used by educational researchers such as Chrispeels (1992), Casa and Furlong (1994), Delgado-Gaitán (1995), Núñez (1994), and Ochoa (1995) have proven to be of significant contribution in the area of parent involvement. However, Epstein's (1995) components of her typology of "overlapping spheres of influence of family, school, community on children's learning," a theoretical framework, has been employed by scholars and educational practitioners in the design process which has served as a basic construct used in home-school collaboration.

Through a naturalistic inquiry design and by using triangulation analysis, the researcher examined factors which promoted Latino parent involvement at the middle-level school. In this study, the triangulation analysis consisted of the following dimensions for analyzing the qualitative component: review of the current literature on parent involvement, interviews with sixteen expert panel members in the area of parent involvement, and interviews with a total of fifty-two first and second generation Latino parents in focus groups on parent involvement programs in a middle school setting. Triangulation analysis was accomplished through a methodological mix that employed "multiple methods, measures, researchers, and perspectives" (Patton, 1990, p. 187). Patton (1990) in his extensive review of naturalistic inquiry in educational evaluation, identified triangulation "as borrowing and combining parts from pure methodological approaches, thus creating mixed methodological strategies" (p. 188). A holistic-inductive approach was also achieved by using multiple strategies to identify factors which have promoted Latino parent involvement at the middle school level.

The research questions guided the investigative research. The triangulation analysis was accomplished through a methodological mix by using strategies that identified the factors that promoted Latino parent involvement at the middle school level.

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Three goals were achieved in the triangulation analysis: (1) the current review of the literature was studied in order to analyze successful parent involvement models for Latino parents; (2) expert panel members in the specific area of Hispanic parent involvement were interviewed; and (3) Mexican and Mexican American parents participated in focus group interviews. Crucial to this study were the responses of Mexican/Mexican American parents as their voice was important in developing a Hispanic parent involvement framework model and determining how it pertained to the attitudes and perceptions of effective parent involvement programs in a middle level setting.

Second Phase of a Triangulation Analysis

Expert Panel Interviews

The second phase of triangulation analysis was achieved by interviewing sixteen expert panel members who possessed theoretical and practical expertise in the area of parent involvement. Merriam recommended non-probabilistic sampling, (Patton, 1980); that is, selecting those who are most knowledgeable, when the purpose of the study is expansive, to discover, to gain insight, to elaborate on phenomena. The use of expert panel members to identify successful Hispanic models provided the second piece of the triangulation process. The review of the literature on parent involvement was studied in order to analyze successful parent involvement and served as the first phase of the triangulation. Feedback from the panel and transcriptions of the expert interviews was analyzed for units of meaning, which were coded and grouped into categories resulting in a phenomenological approach.

Expert Panel Selection

Linstone and Turoff defined experts as "those who have an applicable specialty or relevant experience" (1975, p. 68). They indicated that it is legitimate to identify experts in a particular area and ask them to recommend candidates who could be used.

The panel members chosen for this study were selected from a group of professionals who are published scholars and practitioners in parent involvement

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programs. Eight were males and eight females. These scholars/practitioners all had theoretical expertise, were knowledge-base/action researchers on site, and had been identified by professionals who work with Latino parents and promote parent involvement at the middle level. Subsequent expert panelists were identified through a network selection process, "Each successive participant or group is named by a preceding group or individual" (Goetz and Lecompte, 1984, p. 79). Access to interviewees for panel expert members and for focus groups came through various resources. To enhance generalizability for expert members there was a specific attempt to locate those individuals who possessed theoretical and practical expertise in the area of parent involvement. Guided by the research questions, expert panel members were interviewed. The second phase of the triangulation analysis as mentioned, guided by a phenomenological approach, was used to capture the personal structure and meaning of the experts in interpreting the data concerning Latino parent involvement programs.

The researcher interviewed sixteen expert panel members in person and by telephone. Sixteen panelists indicated on a Consent Form that permission was given to the researcher to list their names in the appendix. Permission from all sixteen panel members was granted to have their names printed on a comprehensive list with demographic characteristics to be used in the completed dissertation study (see Appendix K). The following criteria were used in the selection of panel members:

1. Each individual had published in the area of parent involvement and had been identified by other leading scholars in the area of parent involvement as an individual who had worked with parent involvement programs.

2. Each individual had completed a professional graduate studies program and earned a Masters degree or a Doctorate degree.

3. Each individual had experience in the area of general parent involvement and Latino parent involvement programs.

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4. Each individual had directly worked with Caucasians as well as culturally diverse parents.

5. Scholars and practitioners had experience working with students in K-12 or at the university level.

Parent involvement programs for parents as perceived by scholars and practitioners to be successful in improving home, family, and school collaboration at the middle school level were examined for individuals who met the criteria. Professional groups and conferences pertaining to parent involvement were two other sources. For example, the Institute for Responsive Education, a nonprofit organization promoting family and community involvement in education through demonstration projects, policy development, technical assistance, and field research surfaced throughout the literature review. This organization provides on-going conferences on Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning. Persons involved with the Institute for Responsive Education were targeted as potential panel members. In addition, scholars and practitioners were asked to nominate individuals who met the criteria specified.

These investigative methods led to a group of sixteen scholars and/or practitioners who met the specified criterion. These individuals were solicited with a letter requesting their participation and a telephone call from the researcher stating the purpose of the research, as well as their role as panel members in the study (see Appendix C).

All expert panel members were from the United States, specifically the states of California, Maryland and Massachusetts.

Design of Expert Interview Guide

In the design of the expert interview guide for this study, ten questions were selected. The expert interview questions were constructed to support the research questions that were developed for this study. In this interview, the selected expert panel members were asked to give the components of successful parent involvement programs for the general population and for Latino parent involvement programs. The questions

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provided a conceptual framework for determining the important factors that promote Latino parent involvement at the middle school level and for increasing home-school collaboration. In addition, panel members were asked to indicate what they have found to be an ideal model of Hispanic parent involvement in their research and/or practice. In keeping with the phenomenological framework of the qualitative study, the researcher captured the emerging themes that were espoused by the expert panel members. The ten questions determined the components of successful parent involvement models. The questions supported the research questions.

Choosing the ten questions emerged from a collaborative effort with practitioners who are experts in the area of parent involvement and also reviewing the current literature on parent involvement. The researcher reviewed, examined from empirical research design, and based on various studies, finalized the questions.

After the ten questions were finalized, the questionnaires were mailed to each of the sixteen expert panel members. A consent form and the expert panel questions were mailed in advance so that these scholars and/or practitioners had ample time to reflect on the questions.

The panelists represented a wide variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds in a number of locations across the United States. Table 3.1 outlines the demographic data of the participants. All are scholars/practitioners in the field of parent involvement. All conversations both over the telephone and in person were audio-taped.

Third Phase of a Triangulation Analysis

First and Second Generation Focus Group

Site Selection for Focus Groups

In the site selection process for this study, the researcher selected an inner city junior high school which is unique and provides a strong academic learning environment for all students. Memorial Academy for International Baccalaureate Preparation is a junior high school located in Southeast San Diego, California. It has an 84.1% Latino student

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Table 3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Expert Panel interviewees

Category	#Subjects
Total numbers of persons interviewed	16

Sex		**Age**	
Male	8	25-35	0
Female	8	35-40	0
		40-45	3
		45-55	12
		60-65	1

Career		**Sector**	
Consultant	3	Business	3
Director	1	Non-Profit	1
Educator	10	Education	10
Government	2	Government	2

Ethnicity	
African American	2
Caucasian	5
Jamaican	1
Latino	8

Years of Involvement in Parent Involvement Programs or Latino Parent Involvement Programs

0-5	0
6-10	0
11-15	13
15 and over	3

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population. The campus is surrounded by a predominantly Latino residential community and some small businesses. The socio-economic level of the neighborhood ranges from semi-professionals to families who qualify for federal and state assistance. Approximately 80 percent of Memorial's students qualify for free food programs. Of Memorial's approximately 1230 students, 84.1% are Hispanic, 8% are African American, 6. 3% are Caucasian and 1. 6% are classified as other. Memorial is considered a typical inner-city school with a mobility index of 59. 2%. The mobility index is high compared to other junior high schools/middle schools in the district because students transfer in/out on a daily basis, drop-out of school, or return to their respective countries. The parents at this school play an integral part in the school culture and are considered a family at Memorial Academy for International Baccalaureate Preparation. Moreover, parents have a strong sense of home-school collaboration.

Memorial Academy is a single track year-round comprehensive school and is also considered a model technology school. As a designated International Baccalaureate Magnet school, Memorial offers several specialized academic and foreign language programs, Writing Across the Curriculum, Spanish Language Immersion (SLIM), French Language Immersion (FLIM), Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) cluster and seminar classes, and training in the use of technology. Memorial actively recruits interested students through special program advertising. The school has many programs that target specific student populations such as Greater Level of Academic Development (GLAD), Students At-Risk (STAR), a bilingual program, daily before and after school tutoring, special education, and other programs that enrich and give empowerment to the student. Memorial Academy also emphasizes a pre-college curriculum that stresses high expectations and academic excellence using writing in all subject areas to develop thinking and communication skills. Furthermore, Memorial's vision is based on preparing children to function effectively in a world of new ideas; to think independently, critically and creatively; to become collaborating members of a democratic society; and to become

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lifelong learners. This school was selected for this study because of its uniqueness in school achievement and most importantly, because there is an active Latino parent involvement program at Memorial Academy (see Appendix F).

First and Second Generation Focus Group Selection

In the selection process the focus groups emerged from a computerized roster of parents who have children attending Memorial Academy in English as a Second Language classes or in a regular/advanced academic curriculum. From this list a volunteer sample of Latino parents was generated. A list of first generation parents was made available by asking the Schools Administrative Student Information Computer System (SASI) a query statement to name all English Language Learners students who have been enrolled in English as a Second Language (E. S. L.) 1-6 classes at the given school. A list was then generated by providing the following student data: students' name, address, telephone number, grade level, and parents' name. First generation parents were contacted by telephone to see if they would like to participate in Hispanic focus group interviews. A friendly and amiable approach was used in contacting first generation parents by a community aide, a certificated staff member, and the researcher. A list of second generation parents was replicated with the same student data. Students needed to be enrolled in regular/advanced academic classes and personal telephone contact was made. Second generation parents were then contacted by a certificated staff member and the researcher to see if they would like to participate in Hispanic focus group settings.

Parents, in general, represent the single most important citizen group in terms of school support. The focus group interviewees were selected because they shared experiences of mutual trust, respect, risk taking, commitment, and because the researcher had established a relationship with the Memorial community.

The focus group interviews were conducted in the fall and spring of the 1995-96 school year. A volunteer sample of 30 first generation Mexican parents and 22 second

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generation Mexican American parents participated in this study. First generation parents are those parents who are recent arrivals in the United States and were identified as having children enrolled in English as a Second Language classes. Sotomayor (1991) identified first generation Hispanics as people who have "traditional cultural values" and immigrate to the United States to seek better socioeconomic and political conditions. Sotomayor (1991) asserted that limited parental involvement of Hispanic parents of first generation is due to language barriers, lack of familiarity with structural arrangements of schools, and frequent negative attitudes toward the educational system that are shared by both school authorities and parents. The second generation Hispanic parents are parents "who have been acculturated and have been assimilated into the mainstream and moved toward cultural integration. This acculturation can be mapped along a bipolar continuum, 'traditional' to 'Anglicized,' with an ideal 'bicultural' midpoint" (p. 9).

Questionnaire Design

The design of the questionnaire was constructed to support the research questions that were developed for this study. The ten questions emerged from the research questions and also from the researcher's experience in working with families in San Diego, California. The researcher believes it is vital to involve parents at all levels of shared decision making. It is therefore, imperative to hear the voice of parents and understand the importance of school and family connections for increasing student success. The questions were constructed and were provided in both English and Spanish. The questionnaire was open-ended to elicit the important emergent themes that parents believe are essential components of a successful Hispanic parent involvement model. In addition, Latino parents of first and second generation were asked how they are involved with their child's school and how the school and family connections could increase home-school collaboration.

As the questions were finalized, the focus group questions were given to parents at the various sessions of the focus group interviews. The Latino parents were

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given the questionnaire and were given time to analyze the questions. They were informed of the purpose of their participation and of the written consent form to participate in the focus group process.

Latino parents were surveyed concerning their perceptions and attitudes on parent involvement. They were invited to participate in an open-ended questionnaire. The instrument was based on a survey (see Appendix G, Hispanic Parent Focus Group Interview Questions). Both parent groups responded to several open-ended questions in English and Spanish orally and appeared at ease in doing so; however, when the researcher gave the written survey, there were only four responses submitted. Therefore, it appears that neither first nor second generation parents feel at ease when there is a written survey.

The interview format itself was semi-structured, guided by the research questions. Sessions were held at Memorial Academy in the evenings, and focus group schedules were based on parents' working schedules and other resources that could facilitate their participation as well as contribute to the study.

Procedure

Approval to conduct the qualitative study through interviews with expert panel members and focus groups was acquired from the University of San Diego Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects (see Appendix A).

Selection of the sample was guided by issues of generalizability of data and focused expertise. Experts and Latino parents understood that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to discontinue participation in the research at any time without consequences. The time line for expert interviews and Hispanic parent surveys was nine months, and there was no expense or risk to the subjects. All interview information and survey questionnaire information were destroyed after two years.

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Data Gathering Techniques

Interviews, surveys, and focus groups were used. Expert panel members participating in the study were given information and opportunity to ask questions about the research study. A written summary of the research purpose and process was given to the participants. After the experts agreed to participate and signed the consent form, they were interviewed, audio taped, and field notes were transcribed after all data was collected.

Mexican/Mexican American parents were given information in English and Spanish regarding the purpose of the study before participating in the focus group interviews.

The Focus Group Interview (Patton, 1990) is a research method technique that seeks to structure a group communication process. Patton (1990) described this research method as an "interview with a small group of people on a specific topic." He stated the interview "is not a discussion, it is not a problem-solving session, it is not a decision-making group; this research technique simply gathers recommendations from individuals" (p. 335).

Focus group interviews were held during the 1995-1996 school year at Memorial Academy, and all the Latino volunteer sample parents gave their written consent form to be interviewed and audio-taped (see Appendix E & F).

Focus groups consisted of four to six parents in small groups where Latino parents voiced their recommendations based on their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences in parent involvement programs. The interview format itself was semi-structured, guided by the ten survey questions in which the exact wording and order of presentation varied in response to the individual focus group settings.

First generation parents readily came to the focus group interviews; however, second generation parents were reluctant to come and were often not accessible for the scheduled focus group interviews. Nevertheless, the researcher made attempts to have

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as many second generation parents as possible attend the focus group interviews.

The quality of the relationship between the researcher and the focus groups was personal, and both the researcher and focus group interviewees were engaged in a mutual search for understanding and universal meaning. Latino parents, engaged in the focus groups, perceived this study as important for improving home, family, and school collaboration. They indicated that it was important to voice their opinions, to be empowered in the educational process, and to forge a strong sense of mutual commitment in school reform.

The ten survey questions that were administered to the focus groups in the interview process in oral and written form for the Latino parents emerged from the readings in the literature review. Moreover, the open-ended survey questions were carefully selected for the first and second generation focus groups and as mentioned, were guided by the research questions and the parent involvement survey (see Appendix G, Hispanic Parent Focus Group Interview Questions). Mexican/Mexican American parents were asked about their concerns, experiences, and perceptions pertaining to Latino parent involvement programs in their school.

The open-ended survey questions administered to the focus groups were designed to find out what Mexican and Mexican American parents feel are important elements and/or factors of an ideal parent involvement model. Knowledge of the specifics of the construct of an ideal model for Latino parent involvement is an important factor in the triangulation analysis.

Data obtained from the focus group interviews generated many responses and had to be analyzed for meaning. Patton (1990) pointed out that the purpose of qualitative interviewing in evaluation is to understand and to learn people's terminology and judgments and expectations, and to capture the complexities of their individual perceptions and experiences (p. 290).

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Because, the researcher had established a networking relationship and a mutual trust with the Memorial Academy's administration, certificated, and classified staff, most parents were receptive to the focus group interviews.

Some Mexican and Mexican American parents expressed concern on personal, social, and academic issues about their children and these issues were referred to the principal. The researcher was objective and did not give solutions to the parents' needs; however, the researcher made the appropriate referrals to the principal, and the principal was kept apprised of the data collection of the study at all times in regular meetings.

As the emergent theory developed during this naturalistic inquiry from the triangulation analysis, the researcher gathered recommendations as to what factors promoted a successful Hispanic parent involvement model. In addition, the researcher gathered recommendations based on the parents' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences in parent involvement programs.

From the focus group interviews the researcher was able to analyze the three elements voiced in this triangulation analysis to answer the research questions. Results from parent surveys provided a quantitative measure that, when combined with interviews, helped to increase the generalizability of the findings of the study.

Data Analysis

The objective of this study, to propose a Latino parent involvement model for Mexican/Mexican American parents at the middle school level and to examine factors which promote home/school collaboration, was met by closely following the qualitative research techniques designed for a triangulation analysis study. In brief, the researcher specifically wanted to determine if there was a comprehensive Latino parent involvement model, or if it differed from Epstein's parent involvement typology. The results of the findings of the qualitative study were discussed in Chapter Four of the Findings of the Study.

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As data was gathered, the expert panel interviews and focus group interviews were transcribed. The content of the interviews formed the basis for the construction of the recurring themes and the development of the Latino parent involvement model. Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Merriam (1988) suggested that the unit of analysis selected should be word phrases and that those units must have two characteristics. They must be heuristic, that is relevant and illuminating to the purpose of the researcher, and, they must be the smallest piece of information that can stand alone without additional information other than the larger context. Each audio-taped interview was transcribed and analyzed in order to derive themes which formed the elements of a Hispanic parent involvement model. Themes which emerged from the theoretical review provided initial guidance.

As mentioned, each interview was examined, and each unit of meaning related to the Latino parent involvement model was recorded on an index card. For cross referencing purposes, the assigned number of the interview was recorded on the back of the card. As cards accumulated, each card was examined and compared for similarities and differences in what constitutes a model for an effective Hispanic parent involvement model. Responses to questions from the thematic interview guide provided focus and a framework for clustering.

Each card was read and sorted into an assigned category based on similar verbalizations and tacit grounds. Memo writing and the creation of rules suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) assisted in the categorization process. On the back of each card, the researcher documented thoughts on the preliminary properties of a statement, the relationship of the statement to other statements, both similar and different, and to the concepts/components of parent involvement. When a sizable number of cards had clustered into one category, first attempts were made to capture the 'essence' of the cluster in the "writing of a rule." Each card was reviewed to justify its inclusion and as the study progressed, subsequent cards were examined in view of the rule. When all the

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cards were exhausted, the categories themselves were examined for internal homogeneity and external overlapping.

At the outset of the categorization process, there were thirty categories. Subsequently, twelve preliminary dimensions emerged: sense of belonging, empowerment, collaboration, connection, communication, respect, trust, administrative leadership, parent outreach, teacher perception, shared decision making, activism, and home learning. The preliminary dimensions associated with home-school collaboration emerged from the panel members and focus group interviews.

This emerging conceptual framework showed the components which constituted the model for effective Latino parent involvement. The model incorporated recurring themes from this triangulated naturalistic inquiry.

The final triangulation analysis occurred as Mexican/Mexican American parents responded to the research and focus group questions. From the open-ended questions, the identifying factors and concepts were sorted into categories that reflected the purpose of the research based on the conceptual framework. After compiling the results from the panel experts and receiving input from the parents, the researcher analyzed the results and arranged under separate categories the recurring concepts of successful Hispanic parent involvement programs. Within the framework, attention was focused on identifying the factors which constituted a Hispanic parent model which promoted, increased, and enhanced home-school collaboration.

As a qualitative study, the emerging naturalistic inquiry, illustrated with various tables and figures, defined the concepts which are necessary to the framework of a Latino parent involvement model. Within the parameters of theoretical and practical expertise, a demographic chart of characteristics of expert panel interviewees and focus groups including age, background, race, ethnicity and setting were outlined in Tables 3.1 and in 3.2 the demographic data of the participants.

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Table 3. 2 Demographic Characteristics of Focus Group Interviewees

Category	#Subjects	Category	#Subjects
Total number of persons interviewed in the Focus Group Interviews	52	Born outside the U.S. Born in the U.S.	30 22
Sex		**Age**	
Male	6	25-29	0
Female	46	30-34	2
		35-39	15
		40-44	27
		45-49	8
		55-59	0
		60-64	0
		65-70	0
Career		**Education**	
Catechism Instructor	1	Elementary	26
Child Development	1	Secondary	22
Community Aide	1	College	4
Housewife	23		
Instructional Aides	2		
Loan Officer	1		
Mechanic	5		
Nurse	1		
School Parent Volunteers	6		
Secretaries	7		
Teacher Assistant	1		
Teacher	3		
Ethnicity			
Guatemalan	1		
Mexican	29		
Mexican American	22		

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The focus group graphs were of value as first generation parent perceptions differed from second generation parent perceptions as to what constitutes the essential components of a model. A comparison chart showed perceptions and attitudes of the groups.

From the research literature, the panel expert interviews, and the focus group recommendations, the researcher determined the elements most likely to lead to increased parent involvement. From these findings, a parent involvement model for Latino parents at the middle-level grades was developed. Based on the triangulation analysis, these elements were used in designing a valid and reliable model of Latino parent involvement.

The critical step in this design was to interpret the data from the cross-validation analysis seeking its support for, or refutation of, the Latino parent involvement model. The critical research questions were: (a) What are the key characteristics of model approaches and/or the necessary components of parent involvement programs? and (b) What needs to be changed in parent involvement to improve home-school collaboration? Moreover, the final process was to prepare the cross-validation report drawing conclusions and recommendations based on what has been learned from the triangulation analysis.

A bar graph was developed based on the responses received from the expert panel members and first and second generation Latino parents to illustrate the emergent themes that were most often cited by the expert panel members and by the Latino parents to determine which responses were the most emergent themes in a naturalistic inquiry. It directs the attention and efforts of data collection to the truly important emergent themes concepts. Clearly, in this case, it is the responses that had the most recurring themes. Cross-validation was undertaken in an effort to expand and refine the Hispanic parent involvement model. The intent is to build a general explanation that fits the triangulation analysis. This approach enabled the researcher to find out if there are similar elements that experts and Latino parents agree are essential components in a conceptual

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framework of home-school collaboration for Mexican/Mexican American parents. With this information, a framework of a successful Hispanic parent involvement model was designed.

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CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study are based on the empirical research of the literature review, the responses of a panel of experts and the Hispanic focus groups interviews. An emerging conceptual framework was formulated which constituted a Hispanic parent involvement model. The study examined factors that promote Hispanic parent involvement. It identified a set of key concepts in developing this model specifically for Latino parents at the middle school level.

The dimensions which emerged from the analysis and the categorization of data from the theoretical review provided guidance for both conducting and analyzing the qualitative study. Three dimensions of a triangulation analysis emerged in this study. Theoretical and empirical literature related to parent involvement was studied in order to analyze successful parent involvement models for Latino parents. Expert panel members in the area of Hispanic parent involvement were interviewed and illuminated the investigative study. Mexican and Mexican American parents participated in focus group interviews and their voices determined a foundation for developing a Hispanic parent involvement framework which reflected the attitudes and perceptions of effective parent involvement programs in a middle level setting.

The first phase of the triangulation analysis consisted of analyzing the research questions which the researcher sought to investigate in the study. The literature review was analyzed in the area of parent involvement, and it was determined that home-school collaboration improved student achievement. Costas (1991) noted that parent involvement plays a crucial role in linking the child's home-school collaboration and

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increasing student achievement. Parents can be productively involved in their children's education and increase student achievement throughout their children's educational development (Epstein, 1992). Parents want a quality education for their children and share an overlapping responsibility for the emotional, social, and intellectual development of their children. Moreover, the nature and the quality of the institutions in every child's world are of major importance to the child's successful development (Burch and Palanki, 1995).

In the first phase of the triangulation analysis, a summary review was given of the questions investigated based on the evidence of empirical findings. In order to address the results of the findings, the researcher investigated questions 1, 2, and 3 in the review of the literature. The expert panel members addressed questions 4, 5, and 6. Questions 7-12 directed the focus group interviews. The first three questions were:

1. What types of programs are offered in parent involvement at the middle school level?

2. What are the components of successful parent involvement programs for the general population?

3. How are existing Latino parent involvement programs unique or different from parent involvement programs for the general population?

The summary review of the literature addressed the first phase of the triangulation analysis and illustrated a comprehensive model that constituents used in developing a collaborative partnership. In addition, because of the scope and variety of the investigative questions addressed by the study, it should be of value to persons involved in various aspects of the school educational process. Educators can derive insights into the learning process of students and parents with whom they currently work and with whom they are likely to work in the nation's and California's increasingly multi-ethnic future.

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A growing body of research documents the multiple benefits that occur when parents are actively involved in their children's education. Comer (1984) noted the emotional support that children need in order to learn, indicating that such an environment of support is optimally created when families and school personnel cooperate. Rich, Van Dien, and Mallox (1979) pointed out the improvements in student attendance and behavior and in parent-teacher relations that happen as a result of parental involvement. Bennett (1986) cited the benefits to parents themselves as they gain greater confidence and expertise in helping their children academically. Students are the ultimate beneficiaries when their families collaborate closely with the schools (Simich-Dudgeon, 1986).

Many of the challenges of education appear insurmountable. They are ones which neither schools nor families can meet alone; they must support each other. When families and schools cooperate, the children reap the benefits--they learn more, they enjoy school and the learning process, and they experience a consistent sense of commitment and support from the important adults in their lives (Epstein, 1986). Studies have shown that children benefit when their parents support and encourage their education. On average, more educated families from all situations--regardless of the formal education or income level of the parents, and regardless of the grade level or ability of the student--use strategies to encourage and influence their children's education and development (Becker and Epstein, 1982).

Many configurations of parent involvement models exist for improving and increasing home-school collaboration as was analyzed in the empirical research. Theoretical frameworks as created by educational researchers such as Chrispeels (1992), Comer (1986), Davies (1991), Levin (1987), Swaps (1993) and others, have been designed to examine the important context of children's learning and development. They include information about parent involvement in general, and practical strategies for developing partnerships with parents in order to foster home-school collaboration. These

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frameworks are evidence of the progress in research on school, family, and community partnerships, and have direct effects on parent and community involvement programs. They present effective practices of a home-school partnership typology and are used in improving and increasing home-school collaboration.

However, after examining various models of parent involvement, the model for parent involvement which has been most responsive to the children's educational needs has been Epstein's typology of the "overlapping spheres of influence of family, school, and community on children's learning" theoretical model. While other researchers have made significant contributions in the area of parent involvement, it is evident that practitioners have adopted in some form or another the elements of Epstein's model. Researchers have implemented Epstein's components of parenting, communication, volunteering, home-learning activities, decision making, collaborating with community as a basic construct to build on their own parent involvement typologies.

Epstein has been one of the principal researchers on the topic of parental involvement and its effects on student achievement, parental attitudes, and education practices. She has offered a different theory for student learning and success in school, the model of "overlapping spheres of influence" of family and school, and extended this theory (Epstein, 1987) to family, school, community, and peer groups to account for the major contexts that influence children's learning and development (Epstein, 1988).

The model of overlapping spheres of influence designed by Epstein has created more systematic connections with families and communities. Epstein's typology has exerted a powerful influence in studying the connections that affect children's learning and development. Her contextual framework has allowed for different practices and relationships that may be needed at various ages and grade levels and with families of different educational and cultural backgrounds. Epstein (1995) identified six categories of parent involvement in the education of their children. As noted, they are: (1) parenting,

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(2) communication, (3) volunteering, (4) learning at home, (5) decision making, and (6) collaborating with community.

Epstein's (1988) model of overlapping spheres of influence includes both external and internal structures. The external structure represents the multiple contexts and dynamic options which more or less overlap, based on the philosophies and practices of families and schools. It also accounts for the age or grade level of the student and period of time or history that may affect the contexts, practices, and participants. The internal model represents the patterns of interaction of the participants within contexts at the institutional and individual level. Because it is assumed that the child is the reason for the connections between home and school, the model focused on the key role of the "child as student" in interactions between families and schools, parents, and teachers, or other influential participants. Epstein (1995) pointed out that the students are the key to successful school and family partnerships. They are the main actors in their own education and the main conductors of the two-way communication between school and home (see Figure 4.1).

From the research analyzed, it was evident that parent involvement is vital in student achievement. Research findings emphasized a shared and overlapping responsibility for the development and success of students and parents. It has become evident that a collaboration and a connection between the multiple environments that motivate, socialize, and educate children result in increased student achievement.

Despite an extensive and growing literature which documents the importance of school and family connections for increasing student success in schools, few studies focused on the relationship of home-school collaboration by Hispanic parents to their students' educational achievement. Even though some progress has been made in this area, changes in policies and improvements in effective practices are much needed to increase knowledge and improve family involvement in the educational system.

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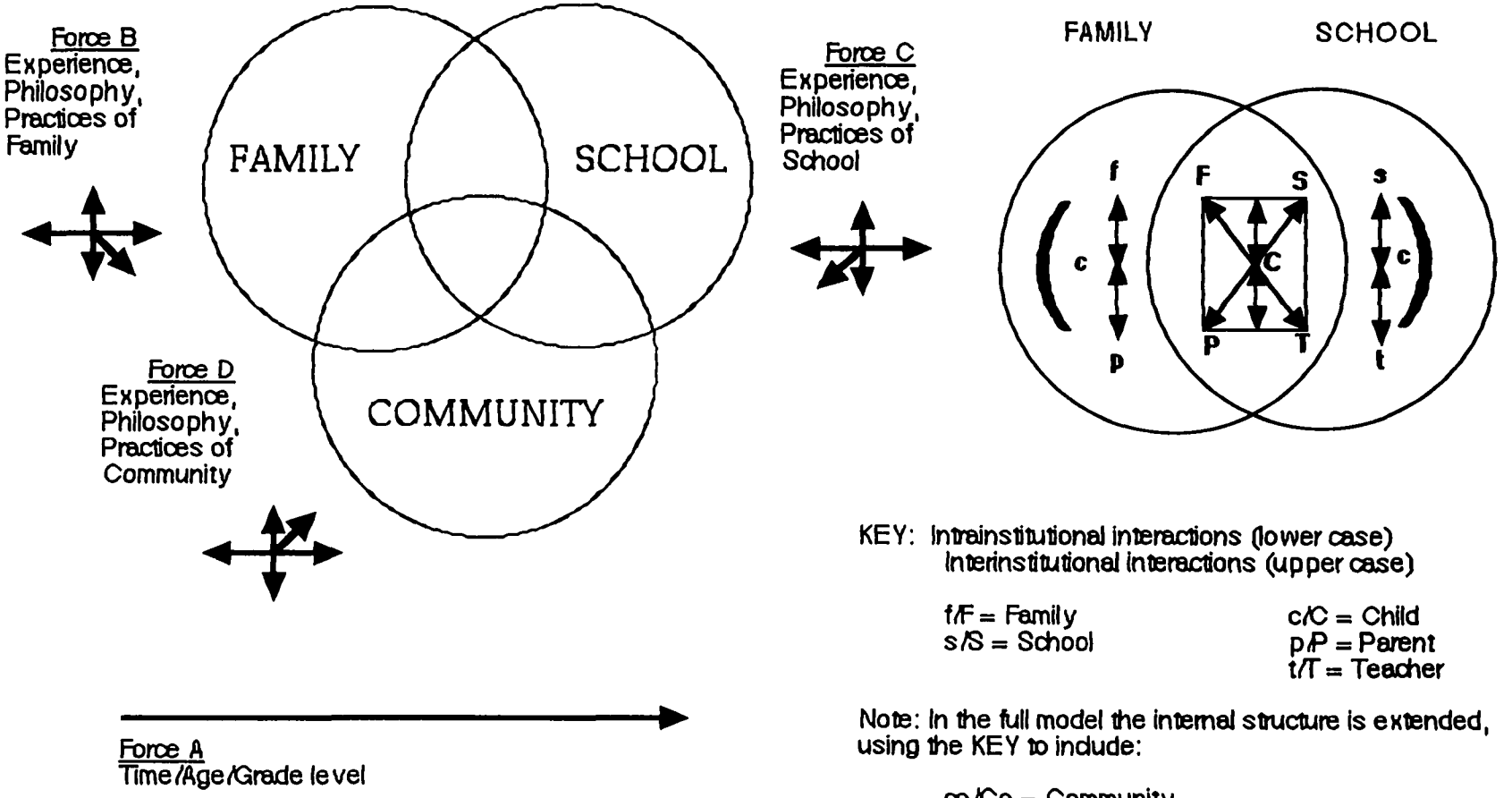
Figure 4.1

OVERLAPPING SPHERES OF INFLUENCE OF FAMILY, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY ON CHILDREN'S LEARNING

(External and Internal Structures of the Theoretical Model)



(Epstein, 1987, 1988)

While efforts are being made to serve culturally diverse children and families in a more comprehensive and responsive way, important issues in home-school collaboration for this sector of the population have resulted in a challenge for educators and policymakers seeking to restructure school reform.

The Latino parent involvement programs that were presented by Casa and Furlong (1994), Delgado-Gaitán (1995), Núñez (1994), Ochoa (1995) and others, discussed a variety of innovative programs which have made efforts to enhance the quality of Hispanic parent participation. In their studies of Latino parent involvement model programs, the educational researchers illustrated and described some of the programs as representative of different approaches used to address the needs of Hispanic parental involvement. However, from a pragmatic perspective, more programs for culturally diverse parents need to be designed in order to empower Latino parents to participate as leaders in their school communities and become more efficacious advocates in school reform.

Panel Selection And Methodological Results

The panel of experts of parent involvement was composed of sixteen individuals who demonstrated an expertise in the area of Hispanic parent involvement and who had theoretical expertise in parent involvement. Eight were males and eight were females. Their ethnicity make-up varied: two were African-American, five were Caucasian, one was Jamaican and eight were Latinos. They represented various professions, and all had expertise in working with parents in general and/or culturally diverse parents. Nine panel members represented institutions of higher education in the United States; three were employed by the San Diego Unified School District, in San Diego, California; two were consultants for the Department of Education in Sacramento, California; one was an executive director for the Parent Institute in San Diego, California; and the final member was employed by a non-profit parent involvement program. The sixteen members were

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identified as individuals who had theoretical knowledge in the area of parent involvement, who had worked closely with parents.

Through a naturalistic inquiry design and by using the second phase of a triangulation analysis, sixteen experts participated in this qualitative study. The researcher interviewed panel experts in the area of home-school collaboration specifically with Latino parents to ascertain responses for the second phase of the triangulation analysis. The following research questions were used:

4. What are the key characteristics of model programs and/or the necessary components of parent involvement?

5. What parent involvement strategies work best with Latino parents and how do these differ from strategies used within general populations?

6. What are the components of an ideal model for Latino parent involvement?

Before the categorization of data from the interviews was analyzed, the recurring themes of the responses to each question were examined and analyzed for meaning. The recurring themes were noted and determined the categorization sequence in which the panelists identified important elements which were worthy of inclusion in a parent involvement model for Latinos.

The Key Components of Model Programs in Parent Involvement

The expert panel members indicated that the main components of parent involvement programs vary according to the needs of the diverse population being served. But for all populations, it was seen as vital that parents participate in their children's education and become more knowledgeable about their children's education. Linking family, school, and community was determined to be important in working with all families, not just those who are economically and educationally advantaged or already connected to school and community resources. Obviously, more will be accomplished if families and school personnel work together to promote student achievement.

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Understanding social, cultural, and linguistic differences was noted as important in dealing with culturally diverse parents. All parents, regardless of their socioeconomic background and educational attainment, want their children to become contributing citizens and receive a quality education. The sixteen panel members asserted that in order for parent involvement programs to be successful there must be a commitment to reaching out to parents, effective communication, giving parents a sense of belonging, mutual trust, a shared sense of purpose and equality, the establishment of a meaningful relationship, regarding parents as co-equals with school personnel, and a strong collaboration among the constituents. Ochoa (1995) contended that the most basic level is a knowledge base for forging a strong relationship in home-school collaboration. It enables parents to be active participants in the process of growth and change. He indicated: "It is a process that recognizes the voices of the community; it is a process that increases a sense of belonging; it is collaborative work; it is empowering people in a democratic process."

Although establishing a relationship between the school and home is vital, there are other dimensions that are important and are key characteristics in parent involvement. Several components were recurring themes in the interviews. Thirty themes emerged; however, as the themes were categorized, the researcher clustered them into six categories that reflected the responses for the research question being investigated. Moreover, the themes that were espoused by the sixteen panel members in their interviews were: (1) communication, (2) collaboration, (3) administrative leadership, (4) home-school relationships, (5) home-learning activities, and (6) teacher perception. Each theme was discussed in its own context as it applied to the second phase of the triangulation analysis and addressed the research question of what the key characteristics of parent involvement programs reflected (see Table 4.1). The findings were consistent with what was reflected in the empirical research on parent involvement.

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Table 4. 1

Panelist responses to what the main components of a parent involvement program were.

Concept	# of Experts
Communication	16
Commitment	16
Home-School Relationships	16
Parenting Obligations	16
Administrative Leadership	15
Home-Learning Activities	15
Sense of Belonging	15
Teacher Perception	15
Collaboration	14
School Achievement	13
School Support	13
Self-Esteem	13
Parent Outreach	12
Decision making	12
Collaboration with Community	11
Parent Advocacy	11
Connecting with Community	10
Cultural Diversity	10
Respect	10
Trust	10
Personalism	8
Language Acquisition	8
School Outreach	6
School/Community Partnership	6
Empowerment	5
Parent Training	4
Staff Development	4
Volunteering	2
Needs Assessment	1
School Culture/Environment	1

Note: N= 16 respondents

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Communication

While many schools engage families to become active constituents in school practice, it is evident that in order to increase parental support and integrate more services responsive to the needs of children and parents, effective communication is one of the leading factors in promoting home-school collaboration. There must be ongoing interaction between the school and family in a home-school partnership. Clearly, schools have the responsibility to communicate to parents regarding student progress, school practices, the implementation of new approaches in curriculum, and school performance.

Chrispeels (1995) noted that in successful parent involvement programs school personnel provide insights into the nature and type of communication that enhances effective practices at home and in school. Communication needs to be ongoing and must be a "two-way process" as Chrispeels and others suggested. Most communication tends to be one way, from the school to the home, with little effort made by school staff to listen to important information parents have about their children, their aspirations for their children, their culture and traditions, or their views on education. For example, Chrispeels stated in the interview:

> I suppose the basic level is home-school as co-communicators. Each level of this activity has to involve the school-home, and communication is the foundation. You cannot have support activities if you don't have communication. It is the basis and I see it as two ways: we listen to parents and solicit their views and have them active at all levels.

Moreover, Núñez who did his action research evaluation, an ethnographic study, on Latino parents at Matthew Sherman Elementary School in San Diego, California explained that parents can be extremely involved at schools if there is an open channel of communication with all stakeholders. "The administration has to be open and amiable to having parents at the school. There must be established rapport and parents welcome; it is a matter of communication." If parents are listened to and valued, they can be strong voices in the change process of school reform.

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Furthermore, for culturally diverse parents, efforts must be made to effectively communicate in their primary language. When schools are able to provide written communications in a language the parents can understand and make available a person at the school with whom they can communicate personally, cooperation between the schools and culturally diverse parents is greatly facilitated. Núñez stated that, "All efforts of communication must be made; it is cultural awareness, it is a form of being valued and respected." Parents feel comfortable and welcome at the school if there is a clear understanding of how the educational delivery is communicated and positive outcomes result. Communication, as mentioned earlier, is a two-way process, and avenues of communication must be readily available so that effective communication may increase home-school collaboration.

Collaboration

Collaboration is another key component of a successful parent involvement program. It is a vital element that offers a prodigious potential in reaching out to parents. Collaboration is the mutual support that links all constituents together in order to create caring educational environments; it is a partnership that links the school, family and community to share responsibility for the children's education and future success since it is evident that educating a child is an overlapping responsibility of the school, family, and community. In fact, without the assistance of parents, schools cannot do it alone nor can families without the help of the school. Each is dependent upon the other and is recognized as a vital feature in a parent involvement program.

Parental participation is a powerful force that has a direct and profound impact on student achievement. Fourteen of the sixteen panel members agreed that collaboration fosters a strong relationship between the school and home. It was noted in the literature review and was espoused by the panel members as one of the key indicators for connecting and strengthening home-school cooperation. Interestingly, Reyes, one of the panel members, indicated that collaboration is "providing a variety of options by which

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schools and parents can contribute to their children's education. It is one of Epstein's six areas. . . it should be comprehensive and inclusive of the diversity of families represented in the community." Unlike Reyes, Johnson contended, that collaboration includes "a partnership that provides children and families access to school and community that provides and coordinates community and support services in order to assist children's learning and development." Davies, Burch, and Palanki (1993) noted that collaboration is a form of family empowerment and that families can play significant roles as collaborators at all levels. It is:

> ...increasing the capacity of families and their children to get and use information, to take action on their own interests and problems, to meet their obligations to their own children and their communities, to contribute to and influence policies and decisions which affect them, and to function independently and effectively as community residents, workers, and citizens in a democratic society.

Involving beneficiaries such as parents and students increases the scope and potential of collaboration. Strategies that increase the knowledge, skill, and confidence of beneficiaries and frontline service providers help them become more effective as collaborators, with more to bring to and take from the partnerships that are formed. Collaboration is, thus, creating a partnership for schools, home, and community. It recognizes the importance of linking and connecting all aspects of knowledge and resources that foster an effective home-school partnership. As Davies purported, "collaboration is a good partnership that recognizes the importance of all aspects of children's development."

Administrative Leadership

One of the most noteworthy elements that affects a parent involvement program is administrative leadership. The principal provides the leadership and encouragement to both staff and parents to work together to improve the environment of the school, to establish a sense of community among a diverse group of families, and to support a climate of high academic expectation for all students. As the instructional leader who

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works closely with all constituents, the principal sets the climate that parents are important stakeholders in the educational process, that there is a high priority in this area, and that school personnel are committed to involving all parents in home-school collaboration. Most often, it is the principal who deals with parents' issues and is sensitive to parents' needs and vulnerabilities, and to the parents' real expectations for their children. In particular, it is the principal who provides the leadership in working with parents and in creating a strong collaborative partnership in order to be responsive to powerful parent involvement practices.

Several of the expert panel members agreed that principals need to provide parents with a sense of belonging, commitment, respect, empathy, sincerity, mutual trust, and *personalismo* (personalism), and appreciation of their values, culture, language acquisition, and culturally diverse backgrounds. For example, Castruita, San Diego County Superintendent of Schools, indicated that:

> I value parents by involving them. You value and you open your office to them. I expect every principal to know that parent involvement is a priority in our entire district. I want to know how many parents are present at every school site. A report is given to the board so that principals can see who is doing a good job and who is not doing a good job. It is part of their management evaluation. I want parents to actively make decisions to improve instruction for their children.

Alfaro, principal of Memorial Academy, in San Diego, California indicated that he and his staff made a commitment to involve parents and improve all collaborative efforts in involving them. The principal requires his staff to make home visits as part of the collaborative vision of reaching out to parents. For example, every quarter, school personnel are required to make visits to the homes of their students to discuss issues that are related to emotional, social, and academic growth and development. In fact, in an effort to achieve such a comprehensive program, the principal told how his school reaches all parents: "...(1) home visits by teachers, counselors, and administrators, (2) a school car to pick up any parent needing a ride, (3) the staff is relentless; they don't let things fall through the cracks, (4) the community knows we hold them accountable, and (5) the

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principal never takes 'no' for an answer!" He explained that he teaches classes in parent involvement so that parents can become more confident and vocal in their involvement with school activities. He contends "Yes, there has been a difference in parent involvement. It has increased an understanding of the school and of their involvement in their children's education, and they are active in the shared decision making of the school." The principal emphasized the need for schools to work closely with social agencies, establish a social contract with parents and provide an organizational liaison between the school and the community. Baker and Johnson expressed in the interview that in their action research studies, principals make it their priority to involve parents at all levels of the "overlapping spheres of influence of family, school, and community on children's learning" in connecting parents to the schools. In brief, administrative leadership is an important element in developing a sense of belonging and involving active parental participation in the schools.

Home-school Relationships

Although administrative leadership is an important element in a successful parent involvement framework, studies have shown that the home-school relationship is also a prime determinant in student success. Home-school relationship is an area in parent involvement in which the school and home must be engaged and actively involved in student achievement. Clearly, an understanding from both the school and home is essential in establishing a strong collaborative team effort which augments home-school practices. For example, Epstein (1987) identified schools as having an obligation to communicate effectively with parents about school programs and children's progress. In a similar fashion, parents have the basic obligation of raising their children to grow, to develop, and to learn in their life span. Moreover, parents provide children's health and safety which includes establishing a positive home environment to support children and teach and prepare them with life skills through their formative years.

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Studies have accumulated indicating that students do better in schools if their parents are involved when schools establish, conduct, and develop strong and responsible programs of collaborative partnerships. As noted earlier, all efforts must ensue to communicate to parents how their children are doing in student achievement. Furthermore, in effective home-school relationships, the school and home are engaged in a joint effort to establish a collaborative and supportive relationship whose purpose is the creation of an environment that provides positive home conditions which support school learning and student outcomes. Sixteen of the panel members indicated that the pressures are great in the home and school environment. Nevertheless, all efforts must be made to ensure that a connection be made between the home and school and that parents are assisted in any fashion possible. Moreover, Baker and Davies asserted that home-school relationships can:

> improve school programs and school climate, provide family service and support, increase parents' skills and leadership, connect families with others in school and in the community, and help teachers with their work when participants work continually to improve the nature and effects of partnerships. And thus, there is a reciprocity which means that there is a shared responsibility for learning.

Thus having the school and home linked together in a home-school relationship forges, unites, and enhances a collaborative team effort in student learning and student outcomes.

Home-School Learning

The fifth component that is vital in a successful parent involvement program is home-learning, according to the responses of the panel members. Fifteen panel members suggested that parents are the most influential teachers children have and that they are their children's first educators in their development. Parents can monitor home-learning activities, thus encouraging and motivating their children in school practices.

Most parents get involved in their children's learning. They convey expectations, achievement standards, and attitudes by how they talk with their children about school, how they monitor their children's schoolwork, how they interpret report card information, and how they provide their children with encouragement and support. Parents collaborate

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with teachers to monitor their students' learning in order to help them do well and maintain high academic standards. Expert panel members reported that regardless of parent education, family size, socioeconomic status, or school level, parents can monitor and be involved in the home-learning process. For example, Ochoa indicated that in any community, you will have 5% to 10% of parents who "will have apathy or resistance of the education system because of linguistic, political, or cultural differences, they do not manifest themselves as co-equals. However, the other 90% to 95% are involved in their children's education."

To ensure that children receive a quality education, a teacher welcomes and stimulates parents to take part in the educational process and gives them direction, options, and opportunities, as well as some resources to assist in home-learning. Moreover, parents work closely with the teacher and the school to create and reinforce a stimulating model for optimum learning at home and at school. Under the teacher's guidance, parents may work with the teacher in the classroom, tutor individually, or in small groups. The teacher works closely with the parents in order to facilitate student learning. It's a process where parents and the teacher are mutually supportive, and its primary focus is on student learning.

Valdivieso and Nicolau (1994) posited that Hispanic parents take parenting very seriously. They work hard to teach their children essential social skills such as cooperation, loyalty, and to be respectful. They instill respect and proper behavior in their children; however they believe it is the school's job to instill knowledge. Studies by (Fillmore, 1990; Nicolau & Ramos, 1990) show that Hispanic parents are unaware of the social, linguistic, and cognitive skills that they must provide to lay the foundation for academic skills. Latino parents must be made aware of specific educational practices and engage their children in home-learning activities. In brief, Hispanic parents must know that they play a significant role at home in their children's education.

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In general culturally diverse parents want the same educational outcomes for their children as parents who have all available resources and educational means. Although home-learning strategies may vary for these parents, they can be powerful contributors to their children's education, both stimulating and reinforcing their children's learning. They may collaborate with the teacher by attending parent/teacher conferences, attending parent training workshops on self-esteem, communication or discipline to name a few, so that they may be better informed and be able to assist their children. The language barrier may at times be a dilemma in communicating with school personnel; nevertheless, the expectations remain the same. Ochoa, Núñez, Mayer, and Alfaro noted, that with culturally diverse parents all efforts must be made in encouraging parents to become actively involved in the home-learning process, specifically in the elementary and middle schools years. Too often, Latino parents are seen as parents that do not care and do not partake in the democratic voice. With culturally diverse parents, there must be a notion of change, a change of attitude. According to the expert panelists, "it requires a different mind set; they need the knowledge-base and the connectedness that is necessary for parents; they have to become part of the democratic participation process."

In monitoring home-learning, parents can establish ongoing communication with their students' teachers and encourage and motivate their children to pursue higher educational attainment that will affect their personal and social development. And as noted earlier, Epstein and Salinas (1990) indicated that the major emphasis of home-learning activities in the middle grades include helping parents: (1) become partners with teachers in encouraging children with their school work; (2) interact with their children at home to support school goals and programs; (3) understand early adolescence and middle level programs; and (4) assist children with decisions that affect their own and the family's future. Further, parents can also assist in the home by modeling the importance of education and having high expectations for student achievement.

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Teacher Perception

Efforts to involve parents in their children's education need to continue throughout the elementary and secondary years. Research indicated, however, that teachers' work with families and parents' involvement with their children's education fall sharply as children grow older. Despite such findings, there are many ways in which educators can reach out to parents.

Educators are becoming increasingly aware that in schools that value parent participation, have higher achievement, more positive attitudes, and more effective programs. Therefore, a contributing factor that was seen as part of a successful component in parent involvement programs is teacher perception. According to the expert panel members, the teacher's attitude is an important element and an indicator in strengthening effective parent involvement. Teachers' attitudes and behaviors influence whether or not attempts are even made to involve parents. Teachers who do involve parents are much less likely to make stereotypical judgments about the willingness and abilities of parents. Teachers who promote parent involvement can make a difference in how they engage with parents. Epstein and Dauber (1991) reported that the more positive teachers' attitudes became about parents, the more likely they included parent input in decisions about curriculum development and instructional strategies. Additionally, they saw more value in holding conferences and communicating with parents about school programs and student progress.

While other indicators were discussed as successful measures of parent involvement, teacher perception was also perceived as an important component when teachers deal with parents. Teachers recognize that mutual support and cooperative measures are needed in order to increase collaborative methods to further their students' education. Delgado-Gaitán (1991) pointed out that teachers can play a key role in the empowerment efforts to change educational settings in order to make them more responsive to the needs of culturally diverse children. Teachers play a key role by

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becoming critical thinkers, conscious of their cultural assumptions and values, sensitive to the values of students whose cultural heritage is other than middle class mainstream Anglo. It makes them aware of the nature of teaching and learning as a single process in the construction of knowledge.

While many teachers are collaborating in family-school partnerships, many are not recognized for their efforts. For example, Johnson's position was that not enough recognition is given to teachers who take the time to develop and implement partnerships with families or for their creative outreach strategies. She stated that:

> Teachers don't get individual credit in the area of creative outreach strategies. In other words if parental involvement is important, the typology in partnership is important. If we believe in it, we will honor the teacher, school, principal and parents that should be highlighted and that is part of my own philosophy. A good practice would be to honor a teacher, a parent, a school that has done a good job throughout the year. They need to be acknowledged.

Although teachers are often not recognized for their merits in creative teaching practices or outreach strategies, efforts should be made so that parents know and understand that working collaboratively is important to student success. Teachers need and deserve parent support to help students develop a positive attitude towards school. It is the school's responsibility to make extra efforts to communicate with families so that parents and teachers can understand one another and the students better. By communicating with one another, parents and teachers can develop a more complete picture of each student: teachers gain insight into a student's needs, abilities and background; parents gain understanding of their child's performance in school; and all are able to learn more about one another's expectations. In fact, teachers and parents have the same vested interest, and that is to continually work together so that powerful student practices may ensue. Schools need the family, and neither can do it alone. Both are powerful sources in children's growth and development.

Moreover, effective communication, collaboration, home-learning, teacher perception, and home-school collaboration were components that were analyzed for the

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research question which focused on what the indicators of a successful parent involvement program are. In brief, panel members suggested that in order to ascertain a successful parent involvement program, the following indicators serve as mediating structures in a parent involvement model. These indicators do not deviate from Epstein's typology but are incorporated in her model. These indicators illustrate important dimensions which create practices that increase the overlap of spheres of influence of families, schools, and communities in children's education.

Strategies for Effective Latino Parent Involvement

In efforts to make parents feel more welcome at school and increase their involvement, a number of schools are creating more creative outreach activities for parents. In order to analyze the research question in terms of what strategies work well for Latino parents, the responses of the panel members cited empirical studies based on their research and illustrated examples of the various strategies educational practitioners may use in working with culturally diverse parents. The panel members indicated that there are several strategies that work well for Latino parents such as home-learning, parent/teacher conferences, family night, social events, volunteering, clerical logistical assistance, fundraising, and school governance. From analyzing the data and decoding the units for meaning, the recurring themes were grouped into categories and were clustered, resulting in the final themes for analyzing this particular question. The following themes emerged from this naturalistic inquiry. They are: (1) cultural differences, (2) language, (3) shared decision making, (4) parent perception, (5) parents as resources, and (6) school accountability. The themes indicated, by the panel members illustrated the various strategies that work well with Latino parents in school practices.

Surprisingly, after analyzing the review of the literature and decoding the units of meaning, the researcher found that the strategies that worked well for the general population differ to some degree for culturally diverse parents. It was strongly recommended by the panel members that strategies need to be adapted and/or modified

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in order to meet the needs of Latino parents. Strategies need to be utilized and linked to the types of projects and programs by which schools work to achieve family-school partnerships and their subsequent effects on children's academic and social success.

Because the literature revealed that most schools adopt Epstein's model within the context of parent involvement practices, the themes that were discussed as strategies for Latino parents illustrate that these themes are good indicators in a conceptual framework for Latino parents. Table 4.2 illustrates the thirty themes that were reflected by the panel members as strategies that work well for Latino parents. The researcher noted that in table 4.2 there was a discrepancy in the responses. The reason for this discrepancy was the fact that some panel members have different perceptions as to the extent or empirical realities of what they consider to be the most effective strategies that work specifically, with Latino parents while other do not perceive the same concepts. For instance, Davies and Johnson have done extensive empirical studies with Puerto Rican families in the Eastern part of the United States while others concentrated on other ethnic groups and demographic areas. Palmer indicated that when he was a principal he dealt with first generation Latinos that were predominately from México and Central America. A discrepancy, therefore, exists on the strategies for dealing with different language minority parents. In brief in dealing with culturally diverse parents, it is vital to examine, the social, cultural and political structure of the specific group.

Cultural Differences

To gain a perspective on the dynamics of the interaction between parents and school to promote home-school collaboration with Latino parents, appreciation of cultural differences was seen as an important indicator. Many minority parents often come from

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Table 4. 2

Panelist responses to what parent involvement strategies work with Latino parents.

Concept	# of Experts
Language Acquisition	14
Cultural Differences	11
Parent Activism	11
Teacher Leadership	8
Desire	5
Establishing Rapport	5
Parent Expectation	5
Teacher Sensitivity	5
Decision Making	4
Gender Equity	4
Parent Perception	4
Parent Resources	4
Personalism	4
Student Learning	4
Family Connectedness	3
Parent Center Room	3
Parent Recruitment	3
Partnership	3
School Climate	3
Teacher Accountability	3
Empowerment	2
Family Support	2
Home Visitations	2
School Expectations	2
Political Space	2
Authority	1
Family Dynamics	1
Parent/Teacher Conferences	1
Socioeconomic Differences	1
Support Services	1

Note: N= 16 respondents

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unitary societies with very centralized systems of education in which they have no role to play in the schooling of their children. García (1990) pointed out that education in most Latin American countries is fashioned after the European model. It is centralized under the "Ministerio de Educación." No property taxes are paid for education, for it is funded by indirect taxation. Based on this, major educational policy decisions are made by the Ministry of Education with limited or virtually no input by parents. In this system, educators are viewed as trained professionals in charge of the education of children, and parents commonly do not interfere in school out of respect.

Te (1994) noted that in other countries the Ministry of Education controls every aspect of education, including budget, curriculum, graduation requirements and examinations, choice of textbooks, teacher preparation, licensing, recruitment, and assignment. Parents' non-involvement in school matters also derives from the belief that they should leave educational matters to school personnel who are experts. As lay people, they should not tell the experts what they should do in the field of their expertise. They also "perceive academic education as the school's job, not the parents," who are concerned with moral education and character training. Hispanic parents in particular, are reluctant to voice their concerns to school personnel. They believe that they are helpful to the school if they refrain from interfering with school personnel's work" (p. 53).

Immigrant parents frequently lack knowledge about American customs and the operation of the school system, about the instructional activities and programs of the school, and about expectations for parents involvement. In order to encourage and facilitate immigrant parents in their greater involvement, the job of the school district is to help them understand how the American education system functions, especially at the local level and how to be informed of their rights in school reform.

Moreover, as schools restructure and are more accountable in school reform, the demands for increased parent-school involvement are essential for all parents. As Nicolau and Ramos (1990) indicated, in order to develop a strong partnership with Hispanic

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parents there are several factors involved. Appreciation of cultural differences for example, is one of the key elements to understanding Latino parents as they become more actively empowered in school practices. Knowledge of cultural nuances, beliefs, mores, styles, traditions, and values of the constituents assist school personnel as they collaborate with Latino parents.

Eleven of the panel members indicated that cultural differences constitute a significant characteristic that must be recognized by school personnel and play an important role among Latino parents. Strategies that are most effective with culturally diverse parents is to make them feel welcome at the school and to respect and value them as individuals. Several of the expert panel members indicated that these strategies are important because one needs to have parents feel welcome in school and that their school belongs to them. For example, with Latino parents, specifically with Mexican parents, there has always been a reverence for the teacher; however, if the teacher begins with a direct discourse and does not acknowledge some form of contact, it is often perceived as rudeness. Ultimately, one establishes some kinetic or paralinguistic form of contact prior to opening the lines of communication.

Clearly, Latino parents want to be valued and respected as strong supporters that make a difference in educational reform. Often, Latino parents are misperceived and stereotyped as unresponsive or uncooperative to the demands of the school environment due to apathy. Ochoa, for example, suggested that with Latino parents it is necessary to consider that an essential component of Latinos is social identity; it is an assessment of self-concept, self-worth, a sense of belonging, a sense of *la familia.* He argues: "One visible element is to treat Latino parents with respect and know that they are co-equals in the process." Núñez and Delgado-Gaitán indicated that with Latino parents one of the strategies that works well is to involve all parents at different levels, but most importantly, to be aware of their cultural differences and make them feel that they are respected and valued as part of the collective process." Appreciation of cultural

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differences is an integral element which is linked to cultural values and is part of the socialization process of culturally diverse parents. Thus, understanding cultural differences has an important and lasting consequence, affecting the very fabric of a democratic participation in the context of school reform.

Language

In order to gain perspective on the dynamics of interaction between parents and schools to promote home-school collaboration, another element that shapes the social and cultural context is language. Language is an integral element which is shared collectively in the context of school practices. Delgado-Gaitán and Trueba(1991) pointed out that language, in any ethnically diverse group, is an important component in creating specific sets of experiences shared collectively by individuals which influences and determines the meaning of their experiences.

Language plays an important function in the culture and as an overview of life that influences collective behavior, style, and values for Latino parents. Moreover, language is crucial in understanding human interaction and is pivotal to cultural values and maintenance.

Because language influences behavior, style, and values for Latino parents, it is vital to know that communication influences social interactions. Often, Latino parents are not fluent in English and may depend on a relative or friend to be their interpreter in order to address an issue. The lack of English proficiency prevents them from understanding what is being discussed and from expressing their views in conferences and meetings. The fear of embarrassment is a major reason that causes Latino parents not to attend meetings. For some parents, communicating with teachers or coming to school can be an uncomfortable or even a fear-producing situation. Parents, whose language is different from school personnel with whom they must interact, may be particularly vulnerable to frustration or misunderstanding produced by the situation. They may feel intimidated and may not know how the educational system functions. Nevertheless, schools need to

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make extra efforts to provide the appropriate personnel, hire bilingual staff to work with families, or have bilingual aides available when parents visit the school or attend meetings. Chrispeels pointed out for example, that efforts must be made in order to influence Latino parents in positive experiences. She stated:

> Well, clearly a necessity for success is having the materials in Spanish and having the personnel speak Spanish so that parents and teachers can communicate. There has to be more information and translators and teachers about the system. There has to be more information for parents and teachers on how the system works and teachers need to know values and beliefs and the patterns and traditions on how to respond.

Alfaro in a similar note, suggested that efforts should be made in speaking the language of the parents in order to communicate effectively. He indicated that:

> Language is important. Meetings must be done in peoples' own languages. For example at the School Site Council meetings, the worst thing is to have 300 Latino parents and 127 Anglos and the meetings is held in English where parents do not know what decisions are being made. It is important that meetings be held in parents' native languages for understanding and meaning.

Vigil, assistant superintendent of San Diego Unified District, in San Diego, California, stressed that communication is important and showing a genuine interest when one speaks to parents is essential. He continued:

> By reaching out in all different ways in communication involvement with genuine interest in what the parents have to say, we will achieve positive results. The more we do, the more they will do. They will have positive experiences. You have to have the technique and ability of listening to parents.

The importance of language as expressed by the panel members indicates that in order to have a successful Latino parent involvement program, one needs to have the materials translated into the primary language. In addition to promoting parent participation in the schools, language plays an important role in the communication process between the home and school. Although some Latino parents may be in isolation due to their lack of English proficiency, the underlying premise is that regardless of the language spoken, efforts should be made by the school to communicate effectively with culturally diverse parents as indicated by the educational researchers, practitioners, and empirical studies.

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For example, Mayer, the executive director of the Parent Institute in San Diego, California, stated that: "With Latinos it is important to make connections with parents in their primary language and focus on a personal relationship. In essence, engage in more of a *platica* (informal discourse) style and communicate with them directly."

Shared Decision Making

As Goals 2000 stated, every school will strive to increase parent involvement. Further, studies indicate that schools are actively engaging in the restructuring movement and are creating innovative changes in their schools. Schools are embarking on the notion that parent empowerment in school governance brings systemic change and can make a significant difference in the organizational structure. Moreover, parents are powerful stakeholders who can influence policy and can be a catalyst in school policy.

The restructuring movement has the goal of improving student achievement and creating a collaborative relationship with the school community. It is important that all students be educated in an integrated setting to become responsible, literate, thinking, and contributing members of a multicultural society through excellence in teaching and learning. Based on this assumption, parents are actively engaged in school governance issues which result in policy changes.

In shared decision making, culturally diverse parents play an active role and are involved in the decision making process. Their voices are heard on selected policies and programs presented by their school governance teams. Epstein (1995) pointed out that in decision making, parents need to be made aware and allowed to give input on policies that affect their children's education and school effectiveness which affects the social conditions of the school. Parents need to have an awareness of school, district, and state policies and of the challenges and demands of school reform.

When parents raise their voices and express their concerns, socio-political and organizational tensions may arise. As parents exert their rights as advocates for their children and community, Latino parents need to be encouraged to be active participants in

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the shared decision making of their schools. Eight of the panel members pointed out that it is important to have interaction and dialogue with all parents in shared decision making issues, and it is vital for Latino parents to exercise their right to equal participation in meaningful decision making. For example, Ochoa indicated that "Latino parents must be involved in leadership committees such as the Parent Teacher Association, Bilingual Advisory Council, School Site Council, District Advisory Council, District Bilingual Advisory Council, school governance or school site management teams in which they serve in participatory roles and exercise their power on school issues." In addition, he stated that "parents must be encouraged to be members and made to feel that they are contributing members. They should not feel intimidated; their voices are egalitarian in nature. Parents must be activists and formulate policy and push policy so that they can become action researchers." Núñez reported that at Sherman Elementary School, for example, Latino parents formed a coalition group called Organization of Parents Latino Association (OPLA). This group advocates for the school, is involved in the decision making process, and collaborates with the school administration for a better quality education for children. The parents are given a voice and make knowledgeable decisions on school issues.

Eight panel members also indicated that if culturally diverse parents do not know how to become involved in school governance, they must be trained to effectively serve in participatory roles and engage in policy development. Epstein (1992) noted that schools assist parents to be leaders and representatives by training them in decision making skills and in how to communicate with all of the parents they represent; by including parents as true, not token, contributors to school decisions, and by providing information to community advocacy groups so that they may knowledgeably address issues of school improvement. Parents need to be involved in the planning, designing, implementation, and evaluation of school reform whether it is the curriculum, school budget, staff development or issues that involve systemic change. Most importantly, it was

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suggested by the panel members that it is imperative to involve culturally diverse parents in decision making so that the stakeholders may work collaboratively with the school. The process in which there are collaborative efforts, collective purposes, and a sense of power and influence will create a democratic participatory process in school governance and create systemic change.

Parent Perception

Another component that was purported as important by the panel members in the findings is the perception that culturally diverse parents have toward schools. Although there are creative outreach strategies for parent involvement, if parents perceive that they are not welcomed or do not have a sense of belonging, they will not engage in participatory roles in school activities regardless of the efforts school personnel provide for the community.

Throughout the expert panel interviews it was stressed that parents must have a sense of belonging in the school culture and that school personnel must strive to work with parents in respectful ways. It was noted by nine panel members that the clerical staff personnel in a school office make a difference in how parents are greeted. A warm smile or eye contact can make a difference in how school personnel communicate with parents. An amiable approach is to be friendly and caring, indicating to parents, students, and the community that they are perceived as important stakeholders. Often, Latino parents have commented that when they go to the school to request information, school personnel will often not attend to the parents' request and will make them wait or simply ignore them. An obvious example is when a Caucasian parent speaks English and the other parent does not speak the language. The English speaking parent will be served first while the language minority parent will not be served until the secretary is able to attend to that parent. Nonverbal and verbal messages given by school personnel are important elements as they address parents per se. This not only applies to language minority parents but all parents. Latino parents pointed out that school personnel need to

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have fair practices and have the perception and the desire that they, too, are valuable constituents.

Another dimension of parent perception as was pointed out by the panel members is that parents can be influential leaders who can work collaboratively with school personnel for promoting school improvement if they are perceived as important stakeholders. Parents are willing to volunteer endless hours in school activities and take an active role in their children's education, particularly at the elementary level, if they know that they are perceived as valuable participants. However, an unusually high level of parental participation tends to decrease as students move from elementary to junior and senior high school (Epstein and Dauber, 1991). Creative outreach strategies are needed in order to increase parent participation. The panel members advocated that a positive perception or attitude toward parents and an active support of them with appropriate resources make parents feel and be viewed as collaborators in school practices. They are vital in making any systemic changes and can create positive tensions as was noted earlier.

Another contributing factor that is seen as part of effective strategies for Latino parent involvement and is related to parent attitude and perception is to provide parents with political physical space where they can gather with other parents or other family members to meet, plan, and implement programs that parents initiate or which they develop cooperatively with school personnel and community participants. The physical space can be a Parent Center Room with a community liaison that will work closely with the school and with the families. Johnson (1994) pointed out that parent centers are necessary. She indicated that parents having a room of their own shows them that they belong in school because there is a place waiting for them. She explained:

> The inclusion of parents in the institutional structure of schools also changes the message to them from 'you are invited on special occasions' to 'you are expected at any time.' The changes in structures and messages promote changes in the patterns of parent-teacher encounters from brief, infrequent, and formal to longer, more frequent, and relaxed

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> encounters which are more likely to result in communication and collaboration. By meeting more frequently in informal, comfortable ways, parents and teachers learn to share information, work out differences, and collaborate on activities to benefit children and schools.

As structural support, parent centers connect teachers and parents in the pursuit of home-school collaboration. They provide a relaxed atmosphere in which teachers and parents can meet informally, exchange information, and work out their collaborative roles.

Moreover, parent perception as noted by the panel members illustrates how parents' attitudes must be viewed as true indicators of how parents are perceived in the school environment. They can be viewed along a continuum of leadership or perceived negatively. Conversely, parents are contributing and collaborative stakeholders who are the most influential teachers children have. At best, if parental perception is viewed as a catalyst in terms of stressing a pervasive sense of belonging, a sense of commitment as contributing stakeholders in home-school collaboration will be achieved. In brief, parent perception will result in positive outcomes for increasing and improving parent involvement.

Parents as Resources

While shared decision making has been identified as an important influence in parent involvement, another dimension that illustrates family empowerment is parents as resources. Parents as resources bring benefits in student achievement. As resources, they are vital to school reform; they create promising programs of collaboration and family empowerment. Parents as resources may assume new responsibilities, develop communication between the broader community and schools, organize parents and communities to become active participants in schools, and serve as a resource to other parents, community members, and schools on issues that pertain to school effectiveness. According to the ten panel members, parents as resources play a myriad of functions and represent legitimate authority in support of teachers in ongoing collaborative efforts.

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Ochoa indicated that parents as resources are vital and play important roles in schools. They are "parents as cultural brokers." For example, in middle schools where there is a high population of Latino parents, there can be five parents who are knowledgeable of the resources of the school and community. Their function is the same as brokers. These "cultural brokers" advertise that the school has important group information; they are knowledgeable about the social services for their community. He stated that:

> Cultural brokers become resources; they know where services that are family-focused and family friendly exist. Parents could be assisted and they can call about anything parents need--such as food, shelter, medical services, welfare, immigration, legal assistance without fear of feeling a sense of being uncomfortable. The school becomes a place where they can get information for the purpose of information and seek information. It is a sense of empowerment.

As Ochoa indicated cultural brokers serve as powerful resources that can service other parents. Davies also suggested that parents as resources are influential leaders in the school and community. They have a wealth of knowledge and must be utilized in all capacities. Since parents as resources have a shared responsibility and are involved in the emotional, social and academic development of students, they make significant contributions in providing services for the school. For instance, Núñez pointed out that parents as resources are advocates who provide information on educational issues. This cadre of parents volunteers their services in the school environment and recruits other parents to become knowledgeable partners. They use strategies and/or activities that train parents in techniques related to home learning activities, coordination of community and family support services or training parents in instructional and support roles in schools. For example, Alfaro indicated that at Memorial Academy, he has a cadre of parents that work with other parents in assisting them in support services and assisting teachers in formal instructional programs. The presence of parents is powerful in the classrooms and in the community. He explained that: "The power of parents' presence is significant. It reinforces the common value system of the school community and shows

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the power of action over words. Other parents and classroom teachers respond positively to having parents as resources."

In a similar fashion, Delgado-Gaitán indicated that parents can be successful resources and described a successful parent involvement program in a Latino community in the Carpenteria District, in Santa Barbara, California, which was grounded on the assumptions that all individuals have strengths and that a truly democratic society provides all people choices and opportunities to exercise their strengths. The underlying premise in terms of parents as resources is that they are influential resources that are vital in linking and promoting family-school-community collaboration.

School Accountability

Because modern communities are increasingly diverse in their social, cultural, and linguistic composition, new flexibility and approaches for reaching out are needed to ensure that all students receive a quality education and that no student is excluded from educational attainment. A positive relationship exists between parent involvement in education and the progress that students make in academics and in their attitudes toward learning. As such, school accountability is another factor that presents particular challenges in school reform. Eleven panel members pointed out that schools today are faced with more expectations, challenges, and demands. Communities require more accountability in educational performance. Schools are held accountable for commitments, policies, and practices to (1) ensure that students are exposed to good instructional practices in a supportive learning environment; (2) ensure that students are not exposed to harmful teaching practices; (3) provide internal self-correctives to identify, diagnose and change courses of action that are harmful or ineffective; and (4) provide information to students, parents, educators, the school board and the public on the strengths and weakness of student performance at the school, district and state levels.

In the process of reform, schools are faced with many challenges and are responsible for standards of excellence in student performance. Eleven panel members

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proposed that although schools are involved in integrating a well-defined, academically rigorous curriculum with a sense of community, rooted in nurturance, self-discipline, and esteem, more efforts are still needed to address the needs of children and families. They explained that school personnel have an obligation to reach out to all families so that students may benefit. Underpinning measures of assessment for developing, coordinating, and incorporating comprehensive service delivery are needed for families so that supportive learning practices may be ensured. Alfaro, for example, indicated that efforts must be school-based and that every stakeholder is accountable. He explained that:

> One thing is to connect with social agencies and to mak e certain whether or not your child has special needs. What do you do? You do everything! You don't belabor what doesn't work. We are building on what works and on developing more proactive skills.

In brief, every measure of school accountability needs to be included in school reform so that children are provided with optimal learning experiences. As schools strive to improve student performance and address the needs of their student populations, they must build upon and enhance strong support systems. Subsequently, schools need to examine issues of accountability for student achievement and school performance.

The findings for this investigative research question indicated that the components of cultural difference, language, decision making, parent perception, parents as resources, and school accountability reflect the responses of the expert panel members. These components can have a significant contribution in terms of working with Latino parents at the middle school level.

A Contextual Ideal Framework for Hispanic Parent Involvement

Although there have been many configurations of parent involvement models that exist for improving and increasing home-school collaborations as was analyzed in the empirical research, most have been designed to examine the important context of children's learning and development. In fact, they include information about parent involvement in general, and practical strategies for developing partnerships with parents

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in order to foster home-school collaboration. The various typologies are evidence of the progress in research on school, family, and community partnerships, and they present effective practices of a home-school partnership typology used for home-school collaboration.

Interestingly, the theoretical frameworks created by educational researchers such as Chrispeels (1992), Comer (1986) Davies (1991), Epstein (1987), Levin (1987), Swaps (1993) and others, have made significant contributions in the area of parent involvement. Moreover, these models serve as a framework for developing a contextual model in addressing children's educational needs.

The findings of this investigative research question as indicated by the sixteen expert panel members suggest that in order for parents, specifically Mexican and Mexican American parents to become active participants in their children's education, the quality of home-school collaboration must be increased and enhanced. Sixteen expert panel members reported that there is no specific or ideal model for Latino parents; however, all agreed that Epstein's typology must be included in Latino parent involvement and must be adaptable to address their needs since "one size does not fit all." All of the panel members suggested that in order to work with Latino parents effectively, the social, cultural, linguistic, and political context have significant influences and implications as to how Latino parents influence their children's education.

Thirty-two themes emerged from the responses that expert panel interviews reported. The themes were analyzed for meaning and clustered in sequence. Six categories of themes emerged to be the ideal components for Latino parents (see Table 4.3). They are: (1) parenting, (2) communication, (3) home-school learning activities and support services, (4) decision making, (5) collaborating with the community, and (6) creating the notion of parents as change agents (see Table 4.4). The components addressed the question of what ideal model can be used to develop and increase Latino parent involvement at the middle school level. According to the educational researchers

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Table 4. 3

Panelist responses to the question of an ideal model for Latino parent involvement to research question 6.

Concept	# of Experts
Appreciation of Cultural Differences	16
Collaboration	16
Communication	16
Cultural Context	16
Parents as Knowledge Base	16
Commitment	15
Epstein Typology of "Overlapping Spheres of Influences"	15
Notion of Change Agents	15
Commitment	15
Home-Learning	14
Home-School-Child Model	14
Democratic Participatory Process	14
"One Size Does Not Fit All Model"	14
Social Context	14
Staff Development	14
Support Services	14
Activist for Change	14
Child-Centered Focus	14
Client-Centered Approach	14
Decision Making	13
Support Systems	13
Developmental Model	11
Personalism	10
Creative Outreach Strategies at Various Levels	10
Parent Choices	10
Parent Participation	9
Volunteerism	8
Governance	7
Anti-Racism	2
Action Researchers as Parents	1
Artisan Skills	1

Note: N=16 respondent

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Table 4. 4

Components of emergent themes responses for research questions 4, 5, and 6 of expert panel members.

Effective Parent Involvement Programs	
Communication	16
Home-School Relationships	16
Administrative Leadership	15
Home-Learning	15
Teacher Perception	15
Collaboration	14
Parent Involvement Strategies	
Language	14
Cultural Difference	11
School Accountability	11
Parent as Resources	10
Parent Perception	9
Decision Making	8
Ideal Model for Latino Parents	
Communication	16
Parenting	16
Collaboration with Community	15
Decision Making	15
Home-Learning and Support Services	14
Creating the Notion of Parents as Change Agents/Activism	13

Note: N=16 respondents

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and practitioners, an ideal model must be focused and have a strong emphasis on a client-centered or child-centered approach. In addition, it must be based on a democratic participatory process where culturally diverse parents are actively engaged as influential powerful teachers and learners in their children's education. The following themes such as parenting, communication, cognitive development, and decision making processes for systemic change are essential for developing a model for Latino parent involvement.

Since the expert panel members suggest that there is not a specific model for addressing Latino home-school collaboration the researcher designed and developed a contextual framework based on the responses of the panel members. The researcher presented the six essential components that illustrate a model for Latino parents using practical application skills that are appropriate in the identification process.

Parenting

Based on the findings, the sixteen expert panel members indicated that all parents, regardless of socioeconomic status or educational attainment, must meet their basic obligation as Epstein (1995) pointed out in her typology of overlapping spheres of responsibility. Parents have the basic obligation of raising their children to grow, to develop, and to learn in their life span development. At this developmental stage, parents oversee the basic needs such as the physiological and psychological needs which children must have met in order to be fully developed individuals. Epstein (1995), for example, indicated that parents provide for children's health and safety which includes establishing a positive environment to support children and teach and prepare them with life skills through their formative years. Furthermore, in order for children to be powerful learners, they need the nurture and care that are essentially provided in the home environment in order to have a sense of a positive self esteem and value as individuals. As previously mentioned, parenting is thus seen as the first area of development where parents provide their children positive home conditions that support school learning behavior. In fact, as researchers have purported, during children's formative years,

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parents are the most powerful and influential teachers in their children's lives. Ochoa noted that:

> Parents must have an understanding of their children. One of the most popular things is child development. This is the first phase in which parents have knowledge of their child in terms of growth and development.

Clearly, the findings indicate that the concept of parenting is vital in the growth and development of their children. The expert panel members also stated that all parents, whether they are single parents or from an extended family, must be able to understand the child. Therefore, their primary obligation is to have a knowledge base, which will effectively prepare their children for contributing citizenship in the American social context, while at the same time maintaining their own social, cultural and linguistic systems.

Communication

Sixteen expert panel members asserted that in order to have a contextual ideal model that shows evidence of success in Latino parent involvement, effective communication is mandatory. Although there may be a language barrier in communicating with Latino parents, all efforts must be made to communicate school information to parents in their primary language and to understand cultural differences as language minority parents are addressed in a social and cultural context. According to the sixteen panel members, schools have an obligation to communicate effectively with parents about school programs and their children's progress. They suggested that schools design and produce forms for school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programs and children's progress. Communication includes the notices, telephone calls, home visits, report cards, and parent/teacher conferences that most schools provide. For example, some schools have parent/teacher conferences that are held annually. Schools may want to explore having parent/teacher conferences every week so that a clear two-way channel for communication is established. For example, Alfaro indicated that

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> At Memorial Academy, every Monday afternoon is designed for Parent/ Teacher Conferencing. Parents may come in to have a conference at the school, or teachers go to their students' homes for a conference. In particular, parents are aware of their children's academic progress, school programs and policies, and/or special events held throughout the school year.

Alfaro continued to explain that communication is essential at all levels, especially at the middle school and secondary levels because students at this adolescent stage, may sway from the mainstream due to peer pressure and/or social demands. He explained that the role of the school and parents must be to have an ongoing communication in order to ensure that both parties are thoroughly supportive in the children's education. In the same vein, Latino parents must be able to communicate to school personnel their children's academic, attendance, or physiological or psychological problems as identified by the parents.

Educators, as indicated by the panel members, need to be able to effectively communicate to parents and increase the channels of communication so that parents are aware of the opportunities for home-school collaboration and for mutual efforts to support student performance.

Home-Learning and Support Services

According to the fourteen panel members, one of the most vital aspects of an ideal model is home-learning and support services for Latino parents and their children. Many research studies confirmed that parents are the most influential teachers children have. Parents are considered their children's' first educators in their development and are the most influential in student success. Consequently, they play a key role in their children's education by monitoring home learning. Parents can establish ongoing communication with their students' teachers, encourage and motivate their children to pursue their educational career paths, assist their children with decisions that affect their personal and social development, and understand the adolescent growth process. For example, Delgado-Gaitán, indicated that Latino parents are able to monitor their children's home-

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work in some form or another. She cited in her ethnographic research that in the Comité de Padres Latinos (COPLA), a literacy program that was implemented in the Carpenteria District, in Santa Barbara, California, generally speaking, parents were trained on literacy skills in which they as parents, taught their children language acquisition skills acquired in the literacy program. Delgado-Gaitán and Trueba (1994) asserted that some parents had learned how to read to their children in a night literacy project at Gardner School. In the project, adults were taught to read in Spanish and English, using children's materials as well as an adult literacy curriculum. In fact, they explained "parents who wanted to learn how to better help their children in their homework, believed that attending English literacy classes would expand their ability to help their children with their school work" (p. 135). Moreover, even if some Latino parents are limited in their educational attainment, parents are taught how to monitor homework activities and be informed by school personnel of their children's progress.

Violand-Sánchez, Sutton, and Ware (1991) indicated that language minority parents need to be involved and be provided assistance in the use of home-learning activities. The authors noted that multilingual family learning activities for home use provide another avenue for parents to support the school curriculum and help their children learn. Such activities are extensions of the classroom curriculum. Furthermore, parents who know classroom expectations and are able to work positively with their children on school-related tasks provide support services for their children.

Epstein (1995) pointed out that in home-learning, parents know how to support, encourage, help students at home; have discussions with their children about school classwork; understand the instructional program the children are expected to learn in each grade level, have an appreciation of teaching skills; and have an awareness of the child as a learner. The major emphasis of home-learning activities for parents would be to become partners with teachers in encouraging children with their school work, to interact with their children at home to support school goals and programs, and to assist children in

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their growth and development. Fourteen panel members reported that in order for Latino parents to know their children's educational performance, it is vital to establish a connectedness in home-school learning and to be able to understand the school context, be knowledgeable and have a sense of awareness so that they may be able to encourage and support their children's progress. Staff personnel need to work collaboratively with parents to relate, to have parent-to-parent contact, and to be able to work with parents on home-school learning activities so that parents, in turn, may monitor their children's home-learning activities.

Decision Making

A virtual silence in policy making is keenly seen with language minority parents in a socio-political context. Culturally diverse parents do not question school policy nor actively participate in school governance. García (1990) indicated that a factor which has contributed to the alienation of the family from the school is the increased bureaucratization which has taken place as a result of the consolidation of school districts. This has made decision making in many districts increasingly remote. Hispanic parents, unfamiliar with the decision making process and sometimes lacking the language skills and the knowledge of the system's structure, are further hindered from fully participating. In practice, they have been a silent majority. Nevertheless, this trend is changing and Latino parents are becoming empowered in school reform. According to the panel members, Latino parents today are becoming more involved in the decision making process of school governance and are becoming more aware of the importance of leadership.

From this perspective, it is evident that activism, advocacy, empowerment, and decision making are powerful indicators that come into play as Latino parents are more cognizant about how school policy has an impact on the process of democratic participation. Their voices are heard in school governance and are essential in the design of an ideal contextual framework. Fifteen of the panel members reported that in order to have an ideal Hispanic parent involvement model, parents must be involved in the

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decision making process of school policy. Parents need to be able to ask questions and make recommendations in terms of policy development and decisions. Panel members indicated that parents need to be empowered to make school decisions about personnel, curriculum, instructional materials, and other issues that pertain to school effectiveness.

Ochoa, for example, stressed that Latino parents need to become involved in school councils or governance teams and for Latino parents to be engaged in governance decisions. Although some parents may be reticent in decision making practices, school personnel must provide efforts at empowering parents to be involved and perceive their roles as of equal status in leadership. Their input into policy practices affects their children's education.

From a pragmatic perspective, Latino parents play a vital role in the change process in terms of systemic change in school reform. They must be able to actively participate in the decision making process of their schools and have their voices heard. Parents can be active in school policy and create tensions in school policy. Ochoa, for example, explained, "parents need to be action researchers in which they formulate and question the data, provide recommendations in school decisions, and formulate policy and push policymaking throughout the agencies. Stakeholders then impact the life of democracy."

By involvement in decision making, parents voice their concerns in school policy. Parents and school personnel determine what changes need to be implemented so that they become active contributors in school governance.

Collaboration with Community

Epstein in her typology of "overlapping spheres of influence," indicated that in order to be responsive to parents' needs, linking community organizations with social agencies is a collaborative effort since it helps the community at large. As an ideal contextual model for Latino parent involvement, fifteen of the panel members purported that in order to foster student learning and development, families that may exhibit life

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stresses need to be linked to social agencies so that their needs are addressed and their problems not allowed to inhibit the growth and development process of their children's education. Schools should be able to make the appropriate referrals of children and families to needed services. Alfaro, for example, contended that schools can assist parents and work collaboratively with families to have all parents participate, learn, and collaborate. He explained:

> We bring allegiance, and most importantly we are able to bring them to the school. We refer them to community agencies and get parents to participate in education classes and believe in education. My advice is to always be able to participate, be patient with parents, and encourage them to contribute to a quality education in their family life.

The community can provide vital resources to augment teaching practices as it relates to the school environment. For instance, using mentors, business partners, community volunteers, and others achieves important educational outcomes for the school and the community. This practice engages parents as vital resources and generates a collaborative school partnership. As Reyes suggested, "schools have to take the initiative or first steps in welcoming parents to participate in collaborative partnerships." Furthermore, programs such as Healthy Start or efforts from the school that attempt to tap into community resources and make those services available at the school can help meet the needs of family and child. Finally, as indicated, the fifteen panel members stated that schools need to establish strong collaborative efforts in service integration through partnerships in order to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning in a "learning community."

Creating a Social Context: Parents as Change Agents in Leadership

Achieving effective parent involvement programs is vital in systemic change. Because efforts to involve parents in their children's education is a collaborative effort in the home-school-community relationship, a solution is to create a home-school partnership that ensures the notion of a sense of belonging, a sense of community

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power, and a sense of leadership. Latino parents must be encouraged to be change agents as they become actively engaged in the educational process of their children at the various levels of school practices. Thirteen panel members asserted that the culturally diverse must be empowered as change agents; they must be involved in the process of growth and change. Vigil, for example, reported that an ideal model for Latino parent involvement is to have all parents participate and be engaged in the empowerment process. He explained that:

> Overall you must use your artisan's skills: the soft touch, use the sugar, not the vinegar. You use litigation when it is necessary. You have to go to this avenue within the realm of how we do business. There is no ideal model that works. The ideal model is the one that is persistent and is very personal. The ideal model is one that works for parents. Everyone doesn't give up. You persist until you are done! A model is eclectic that takes from here and there and utilizes the best from all of it; you use the best; you use different options.

Chrispeels, Davies, Delgado-Gaitán, and Ochoa have purported that in order for parents to be truly empowered, it is a developmental process in which parents evolve a sense of control and mastery. Sotomayor (1991) pointed out that empowerment is the process by which individuals and communities gain mastery over their lives. Sotomayor (1991) noted that:

> To be meaningful, profound, and lasting, empowerment must be initiated and experienced by those who see themselves as powerless. In reality, one cannot empower someone else. However, others can strengthen and support individuals who view themselves as powerless. Empowerment occurs by enhancing strengths, promoting the development of the skills necessary to mobilize resources, and/or providing the necessary resources. In working with Hispanics, self-help and mutual help are critical elements in helping individuals and families cope with their environment. Empowerment allows these various populations to seek affirmation through traditional cultural values.

Ochoa contended that Latino parents must be empowered, and the empowerment must be collaborative in nature. Latino parents must be active participants and impact others in the change process.

In practice, parents must voice their concerns and make recommendations to affect widespread changes in policies and practices. They must be ensured that their decisions

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and their voices can make a difference as challenging issues are presented in school reform. While some parents possess leadership skills, some must be trained in this process in order to influence others. It is a critical element in systemic change. Ochoa summarized the notion of change and leadership in parent involvement programs by indicating that parents must be individuals who have leadership influences and affect other individuals as change agents. Moreover, in order for culturally diverse parents to affect change they must be involved in the process of growth and development as previously mentioned. He indicated:

> Knowledge that is designed and developed for parents is enabling and working toward the notion for parents to be involved in the process of growth and change. It is collaborative, working with and through people; it has a whole dimension; it has equal status. A good program has true leaders as facilitators as opposed to some that manipulate the masses. It is a process that recognizes the voice of the community. It is a process that increases a sense of belonging; it is a process of documenting concerns using different methodologies whether it is quantitative or qualitative. It is empowering and empowers people, including school personnel; it is a process of democratic participation.

Furthermore, parents can create changes by collaborating with other parents and the school personnel toward a shared vision. This shared vision is student performance and forging of a strong collaborative partnership.

Summary of the Research Findings

Qualitative research methods were used in this study to examine factors that promote Hispanic parent involvement at the middle school level. Based on the findings, a contextual framework was established that specified the important concepts to be used in parent involvement programs.

In reflecting on the meaning of the responses, in the second phase of the triangulation analysis, it may be stated that the sixteen expert panel members demonstrated a sense of commitment and a sense of desire to work with parents. The contributions of their beliefs, values, and empirical and practical knowledge of what they see to be practical designs and implications for educators formed a knowledge base in

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which educators and practitioners can relate and collaborate effectively with parents and primarily with culturally diverse parents.

The questions which framed this research formed the context for the discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of the findings. The findings showed sixteen panel members have adopted and/or encompassed Epstein's typology in some fashion in terms of parent involvement. There appeared to be a general consensus that the six components are vital in a comprehensive parent involvement model. Panel members indicated in the findings for the general population, and for culturally diverse parents, that adaptations or modifications must be tailored to the specific audience in order to work successfully with parents. In fact, panel members asserted that ideally a contextual parent involvement model involving parents actively in this process requires parental involvement programs which include parenting and family skills, communication, home-learning and support services, parental participation in decision making, collaborative efforts with the community, and parents as collaborators in their roles as change agents.

The results indicated that there was a general consensus on the major components which constituted a contextual framework for Latino parents; however, there was a discrepancy on strategies that researchers used in terms of working with culturally diverse parents. It could be as a result of demographics, ethnic-identity, or structural family characteristics in a social and cultural context.

Educational practitioners are becoming increasingly aware that schools which value parent participation have a desire and manifest a commitment in parent involvement have higher achievement, more positive attitudes, and more effective programs. Furthermore, the external and internal structures of overlapping spheres of influence recognize the interlocking histories of institutions that motivate, socialize, and educate children and the changing that accumulating skills and interactions of the individuals in those contexts has been the basis of studying the connections that affect children's learning and development.

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The results of the findings pointed out that the "overlapping spheres of influences of family, school, community of children's learning," is essential and supports parents as well as school personnel as the constituents work collaboratively in order to improve student performance. Clearly, they also influence the school's plan design, implementation, and assessment of school effectiveness.

The strategies that were reported in the findings suggest that school personnel must effectively establish and implement a "personalism approach" in order to further understand culturally diverse parents at the middle school level. An understanding of cultural sensitivity and an appreciation of the cultural and linguistic context in terms of working with Latino parents were recommended by the panel members. School personnel need to manifest trust, respect, empathy, sincerity, a sense of belonging, desire, and commitment, and create a strong network of support in which parents are truly valued. The purpose for inclusion of parents in the institutional structure of schools is that families and school work together and, most importantly, that parents are valued and welcomed at all times.

Lightfoot (1978) noted that the presence of parents can transform the culture of a school. Traditionally, school culture has created barriers to home-school partnership by promoting brief, impersonal, formal encounters between teachers and parents. The pattern of relationships resulting from this traditional culture is especially counterproductive because current school reform policy calls for direct parental involvement in planning, governance, and evaluation of schools. Parents are expected to join teachers, principals and other school personnel in improving daily life in schools, while traditional school interaction patterns fail to prepare parents or teachers for their new role as collaborators. Schools are, therefore, searching for new ways to develop relationships that move parents and teachers toward greater partnership.

This second phase of the triangulation analysis illustrated that all parents, regardless of their socio-economic and educational attainment, want a quality education for

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their children. The components that were examined are influential indicators for effective parent involvement programs where parenting, communication, home-learning, decision making, and home-school collaboration meet the needs of diverse populations. It is instructive to note that these components serve as a design of successful practices as identified by the sixteen expert panel members. The panel members have maintained in this study, that schools have the obligation to ensure that all efforts are made for parents to forge a strong partnership in home-school collaboration and to integrate the resources to improve and increase parent participation.

As a qualitative study, the emerging naturalistic inquiry illustrated the recurring concepts and identified the components which reflected and provided a conceptual framework model for Latino parent involvement. The second phase of the triangulation analysis addressed the investigative research questions. Expert panel members provided an "empirical reality" of a conceptual framework model based on their studies, perceptions, and research with culturally diverse populations. The procedure included comparing results to the current literature review and analyzing the results of the derived themes that were categorized in sequence. The meaning and responses were examined and clustered for the established themes.

The findings showed that for the general population as well as for language minority parents, Epstein's typology served as a comprehensive model for parents. Nonetheless, all parent involvement efforts need to be comprehensive and inclusive of the diversity of families represented in the school community. The findings suggested that parent involvement models must be adapted to meet the needs of culturally diverse parents and that there is no specific model for Latino parents. It is evident from the study that in order to work with Latino parents, there needs to be creative outreach strategies and provisions of a variety of options by which school personnel can be responsive to families and address the needs of culturally diverse parents. Ultimately, the underlying premise of parental involvement is to increase student academic achievement and to

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provide an understanding of the social contexts of students' education and learning by actively engaging parents in their children's education.

First Generation Focus Group and Methodology Results

The third phase of the triangulation analysis consisted of first generation Mexican parents who voiced recommendations based on their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences in parent involvement programs. The focus groups emerged from a volunteer sample of thirty first generation Mexican parents who have children attending an inner city middle-level school in San Diego, California. Patton (1990) indicated that a focus group interview is a research method technique that seeks to structure a group communication process. He described this research method as "an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic." The first generation parents were selected because they shared experiences of mutual trust, respect, risk taking, commitment, and because the researcher had established a relationship with the Memorial Academy community.

The first generation parents were given a consent form to sign indicating their consent to participate in the focus group interview process. All signed and readily volunteered their time to participate in the study. Latino parents were surveyed, and focus group interviews were held to determine answers to the following investigative research questions:

7. What perceptions of parent involvement programs do Latino parents have?

8. What concerns do Latino parents have regarding parent involvement?

9. What roles would Latino parents like to assume in the education of their children?

10. What do parents see as the main purpose and benefits of home-school collaboration?

11. Are there ways the school could assist Latino parents in coping with life stress issues which inhibit their involvement in parent/school programs?

12. What roles would Latino parents like to play in parent involvement programs?

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The researcher summarized the findings based on the responses of what the first generation parents indicated in the focus groups as it applied to the investigative research questions. The findings for first generation Mexican parents suggested that although some Mexican parents are at a disadvantage because they do not understand the United States educational system, all thirty parents wanted to be active participants in their children's education. They wanted to learn more about home-learning activities so that they could assist with their children's education. Mexican parents want a quality education for their children and have high expectations for their children. In fact, many have migrated to the United States in order to provide a "better life" for their children and maintain several jobs in order to provide the basic means of survival. However, they need assistance as to how the network and norms of United States schooling operate.

Because some Mexican parents are recent arrivals to the United States, they do not understand the complexities of the educational organizational structure. They indicated they are intimidated by the system, want to be involved in their children's education, but have to know how the system operates. First generation focus group parents purported that the language barrier and the mainstream culture is different from their culture, and that they want to overcome this barrier by understanding the mainstream culture. Nevertheless, they indicated that they will maintain their traditions, values, mores, and beliefs. Mexican parents want to become more knowledgeable and assist their children in their educational attainment.

In understanding the Latino culture, It is important to understand that Mexican parents trust the schools and have respect for teachers. They believe that administrators and teachers are working to provide the best education for their children. Consequently, they rarely question the institution. First generation parents are intimidated by school personnel and do not understand the "nuts and bolts" of the system. As a result, they do not step into educational institutions and are often viewed as "apathetic" parents.

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Mexican parents have been taught at an early age, that the family teaches basic core family values, while educators teach pedagogy.

First generation parents noted that regardless of their educational attainment, they were there to support their children in their educational attainment. First generation parents stated that they wanted their children to have a better life and that in order to achieve a better life, they must get an education. Many indicated that they did not have opportunities in their respective countries; nevertheless, they want their children to have high expectations for their educational accomplishments which are pivotal to high achievement.

One of the main interests in the study was to discover how first generation parents perceive home-school collaboration and to find out what their attitudes and concerns are. Given the responses in the focus groups, the following themes emerged for the first two investigative questions to determine their perceptions and concerns regarding parent involvement.

As with the second phase of the triangulation analysis of the expert panel members, the same process was applied to the third phase of the triangulation analysis in the focus group interviews. Each interview was examined and each unit of meaning relating to the Latino parent involvement model was recorded on an index card. For cross referencing purposes, the assigned number of the interview was recorded on the back of the card. As cards accumulated, each card was examined and compared for similarities and differences as to what constituted an effective Hispanic involvement model. The results were analyzed and arranged under separate categories. Sixteen recurring themes emerged from the categorization sequences, and five themes emerged from the clustering: communication, home-school learning, school programs, parent programs, and principles for stages of adolescent development (see Table 4.5). First generation focus groups have a strong commitment to education and view education as a means for social advancement. In reviewing the five themes, it is evident that with first generation parents

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there is a significant amount of agreement about the importance of including parents in the educational process. Twenty-eight parents pointed out that they are involved with their children's schools, while two indicated that because of their educational attainment, they did not know how to assist their children. Moreover, the most important factor is that the parents feel that their children must get an education in order to achieve and have social opportunities.

The Perceptions of Latino Parents

Communication

The perception first generation parents have regarding parent programs are many. It is clear to them that the benefits of parent involvement accrue to everyone and in particular, their children. Furthermore, research suggested there is no one best way, for parents to be involved. Instead, evidence supported the perspective that what works best is for parents to be involved in a variety of roles over a long period of time (Casas and Furlong, 1994). First generation parents indicated that communication is important in dealing with their children and their teachers. Thirty Latino parents indicated that if they, as parents, do not understand their children and are not able to relate to them emotionally and spiritually, problems will develop with lasting repercussions in their lifestyles. It is important to have ongoing communication with their teachers and to know how their children are progressing in school. A parent pointed out:

> Well I think that communication is important with the administration so that we can feel at ease, be comfortable, and be more assured. We should have parent/teacher conferences. We should be more confident and be able to know the principal so that we can establish better communication. I believe this is the key; if we do not have communication, we do not have anything! We should be able to establish communication channels.

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Table 4.5

First generation focus group responses to perceptions and concerns of parent involvement.

Concept	**# of First Generation**
Communication	30
Home-School Learning Activities	28
Principles in Adolescent Development	24
School Programs	22
Parent Programs	20
Educational System	15
Respect	15
Strategies to Motivate Students	15
Safe School Environment	13
Teacher Perception	13
Volunteering	12
Parent/Teacher Relationship	8
Parent Rights	5
Parent Training Support Services	5
Reputation of School	5
Collaboration	2

Note: N= 30 respondents

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> Pues pienso que es importante la comunicación con la administración, para sentirnos comfortables, tener confianza, venir a la escuela y tener conferencias con los maestros. Estar más seguros y conocer al director para tener mejor comunicación. Creo que esto es la clave; si no hay comunicación, no hay nada. La relación y la confianza entre padres a maestros y maestros a padres se debe establecer.

Moreover, first generation focus groups indicated that communication is important; they appreciated the efforts the teachers have expended for their children. Nevertheless, some indicated they would feel more comfortable if they were treated as co-equals instead as parents that are seen as unimportant or have a negative educational influences on their children. Mexican parents purported that they have respect for teachers and want to establish effective channels of communication. However, ten parents suggested that teachers should take time from their busy schedules and inform parents when students are doing positive things in school.

Home-School Learning

Home-school learning was seen by first generation focus groups as an important indicator to assist in their children's education. As critical as this issue is, first generation focus group parents wanted to learn with their children how to help their children succeed in their education. Although some parents were limited in their educational background, twenty-eight insisted that they need to be directly involved with their children's homework and monitor their children's progress. For example, some respondents affirmed that they knew where they could get additional assistance for their children, while some parents did not know where they could get tutorial services for their children or ask the appropriate personnel for services. Some first generation parents pointed out that they would ask a community liaison or counselor for assistance in home-school collaboration because they had established a positive relationship with the personnel involved. It is evident they all want support services in home-learning activities. Many of the parents indicated that they feel frustrated when they are not able to help their children, primarily in the core subjects.

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First generation parents need to be given information about academic skills and development, educational resources, methods for increasing communication between teacher and parent about homework assignments, and provided more opportunities for after school activities to enhance home-learning activities. Some Mexican parents expressed that they feel isolated by not helping their children at the secondary level; nevertheless, they maintained they want to be informed of their children's academic achievement. An important source of support for homework among the Latino families came from other relatives as mentioned by some parents. This finding emphasized the critical importance of considering alternative familial structures and extended family values when seeking to increase home-school learning activities. Overwhelmingly, Mexican parents gave significant positive responses to the importance of home-school collaboration and placed a very high value on educational attainment.

School Programs

One focus which includes programmatic efforts directed toward the development of a strong relationship between school, family, and the larger community is the parents' need to be informed of the different programs that are offered at school sites. First generation parents asserted that they desire information about different programs schools offer at the school level. The finding indicated that Mexican parents at Memorial Academy needed to be apprised of the various programs including Bilingual Education, English Language Development, Spanish Language Immersion, French Language Immersion, Special Education, Gifted and Talented programs to ensure that their students are placed properly. Surprisingly, some of the parents indicated that the fall orientation given at the opening of school is not sufficient; they suggested that there must be a clear purpose as to why their children are placed in homogeneous programs and be given the rationale for doing so. Some parents stated that their children are programmed into classes where they feel they are not challenged and asserted their right to choose the programs for their

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children. They want their children to maximize their full potential and be placed in heterogeneous classes. A first generation parent pointed out:

> I want to know about their subject matter. I want to know how they are doing in English so that I can help my children in their core subjects. What is Excel? How were my children placed in gifted classes. I have a daughter that took the Gifted and Talented exam. The school should inform us and show us how we can help. What are the best programs available? I would like to know.
>
> Quiero saber como van en sus materias. Materias en inglés y darles más ayuda. ¿Qué es el programa Excel? Cúal es el proceso para participar en las clases de Alumnos sobre Dotados y Talento? Tengo una hija que tomó el exámen de Alumnos sobre Dotados y Talento. La escuela debe informarnos y enseñarnos como podemos ayudar a nuestros hijos. ¿Cuales son los mejores programas escolares que se ofrecen?

The findings suggest that twenty-two respondents out of thirty felt a need to be apprised of the programs that are offered at the school site and that as first generation parents, they were sophisticated at all levels of educational attainment.

Parent Development and Support

Closely related to providing a welcoming place to obtain general information is providing classes, which first generation parents perceived as important in parent involvement. Twenty parents stressed the importance of parent inservice training classes and a chance to exchange ideas and practices to use in raising their children. They pointed out that the classes are also a means by which parents support each other in positive parenting efforts.

Parenting classes provide parental development and support adult basic education. In addition to providing information on topics such as positive self-esteem, discipline, chemical substance abuse prevention, social issue discussion groups, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, literacy classes, and parent-child interaction workshops, such classes give Latino parents an opportunity to learn about educational issues, but most importantly they teach them how to work closely with their children on personal growth and development. Twenty parents indicated that they not only learned about parenting strategies, but that the classes also provided them opportunities to

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exchange ideas and learn how to cope with difficult problems. In fact, for some parents the classes are a form of social interaction in which they feel they can network with other parents facing the same issues. A parent in the focus group pointed out:

> I believe I participate in my child's education. Knowing more is the most important thing, but knowing that I can work with my child is useful. Parent Institute, Parents Growing Together, Por la Vida, health issues, whatever parent workshops that are provided should focus more on discipline, communication and self-esteem. Speaking directly to parents at a much higher academic level is important.
>
> Creo que participo en la educación de mi hija. Saber los diferentes programas de la escuela es de gran ventaja para ellos. Conocer más del Instituto para Padres: Los Padres Creciendo Juntos, Por la Vida, temas de salud, cualquier programa o taller de capacitación que enseña disciplina, comunicación y autoestima. Hablando claro a un nivel más alto y académico es importante.

Clearly, providing parent inservices to parents was seen as an effort to educate parents. Parents want to become more knowledgeable in dealing with adolescent developmental issues, and inservice classes were regarded with a significant positive attitude which gives an integrative dimension to home-school collaboration.

Principles of Adolescent Development

Adolescence is a stage of development that parents view with fear and fascination. It is a complex phenomena that parents face in childrearing. Moreover, it is a time of rapid change and personal growth for young adolescents. In particular, it is a developmental stage where young adults achieve emotional independence from parents and other adults. For first generation parents, it is a challenging period during which their young adolescents may want to assume their independence and may have profoundly different behavior in their family and school environment. Nevertheless, this critical phase is a period when parents need to know and understand the developmental stages of their children.

Twenty-four first generation parents indicated that they want to understand this complex young adult developmental stage in order to help their children with this phase in their life. In the findings, some of the parents expressed that the middle school years are

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a difficult phase for them; some of their children do not adhere to the family rules and values. They have lost control over their children's behavior and feel a need to know how to deal with the developmental stages of adolescence. Parents expressed that during the elementary years they had not had problems; nevertheless, during the middle level years, their children behaved differently, and there is sometimes a lack of communication with their children. They indicated they do not want their children to be influenced by negative forces or peer pressure. Clearly, they expressed a deep concern for their children and want guidelines in which they can foster a healthy personal relationship.

Many of the parents related personal issues which they are presently experiencing with their children in their young adulthood dynamics. Moreover, the twenty-four parents expressed a profound interest in issues such as student performance, motivation, self-esteem, discipline, decision making, communication, family values, and conflict mediation. They recognized adolescence as a difficult period for their children; yet affirmed they needed some principles of childrearing so that they may continue to foster respect, love, and a sense of support for their children. In fact, they did not wish to use the childrearing methods that they were raised with when they were young adolescents. Some parents indicated that they were inflicted with emotional and/or physical abuse, and certain methods of corporate punishment. They do not want these patterns to occur with their children. For example, a parent cited:

> It is important to motivate your children and have high expectations. I have learned different childrearing methods. I don't do the same as what my parents did. I do not hit my children any more; I do not spank them. My attitude has changed tremendously. I regret what I have done; it was done because of ignorance. I have learned different principles of childrearing.
>
> Es importante motivar y estimular a nuestros hijos a que tengan ciertas expectativas. He aprendido diferentes modos de como tratar a mis hijos. No hago lo mismo, ya no les doy manotazos; mi manera ha cambiado bastante en la forma de aplicar los castigos. No les pego ni les doy cinterazos. Mi manera cambió. He aprendido varias técnicas en la crianza de mis hijos.

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It is evident that first generation parents value the importance of education, encourage positive attitudes toward education; have high expectations for their children, believe that communication is a key factor in home-school collaboration; and favor new methods of parenting strategies and techniques for their children.

The concerns that first generation parents have regarding parent involvement is in the area of student achievement, a safe school environment, and the negative reputation of the school as seen by some parents. In the triangulation analysis, student achievement has been a primary focus in the findings, and it clearly suggested that parents have a high regard for educational attainment and want the best for their children. Home-learning collaboration was an important factor in student performance.

Based on the responses of the focus groups, parents expressed concern with peer pressure and with gang affiliations that exist in Southeast San Diego. They fear for the safety of their children; they do not fear during school hours but after school hours when children are dismissed. They fear the violence that is prevalent in the community. However, they have learned to deal with this societal problems that impact the community at large.

Some first generation parents expressed a concern about the school's reputation, but other parents had a different attitude because they had visited the school. They found a nurturing environment prevailed in the school and that the educational programs were excellent. In brief, the findings suggested that first generation parents perceive parent involvement programs as important. Evidence supported the perspective that what worked best for parents is to be involved in their children's education attainment. Parents felt a need to be responsive to the changing needs of their children and to take an active role in their children's education and thereby, to improve the quality of educational services for their children.

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The Role of First Generation Parents in Education

There has been an increase in the literature that suggests the importance of parental participation in the home-school environment. Parents and educators have ascertained that both parties are important in the educational process of children. Therefore, the roles that parents play in the growth and development of their children is critical to their development. First generation parents revealed that parenting is a challenging and rewarding process. Their primary function as parents is to support their children in personal, social, and academic domains. Thirty of the first generation parents indicated that establishing a healthy relationship with their children plays a vital role in their children's education. Establishing a sense of belonging and support is unconditional and must be manifested in the family environment. Parents pointed out that if their children have high self-esteem and self-respect and are motivated, loved, and able to communicate effectively, they will exert a control over their environment. In addition, these conditions have a significant impact on educational performance and achievement. A majority of the attitudes and expectations are formed at home and are the product of myriad interactions between the parent and child.

Thirty of the respondents stressed that as Latino parents they are the most influential teachers their children have; they genuinely have high expectations and want the best for their children. Mexican parents indicated that their roles are essential in guidance. They purported that it is their basic obligation to have their children fulfill their dreams, foster a relationship of mutual trust, respect, and values, and educational aspirations (see Table 4.6). From the findings, it is evident that Mexican parents place a high value on traditional educational attainment. Although their roles may vary in parent participation, their focus is to have their children succeed in personal, social and academic performance. Some parents responded:

> School is important in our children's lives. It teaches you the cognitive skills needed in society; it teaches children the necessary knowledge. At home, we stress guidance and family values. Moreover, it our duty to prepare them for the future.

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Table 4.6

First generation focus group responses in the roles Latino parents assume in the education of their children.

Concept	# of First Generation
Family Support in Personal Social and Academic Domain	30
Improving Communication	30
Guidance	30
Self-Esteem	30
Student Achievement	30
Effective Parent-Child Relationship	25
Spending Quality Time with Children	25
Establishing Trust, Respect, Pride, & Independence	23
Monitoring Homework of Children	21
Active Participation	20
Family Values	20
Reflective Listening	18
Constructive Discipline	17
Volunteering	11
Parent Rights	5

Note: N=30 respondents

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> La escuela es importante en la vida de los niños. La escuela los capacita para la superación. La educación en casa es importante siempre estamos guiando a nuestros hijos en los valores de familia y preparándolos para el futuro.

Thus Latino parents have high expectations for their children; they see their roles in their children's education as essential in the growth and development of their children.

The Main Benefits of Home-School Collaboration

The main purpose and benefits of home-school collaboration are many as has been previously mentioned in the findings. All the stakeholders benefit from home-school collaboration. Henderson (1987) pointed out that taken together, what is most impressive about the research is that it all points in the same direction. So long as parents are the basic ingredient of the improvement strategy, students will do better in school. But parents must be intimately involved. In particular, first generation parents noted that all constituents must be accountable in their children's education. The school cannot do it alone; all parties need to work together. They suggested that:

> The main purpose and benefits of home-school collaboration are that our children will overcome barriers by attaining an education. Just being involved is an advantage. I learn to be a better parent and provide support. If the school provides the support, we should also work jointly so that our children will reap the benefits.
>
> El principal propósito es que nuestros hijos tengan una educación. Sólo el hecho de estar aquí es una ventaja. He aprendido a ser una madre que provee apoyo. Nosotros también debemos trabajar juntos para que nuestros hijos se beneficien del sistema y sobresalgan a un máximo nivel.

One of the benefits of home-school collaboration is parental participation. It is a powerful force that has a direct and profound impact on student achievement. Thirty first generation parents agreed that the purpose and main benefit of home-school collaboration is to contribute to their children's education. In addition, many indicated that it fosters a strong relationship between the home and school and strengthens a home-school partnership (see Table 4.6).

Interestingly, the thirty Latino parents indicated that when parents establish a strong relationship with the school, they noted that their children are proud of their

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involvement, and it improved their children's self-esteem as well as their own by their gaining more confidence through parental participation. For example, some parents indicated that:

> The benefits are many. We are faced with challenging demands. We think we know it all, but we don't. Our children learn to be independent and they develop their own attitudes and values. Sometimes we don't even acknowledge it. That is why parent training gives us some strategies in understanding the different phases of young adulthood. We need to support, love, and understand them. We need to be united so that our children can achieve.
>
> Los beneficios son muchos. Estamos en tiempos dificiles. Pensamos que lo sabemos todo, pero no es cierto. Nuestros hijos crecen para ser independientes y desarrollan su propio criterio. A veces no los reconocemos. Debemos comprender las diferentes etapas en la cual se están desarrollando. Debemos ser unidos para que nuestros hijos sean lo máximo en la vida.

The finding showed that all constituents benefit, and parents asserted that they become empowered in their children's education.

Linking Support Services

As Epstein's typology indicated in order to be responsive to parents needs, linking community organizations with social agencies is a collaborative effort since it helps the community at large. First generation parents indicated a need for the school to assist parents in making the appropriate referrals when there are stress issues which inhibit their participation in school programs. A major challenge posed by the parents is that in their culture, they have been taught not to ask for counseling or speak of their personal and social problems to strangers. However, twenty-five female parents indicated that when they have a personal problem or a psychological problem, they will seek assistance. They will reach out to the school's community liaison and/or to a counselor where they have established a rapport, trust and respect, and feel at ease in addressing their life stress issues with the appropriate personnel. Five males did not address the question, but indicated that their spouses would address the question. Because the researcher is a Latina, she understands the cultural nuances of why the five males did not respond to the question.

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In the Mexican culture, males do not seek services for personal, social or psychological issues from social agencies and/or counseling practices. First generation Mexicans do not seek treatment for psychological concerns, and when they do, they are typically mobilized for treatment by the onset of a crisis and not by preventive or growth concerns. In the event that first generation immigrants have immediate family problems or are unable to cope with the issue, it is likely that they seek the advise of an immediate family member or the patrons of their children, *padrinos* (godparents). Consequently, a large portion of the problems in personal and social issues are addressed by Latina female parents. As outlined, the Latina female parent voices concerns and copes with the life stress issues and is the indicative person who is in charge of family maintenance and for the most part has the responsibility of overseeing the education of children in the school environment.

The Role of First Generation in Parent Involvement Programs

The roles that Latino parents would like to play in parent involvement programs illustrate a variety of perspectives among the first generation parents; nevertheless, all agree that parent involvement is important in order to benefit their children's education. Clearly, Latino parents place a high value on educational attainment and expect their children to succeed academically. This characteristic is not unique in the findings since parents in the focus group interviews espoused that they want the very best for their children.

First generation parents affirmed that they want to have a clear understanding of their children's psychological and physiological development, more specifically, a clear understanding of effective parent-child practices.

Fifteen of the parents pointed out that at the middle school level, their children's attitudes change in respect to the school and family environment. As parents, they need assistance on how to understand their children better and be able to deal with young adolescence effectively.

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Since first generation parents maintained a close relationship with their children, they expressed the concern that they want to maintain effective channels of communication and continue to sustain a supportive nurturing relationship with their children.

Given the various roles in parent involvement programs, some parents reported that if they need to know the academic progress of their children, they visit the school and have direct personal contact with school personnel. They have parent/teacher conferences in order to be ensured that they are informed of their children's progress. In a similar fashion, these parents do not wait for the school to make the contact; they take the time and effort to inquire about their children's education. Other parents indicated that they speak to the community liaison in order to find out how their children are performing or when there is a behavior problem. As shown in Table 4. 7, the roles that parents maintain are roles that have been noted in the findings. Moreover, the findings clearly suggested, that first generation parents participate in home-school collaboration in order to support their children in their educational attainment. Their roles differ in parental participation; however they want the best educational services for their children. As some parents stated:

> I want to be more actively involved in my child's education, and I do so, by participating in parent workshops that provide me with educational opportunities to enhance communication in my children's school. I have learned many things and one thing is that all parties work together for our children.
>
> Ser más activo en la educación de mis hijos, y lo soy al participar en los talleres de capacitación de padres de familia. He aprendido como comunicarme mejor con mis hijos y principalmente que tenemos que trabajar juntos para la educación de ellos.

Summary of First Generation Focus Group Research Findings

Qualitative research methods were used in this study to examine factors that

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Table 4.7

First generation focus group responses to the roles parents would like to assume in their children's education and the benefits of home-school collaboration.

Concepts	**# of First Generation**
Communication	30
Guidance	30
Parent-Child Relationship	30
Parent-Child Support	30
Student Achievement	30
Self-Esteem	30
Family Values	28
Supportive in Personal, Social, Academic Domain	28
Establishing Mutual Trust, Respect, and Values	23
Monitoring Home-School Learning	22
Active Parent Participation	20
Spending Quality Time with Children	20
Constructive Discipline	17
Volunteering	11
Parent Rights	5
Main Purpose and Benefits	
An Understanding of Children	30
A Better Future for Children	30
Communication	30
Student Achievement	30
Effective Parent Practices	28
Attitudinal Perception Change toward Parent Programs	28
Parent Teacher Relationship	27
Effective Parenting Training Workshops	25

Note: N=30 respondents

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Table 4.8

First generation focus group responses to the roles that Latino parents would like to play in parent involvement programs.

Concept	# of First Generation
Academic Progress	30
An Understanding of Children	30
Being Close to their Children	30
High Educational Expectations	30
Parent Communication	30
Home-School Collaboration	28
Strategies to Motivate Children in Home-Learning	28
Positive Perceptions and Attitudes of Home-School Partnership	28
Effective Parent/Teacher Communication	25
Linking the Community to Social Services	20
Parent Programs	20
Educational System	18
Assisting in the Middle School Setting	15
Parents Reaching to the Community	15
Single Family Dynamics	12
Volunteerism	11

Note: N=30 respondents

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promote Hispanic parent involvement at the middle school level. The findings of the first generation focus groups clearly suggests that Mexican parents value education and have high expectations for their children.

From the themes that emerged in this naturalistic inquiry, the findings showed that first generation parents are involved in a variety of ways in their children's education and participate in some fashion in parental involvement. In particular, their role is to oversee their children's education, monitor their homework, have ongoing channels of communication with school personnel, and maintain high expectations for their children. Moreover, they indicated they are satisfied with the educational services their children are receiving at the middle school level; however they need to be apprised of the articulation process.

The findings indicated that first generation parents genuinely assume an important role in their children's education. They instill family values and expect these values to be followed in the school environment. Thirty Latino parents purported that understanding their children is critical in student achievement. As parents, they feel they must motivate their children to excel in personal, social, and academic life experiences. Moreover, it is an ongoing process, and they indicated they must continue to be involved in their children's growth and development.

In practice, first generation parents indicated they participated in home-school collaboration in order to support their children's learning outcomes. First generation parents differed in perceptions and attitudes as to how parent involvement programs have assisted them. They indicated that parent training workshops have provided direction in dealing with life stress issues and coping with their children's behavior and attitude. In fact, some parents pointed out that their parenting skills have changed drastically because they have acquired new skills and have a better understanding of the psychological and physiological changes their children experience.

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Interestingly, first generation focus groups did not respond to parent advocacy or shared decision making. Most of their responses centered around the value of education and how they can collaborate with the school to improve their children's academic performance. As mentioned, from the finding, first generation parents want to collaborate with the school and have effective channels of communication. They have a willingness to work closely with school personnel to facilitate parent participation in all aspects of their children's education.

The educational challenges that continue to confront Latino parents have placed societal demands on the role of parents. As parents, they need to acquire an understanding and ability to be responsive to their children's needs. Furthermore, it is essential that they participate in their children's education and become more knowledgeable about their adolescents' schools. As noted from the findings, it is apparent that in order to be influential parents, establishing and creating positive learning attitudes is a way so that they may contribute to their children's education. Latino parents in general, want the best for their children and provide academic support and opportunities for educational attainment.

Montemayor (1996) pointed out that the Intercultural Development Research Association's (IDRA) research and experiences with families especially with those who are economically disadvantaged, minority, or speak a language other than English, continually emphasizes the need for approaching culturally diverse families with respect and expectations. It is the hallmark of effective outreach to families. According to Montemayor, this has led to focus on improving the quality of parental leadership programs. A key element of support is that parents, regardless of their educational attainment, can be empowered and make a difference in their children's education. Mexican parents, regardless of their educational background, may be leaders for educational change.

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The general conclusion emanating from the findings for first generation parents is that Mexican parents encourage positive attitudes toward education based on their life experiences. They genuinely value their children and are responsive to their needs. It is evident from their responses that these parents work closely with the school to forge a strong home-school collaboration. Given such findings, it appears that schools must continue to reach parents and provide culturally sensitive training programs in order to improve and increase home-school collaboration. Some of the stereotypes held by constituents that parents that are socially disadvantaged are "apathetic or uncaring" and unresponsive to their children's needs is unfounded. Finally, specific attention should be directed to the fact that Mexican parents value their children and place high expectations on education regardless of their own life experiences. The respondents had high regard for their Mexican heritage, culture, customs, and traditions. In brief, they have a strong allegiance to their Latino culture and have not lost their sense of identity.

Although many Mexican parents have resided in the United States for different periods of time, they all have a collective vision; it is to educate their children to their full potential. Moreover, while some of the first generation parents were more sophisticated than others in knowing the "nuts and bolts" of the system, they all wanted to empower their children and be responsive to the needs of their children. Casas and Furlong (1994) pointed out that systematic efforts to increase and maintain a high level of parent participation never really ends; it is an ongoing process that continually seeks to make the school more responsive to the needs of the community.

Second Generation Focus Groups and Methodology Results

The third and final phase of the triangulation analysis consisted of second generation Mexican American parents who voiced their recommendations on their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences in parent involvement programs. The focus groups emerged from a volunteer sample of twenty-two second generation Mexican American parents who have children attending Memorial Academy in San Diego,

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California. The Focus Group interviews consisted of parents who were willing to participate in the process and were interested in the study. As stated by Patton (1990), he pointed out that a focus group interview is a research technique that seeks to structure a group communication process. The researcher described this research method as "an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic." The second generation parents were selected because the researcher wanted to determine if there was a generational difference in perceptions and attitudes in respect to Latino parent involvement programs. It was found that there is cultural differences to a certain degree.

The second generation parents were given a consent form to sign indicating their consent to participate in the focus group interview process. All signed, and they volunteered their time to participate in the study. Extreme efforts were made to interview more second generation parents; however, some Mexican American parents were not able to participate because their schedule did not permit it, and others, were not interested in participating in the study. Latino parents were surveyed, and focus groups were held to determine answers to the investigative research questions written in the first section of Chapter Four.

As with the third phase of first generation focus group, the same process was applied for the triangulation analysis. Again, each focus group was examined, and each unit of meaning relating to a Latino parent involvement model was recorded on an index card. For cross referencing purposes, the assigned number of the interviews was recorded on the back of the card. As cards accumulated, each card was examined and compared for similarities and differences in what constituted an Hispanic involvement model. Themes that emerged from the clustering were cited: communication, home-school learning, decision making, cultural diversity, collaboration, empowerment, parent advocacy, life stress issues, and racism.

Perceptions and Attitudes toward Parent Involvement

The involvement of parents played an important part in children's education and

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varied among culturally diverse parents. Among second generation parents, there was a range of parental involvement. There was much variety in how second generation Mexican American parents perceived home-school connections. A strong emphasis emerged on the issue of parent advocacy with respect to policy making and the implications it has on parental involvement and how it impacts student achievement. In a similar fashion, second generation parents addressed some of the same issues as first generation parents with regard to student achievement and having high expectations for their children's educational attainment.

Second generation parents emphasized the importance of communication in home-school collaboration. They indicated that school personnel need to be flexible in communicating with parents. In fact, all twenty-two parents indicated that two-way communication is critical in home-school partnership. Mexican American parents stated that school personnel need to effectively communicate to all parents and ensure that communication gets through. More systemic efforts for achieving effective communication is vital in home-school collaboration. For example, a parent stated:

> I believe communication is important. I fear there is sometimes, a lapse of time when teachers need to call and initiate the effort of communicating; it is a two-way street. The teacher must take the first step in communicating more at a general level.

Second generation parents indicated that efforts in communication must not only focus on academic achievement but on issues such as program quality, access, support services, linguistic differences, curriculum alignment and performance-based assessment. Mexican American parents asserted that they need to be involved in school programs from a variety of perspectives. They articulated that they must be engaged in the discussions which require them to participate in the decision making process of the instructional programs and given the opportunity to engage in the shared decision making of any instructional programs.

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Mexican American parents in the focus group stressed that schools need parents to become active partners in education, and that they are pivotal in creating family-school collaboration. Montemayor (1996) pointed out that effective parents who are leaders exhibit a fine balance of assertiveness and compassion, especially with their peers. The assertiveness is demonstrated both in dealing with the school and in recruiting other parents. The compassion is necessary for there to be real dialogue with teachers and administrators and for other parents to respond to the call for participation. Seemingly uninvolved parents need to attend meetings where they will be asked to share their aspirations for their children's schools. The findings indicate that Mexican American parents are assertive in terms of what their needs are and revealed a spectrum of concerns as already listed from the curriculum content being taught to the variety of educational experiences available.

Another perception that Mexican American parents espoused in the focus group interviews is home-school learning. Nineteen parents believed that home-school learning must reflect the direct delivery instruction of effective teaching practices, and said they closely monitored their children's homework. The majority of second generation parents assisted their children in their academic subjects and provided supplemental instructional materials their children might need in their studies. They indicated that their children also participated in extracurricular activities in order for them to be well-rounded individuals. For example, some Mexican American parents cited that their children who are enrolled in Gifted and Talented classes are assisted not only academically but they also ensure that they are provided with a supportive environment where their children will excel academically. They stressed the importance of home-learning activities. Out of the twenty-two second generation parents, there were three parents who were elusive in their responses. These parents indicated they do not help their children, did not have a clue about their children's progress, and seemed unresponsive to any efforts the school

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was providing for their children. It may be that these second generation parents are coping with life stress issues and are not able to deal with other issues.

Surprisingly, another perception raised by parents was the concern voiced by some Mexican American parents in terms of parent involvement was that Mexican American parents feel that they are Americans and are predominantly English speaking. They do not feel it is appropriate to attend meetings where the predominant language spoken at the meetings is Spanish. However, at Memorial Academy, parent meetings are held in English and Spanish. Although some of the Mexican American parents are of Mexican descent, they pointed out that they do not feel comfortable attending Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings held in Spanish due to the language barrier. Some indicated that school personnel assume they are Spanish speaking parents and, therefore, do not speak English. Some Mexican Americans were emphatic that there needs to be more awareness of cultural appreciation and culture sensitivity. Some felt they are stereotyped as Spanish speaking or categorized as a collective mass due to their Spanish surname. Clearly, they felt the school is reaching out to parents with creative strategies; however, they indicated this issue must be addressed in order to involve second generation parents in parent involvement (see Table 4.9). These respondents are assimilated-acculturated into the American mainstream believing this will motivate them to succeed in the educational system. However, not all Mexican American parents express the same feelings; others have strong ties to the Mexican/Latino identity, culture, customs, and traditions.

Another issue that was a concern for some Mexican American parents is the issue of racial tension or prejudice. Twelve respondents indicated that there was subtle prejudice among the staff toward their children. For example, a parent who is an elementary teacher indicated that her daughter's teacher wondered why her mother never attended parent/teacher conferences. When the student said that her mother worked and would not be able to attend, the teacher asked, "For what hotel does your mother work; is

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she a house maid?" The student replied, "No my mother is an elementary teacher and that is why she is always calling you. If there is a major problem, she will be here." The teacher apologized and said, "I didn't mean to imply that she was a house maid." The respondent indicated that often, suburban middle-class Americans believe that all *Mexicanos* are blue collars and do not seek white-collar positions. In fact, the social structure, according to the Latino parents, rewards other cultures, but entrance into a white-collar domain by a Mexican American may be viewed as trespassing. She continued to indicate that her daughter's teacher changed her attitude towards her child and did not make the same mistake of assuming that all students come from blue-collar background. The respondent concluded by stating that there is a definite social class difference in some areas of the country, and Mexicans are not always accepted into the mainstream culture. Other parents also recounted their experiences with subtle prejudice or racial tensions in terms of parent involvement and addressed this societal issue. They saw this issue as having existed for many generations and has plagued many by its effects. However, they concluded by stating that they know the system and know the uniform procedures to change some of the coalitions or the mindsets of certain individuals.

Education, in general, was a major concern for parents. Parents wanted the best education for their children. Moreover, they wanted the best qualified teachers to deliver instruction to their children. Mexican American parents indicated by their responses that teacher attitude was an important issue because it affected their children's education. The findings, indicated a surge of interest in teacher accountability. Although, the results varied in high performance, Mexican American pointed out that effective teaching practices were an important issue that needed to be pointed out to school personnel. They indicated that too many teachers do not call home to inform parents of how their children are doing when their children are doing well in school. They felt that teachers had different expectations of male and female students and used different language with their male and female students. Mexican American parents purported that a number of teachers called when there

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Table 4.9

Second generation focus group responses to perceptions and concerns of parent involvement.

Concept	# of Second Generation
Communication	22
Creating a Positive Home-School Environment	19
Decision Making	19
Home-Learning Activities	19
Parent Control of One's Environment	19
School Policy Issues	19
Stages of Child Development	19
Empowerment	18
Modalities for Cultural and Linguistic Strategies	18
Parent Advocacy	18
Teacher Communication	17
High School Diploma Requirements/College Requirements	17
Curriculum	16
Dealing with High-Life Stress Issues	15
Racial Tension/Prejudice	15
Family Values	14
Uniform Complaint Procedure	13
Culture Appreciation/Sensitivity	12
Flexibility in Scheduling Parent/Teacher Conferences	12
Teacher Perception	12
Teacher Attitude	12
Acculturation/Assimilation	11
Bilingualism	11
Behavior Development/Discipline	10
Latino Role Models	10
Apathy	8

Note N=22 respondents

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appeared to be a problem. Some parents stated that they like to be notified when there was not a problem and their children were doing well in academic performance. They noted that when they received calls, some teachers were curt and did not have interpersonal skills and perhaps had a gender bias with their students or with some parents. The importance of teacher perception and attitude was evident in their responses. According to them, they respond best to teachers who display a genuine interest when interacting with parents and also in communication.

Nineteen parents maintained that they wanted high standards delivered in critical pedagogical praxis. They wanted teachers to be accountable for providing a quality education. Mexican American parents reported that they wanted all efforts to be made to maintain high standards for effective teaching practices. Clearly, most parents indicated that it is their desire to take control of their children's education and that the school existed here to serve them. For example, a second generation parent stated:

> Based on my own experience, we didn't have parent involvement. Now we do. It is very important to become involved in our own destiny and take control. The school is here to serve us.

Therefore, teacher perception/attitude was important in terms of school accountability and how teachers were perceived by parents. Teachers can bridge the gap in effective parent/teacher communication by soliciting parents' views about real and significant issues such as teacher perception as they are seen by Mexican American parents.

Shared Decision Making Process

A critical difference between first generation parents and second generation parents was that second generation parents addressed areas of concern and examined in greater detail some of the forces that adversely affected parental involvement in education. They served as mirrors and judged what they saw. They did not ignore the structural realities that affected program design and operation. They were vocal parents and voiced their opinions and identified areas that needed to be addressed. Mexican

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American parents are not a silent minority. Moreover, Mexican American parents addressed issues that need to be addressed in school reform. A major concern that was espoused with second generation parents was the issue of shared decision making and how it impacted parents when school personnel made decisions in systemic restructuring efforts. Sixteen second generation parents indicated that parents were not given the freedom or the opportunity to make sound shared decisions (see Table 4.10). They observed that there was not a deep sense of shared decision making; it was superficial. They indicated that shared decision making must be at a deeper level and enable parents to actively engage in the decision making process. In particular, Mexican and Mexican Americans need to be empowered in bringing about systemic change and creating policy tensions in order to have an effect in policy making. Some second generation parents indicated:

> The school district does not accept the seriousness of what parents believe. Parents are not given the freedom or the opportunity to understand at a much deeper level of shared decision making. Parents must be involved at a deeper level and focus on specifics, reasons, and avenues to have true shared decision making. The school must value our input and negotiations in decision making. The school assumes we are in the most basic level of understanding. We are not; we need a coalition and we must make a difference in the process. It should not be top down. It should be a collective process.

As noted from the parents' responses, they were participants who are highly sophisticated. It appeared that they had extensive backgrounds in shared decision making. From their responses, most of the parents have assumed a leadership role in school governance, School Site Councils, Parent Involvement Task Forces, and other community organizations with which they are affiliated. Memorial's second generation parents were assertive and knew how the organizational structure worked. In brief, they had served in leadership positions and were advocates in creating change. They engaged other parents to become change agents in parent advocacy issues and advocated systemic change in school reform. Parents did not want their decisions be

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ignored or have their decisions be put to the side. For example, a second generation parent stated that:

> Decisions are ignored or pushed to the side. I was a Charter member of the board. The principal does what he wants and that is what makes me uncomfortable. It has happened two or three times. My main concern is to involve parents and to rely on the parents' decisions and on their input.

Parents have valuable insights in what constitutes decision making and how decision making must be executed in order to create and to empower parents in policy issues in education. It is an issue that needs to be addressed by the school administration and district personnel to see if other parents purport the same concerns on equal access in decision making in order to make changes in school policies. The district may need to explore an assessment instrument that would address school governance. The findings showed that there needs to be a concerted effort to look at other measures of supporting parent leaders in shared decision making so that systemic change in school reform may be established at all levels of decision making.

The Roles of Mexican Americans in Education

While there is commitment to create systemic change in school reform, there is also the need to meet the demands of students who will be faced with more rigorous academic requirements in the 21st century. Their personal, social, and academic achievement will impact their livelihood. Therefore, the roles that Mexican Americans play in their children's education is critical to their performance. First generation and second generation parents have the same expectations regarding education. Nineteen Mexican American parents indicated that in order for them to help their children to succeed academically and to be able to understand a child holistically, they must ensure and monitor all aspects of the child's development. It is a process in which they must make sure that their children are provided with Maslow's hierarchical needs. Their roles in their children's education are vital to their basic needs. Mexican American parents mentioned that raising a child is sometimes

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Table 4.10

Second generation focus group responses to the roles parents would like to assume in their children's education and benefits of home-school collaboration.

Concepts	**# of Second Generations**
Communication	22
Parent-Child Relationship	20
Parent-Child Support	20
Student Achievement	20
Self-Esteem	20
Collaboration	19
Contacting Homework Hotline	19
Educational Attainment	19
Establishing Mutual Trust, Respect, and Values	19
Monitoring School Work	19
Tutoring Programs	19
Teacher Relationship	16
Linking School Family and Community Resources	14
Counselor Team Effort	10
Volunteerism	10
Main Purpose and Benefits	
Communication	22
Change Agents/Action Researchers	19
Decision Making	19
Parent Advocacy	19
Student Achievement	19
Student Achievement in a Child-Centered Environment	19
A Collaborative Partnership	18
Culture Perspective to Parent Involvement Programs	17

Note: N=22 respondents

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overwhelming, but it is their responsibility to ensure that they manifest support and provide the emotional and social necessities. They stated that they have a very specific structure time allotted for doing homework. If there are distractions or if their children do not perform, there are certain restrictions until they perform as they should. Second generation parents monitor their children's homework, monitor their academic progress, contact the school, have parent/teacher conferences, calendar important school activities, and call the homework hotline. They have instilled in their children that they will go to college. It appeared that the roles that Mexican American parents play in their children's education are not any different from national norms of middle class Caucasian parents. The findings indicated that some parents who are highly involved in their children's education while other parents seem to be indifferent about their children's education.

From a researcher's perspective, it was found that Latino parents have high aspirations; they want their children to be successful citizens in society. They are committed to the highest goals their children are able to attain in their adult professional development (see Table 4.10). In general, Mexican and Mexican American parents pointed out that they, too, want the same benefits as any other constituents of society may have. Their aspirations, expectations, goals, and dreams may be slightly different based on their culture and beliefs; however, they voiced that they want the same benefits as other members of society expect for their children. Most of the second generation parents are role models to their children and as a parent pointed out, "Education is the key to knowledge. You have to be responsible for your own actions and learn to be better than I was."

The Roles and Benefits of Home-School Collaboration

According to second generation parents, most Mexican American parents assert that parent involvement is important in home-school collaboration. They want a sense of community with school personnel who are responsive to their needs. Sixteen parents

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indicated that they bring a different perspective. They ascertained that it is a major benefit to understand the child holistically and as parents, they needed to support each other and to support the school; they cannot do it alone. Nineteen second generation parents indicated that self-esteem and understanding the middle level philosophy of what their children face in their young development is crucial to their adult development. They serve as role models. Their issues need to be addressed, and they pointed out that they must be heard. A conscientious effort to raise high standards for all constituents is beneficial to all. According to twenty-two respondents, if more Mexican American parents would get involved, there would be a tremendous change in societal attitudes, leading to a more positive trend in Mexican American issues. Their desire is fair and equal access in school reform and fair treatment to their children without any prejudice or racism involved. In brief, they want to be valued as Mexican American parents, and have their voices be heard.

> The biggest benefit is that we need to get more involved. We need to have more role models. We need to have our voices heard. It is a cultural barrier. I am second generation, and it is just a way of showing my son that he can participate in anything. Second generations need to identify more as Mexicans and know about their cultural heritage. They cannot be too American; they have left their roots. They leave their Mexican descent out. You see high officials in all levels of government in Texas. Why not in California? I see more apathy in second generation parents. Why? We need to educate parents and make use of the rich resources of our people. After all, we are bilingual and bicultural, and we can all benefit.

Thus, from the findings, it was evident that Mexican American parents find home-school collaboration vital in supporting the home and school so that their children receive a quality education while some of the respondents advocated maintaining their cultural identity. Others are acculturated and assimilated into an "Anglicized" mainstream culture identity. Nevertheless, the major benefit in home-school collaboration is understanding their children and creating a school culture of a thinking meaning-centered environment where there will be socio-cultural changes in the social context of school reform. In particular, for some second generation parents it may be that:

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> The major benefits of parent involvement is that it brings a different perspective. As different cultures get together, the diversity expands. We keep teaching each other and informing society of who we are. We all benefit students, parents, and teachers.

The Role of Second Generation in Parent Involvement Programs

An over-arching need revealed by Mexican American parents in the focus group interviews was the creation of more parent programs and mental health services for families who exhibit life stress issues. School personnel need to be able to link culturally diverse parents who purport to exhibit stress issues and/or indicators such as poverty, cultural issues, educational deprivation, ethnic-identity conflicts, prejudice, and psycho-social disorders in their lives to community agencies and make concerted efforts to take the appropriate measures to ensure that parents receive assistance. Although school personnel may provide outreach services to Mexican Americans who want to be helped concerning their life stress issues, the school cannot do it all. It is evident that parents must seek to change their respective psycho-social behaviors. Some second generation parents may blame their mental illness on the mainstream society; however, these respondents may need to assume responsibility for their actions and change their current behaviors in their social environment. If Latino parents take control of their lives, they may empower and be able to help their children in their young adult development.

Chemical substance abuse and gang affiliation were examined as issues which surfaced in discussion of how to address and meet the needs of Latino parents who were plagued by their environment and the internal factors that affect Hispanics' well-being. The problems of the family cannot be viewed only for culturally diverse parents; unfortunately it affects all parents. How can parents that face high-stress issues, dysfunctional parents, be able to work cooperatively with the school? Nineteen respondents felt school personnel could link community resources to assist these families and, as mentioned, provide some support system for the individual in difficult times. The school could connect parents to other parents that have had the same experiences as these respondents are having which affect their mental heath.

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In the findings, the nineteen respondents indicated that instead of making over-generalizations of these families as "apathetic, uncaring, unresponsive, worthless" and inactive participants in their children education, school personnel need to be aware and able to understand how some Mexican American parents are affecting their children's psychological and physiological development, through making home visits, and assisting them by providing some support system, transporting families to the nearest community agency when appropriate, and working closely with these families. In particular, those parents who have children showing signs of major behavioral problems due to their home environment need assistance in social and emotional development.

Interestingly, the three second generations parents who appeared to be unresponsive indicated that the school is not able to assist Latino parents in coping with life issues. According to these respondents, their children are not "at risk" and appear to be doing well academically. One stated that:

> I don't know what the school can do. My child says he's doing well. I have never attended any programs; I thought my child was in trouble; that is why I came. I give him support. I don't have personal problems.

The findings suggested that there was a range of parental involvement and understanding of what parent programs can do for families who are in dire need of social or mental health service. From the focus group responses, it was evident that some Mexican American parents expressed concern and the need for mental health services to be provided to those parents who do not utilize community resources and suggested alternative programs to seek appropriate help for families who have high stress issues in their lives. The complexity of societal problems may have adverse effects on the children that come from families that do not have a stable environment, resulting in major implications for school, family, and community members.

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Second Generation in Parent Involvement Programs

The roles that Latino parents play in parent involvement are multi-dimensional as illustrated by their vital interest in parent involvement programs and how they can become actively engaged in a democratic participatory process. Second generation parents pointed out that education is the key to knowledge; it is a "means to the end." The findings showed that Mexican American parents place a high value on educational attainment. The respondents reported that challenge in a rigorous academic program is critical to the success of their children. In fact, they reported that in order to develop a deeper sense of cultural awareness and an understanding of social and cultural change, they have determined the educational attainment their children will achieve (see Table 4.11). Nineteen Mexican American parents reported that their children will pursue a college education in order to be empowered and avail themselves of opportunities to participate in a democratic society. Their children will acquire the skills for learning as empowering pedagogy. In addition, some Mexican American parents indicated being proud of being bilingual and transferring this pride to their children. They noted that they will assist their children to become bilingual and acquire a culture awareness perspective. In particular, they will provide support and a nurturing environment for their children and instill pride in their cultural identity, which they stated was indicative of a sense of empowerment and a sense of who they are. According to Mexican American parents, it is a reflection of effective parenting practices and is reflective of their childrearing practices. A parent reported:

> His ideas are different; he sees himself as an Hispano. My children are different; I speak to my children. I see things differently. I like to explain to my son that we were really poor. I am proud of who I am. I do not like for my children to make derogatory remarks of other cultures. There is a growing pride. There must be an acceptance of being different, accepting the different cultures and ethnicities, being able to be exposed to all these different cultures and being integrated, culturally sensitive, motivated. You have to go to college. The only thing you will inherit from me is education. You must go to school.

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Others, as noted, indicated that they are Americans and do not identify with Mexicans or Mexican Americans; they are assimilated in the mainstream society. They do not consider themselves bilingual/bicultural; they are European-Americans. Nevertheless, they feel that have raised their consciousness and their tolerance level for cultural differences. The findings showed however, that regardless of culture, values, beliefs or tradition among second generation parents, their foremost issue of concern was to continually strive for academic excellence. They have a sense of awareness and an understanding of their children in their educational attainment. A Mexican American parent summarized:

> To be a parent in an Hispanic environment, it enhances my education by helping. I gain and bring those skills home that I learn in school. I see behavior patterns. I try to focus and have my child have peers that are acceptable. I try to have a direction so that he can be somebody and achieve things that minority children do not achieve. My involvement shows him that I am concerned. I see a lot of things that are positive. Being part of his education and seeing his development are fulfilling. Empowering my son is, in essence, a key to his development.

The findings suggested that second generation parents, in particular the nineteen Mexican American parents, are influential teachers, supportive, and engaged in active participation in home-school partnership. They have high standards for their children. Mexican American parents have raised their own level of awareness by maintaining and encouraging their children to have their own social and cultural identity in a social and cultural context.

As noted, three participants did not provide information regarding their children's achievement nor of their expectation that their children complete a secondary or alternative education. Given their social environment, it appeared the three respondents have not reflected on issues of educational attainment.

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Table 4.11

Second generation focus group responses in the roles Latino parents assume or would like to play in their children's education and in parent involvement programs.

Concept	# of Second Generation
Building a Strong Bond between Parent-Child	22
Children's Needs in Maslow's Hierarchical Structure of Needs	22
Communication	22
Education	22
Providing Support Services and Resources	22
Self-Esteem	22
Social Advancement	22
Providing A Sense of Unity in the Home Environment	21
Knowing the Educational System	19
Being Involved with School Personnel	19
Democratic Participatory Process in Decision Making	19
High Expectations in Homework	19
Mutual Trust, Respect, Sense of Belonging, and Encouragement	19
Parent Initiative	19
Parent/Teacher Conferences	19
Social Peer Pressure	19
Ethnic Identity	18
School Values	18
Motivational Strategies for Children at the Middle School Level	16
Becoming Involved in the Community	15
Uniform Complaint Procedure	13
Multiple Intelligence and Cognitive Skills in Children's Learning	12
Volunteerism	11
Latino Parent Outreach	10
Drug Awareness and Domestic Violence Programs	5
Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Recruitment	2

Note: N=22 respondents

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The findings showed that the nature of involvement among Mexican American parents varied. However, their understanding of school reform is clearly evident. Regardless of the social construct, second generation parents exercise power; they address issues in terms of systemic changes and restructuring practices in school improvement. In fact, it was evident that they are not a silent minority. Sleeter (1991) noted that the ultimate goal of empowerment is the institutionalization of innovations, resulting in social changes for the better. Thus, it is important to recognize that empowerment is all about attitude and persuasion. For Mexican American parents, it is about empowering their children and in improving and increasing their voices.
The findings suggested that second generation parents who participated in the focus group were active parents who are engaged in parent involvement programs. They are parents who are empowered parents to the extent that if it meshes with and augments their knowledge in decisions in which there is dissonance, they will exercise their power for social changes. School policies affect children's education and, therefore, those generated discourse among all constituents.

Given the fact that racial tensions are still prevalent in the United States, especially with language minority parents, equity and fairness were a concern for all constituents. Mexican American parents noted that education is the key to success; it is knowledge. They wanted a quality education to be provided to all students in order for students to become active learners regarding real-world problems and to become critical thinkers. It is vital for students, in general, to become thinking, productive, empowered citizens in a diverse pluralistic society. From the findings, Mexican American parents suggested that parents must be empowered in order to create social change in school reform. Sotomayor (1991), pointed out that empowerment has two main components: capacity and equity. Capacity is the ability of the community to use power to solve problems and to promote equity in the distribution of available resources. In effect,

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empowerment is the process by which individuals and communities gain mastery over their lives and meet their perception of need.

Summary of Second Generation Research Findings

Qualitative research methods were used in the final triangulation analysis to examine factors that promoted Hispanic parent involvement. Based on the findings, a contextual framework was established that specified important concepts to be used in parent involvement programs.

In reflecting on the meaning of the responses which were expressed by the twenty-two second generation Mexican American parents in the third phase of the triangulation analysis, it was evident the respondents had high expectations for their children in educational attainment. In fact, there was a clear expectation that their children would pursue a higher education in their young adult development.

The findings also suggested that Mexican American parents are assertive and will take the appropriate measures if their concerns are not addressed. In addition, most second generation parents indicated that they knew how the educational institution operated and would take the appropriate measures in order to have their concerns met. As mentioned, parents stated that they would take measures in terms of school policy if their needs as parents were ignored or not addressed appropriately. In particular, Mexican American parents suggested that there needs to be a process for shared decision making. The current restructuring form is not functioning as it should in order to meet the needs of the constituents. Eighty-five percent of the parents who participated in the focus group indicated that a deeper understanding of the decision making process should be implemented in the design tasks of school programs. They felt that school personnel needed to continually foster effective parent input and look at alternatives for effective socio-political concerns in school reform. Sotomayor (1991) noted that with any Mexican American parents power was held by the individual who initiated change, with or without the consent of the individual who responded to the change. Therefore, as any

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culturally diverse group, Latino parents have a vital interest in school policies which have major implications for school improvement.

In the findings most Mexican American parents stressed the importance of parents being concerned about school programs and parent involvement programs. It appeared they were not as concerned about parenting skills as were first generation parents; however, they are concerned with school effectiveness. They were active parents who communicated to school personnel and empowered parents to participate in a democratic process. For example, one parent indicated that in order to make a difference, sometimes one needed to create attention in order for school personnel and politicians to hear the voices of the community. For example, she mentioned that she had formed a coalition of constituents to protest Proposition 187. She had felt that it was politically wrong; all children must be provided with an education regardless of political implications. She concluded by affirming that in order to make a difference, one must have active leaders to create social change. A person must have leadership skills and be able to take a risk. In brief, the parents felt that parents must lead by example if change is to occur in school reform.

Clearly from the findings, there was a range of parental participation with Mexican American parents. It was also found that second generation parents reaffirmed, that a Caught in the Middle philosophy should be sustained in middle school settings. They wanted a supportive caring school environment for children to be provided with a strong home-school partnership. They felt this type of philosophy needed to exist so that students could receive a quality education and have a positive sense of well-being in order to become thinking, productive empowered citizens in a pluralistic society.

Interestingly, Mexican American parents reported in the findings that they placed a high value on open communication with school personnel. It was pointed out by eighty-five percent of the parents that some of the teachers at Memorial Academy informed parents of students' behavior problems. However, some second generations

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parents noted they would appreciate being informed of positive learning outcomes of their children's performances instead of being apprised only of the inappropriate behavior. Moreover, the respondents made it extremely clear that they take the appropriate measures of dealing with their children's behavior. They take privileges away or have appropriate "time-outs." However, there was not the "corporal punishment" that was sometimes performed by first generation parents.

Communication was vital to second generation parents. They pointed out that in order to have high standards and to effectively teach children, there must be a high value placed on home-school collaboration. Again, they indicated they needed to be informed of their children's academic achievement. Second generation parents indicated, "Communication is two-way; they cannot do it alone; we need to work together in the process."

Clearly, the findings showed that second generation parents are powerful in terms of providing support for their children and play an extremely vital role in their home, school, and community. Mexican American parents have a sense of maintenance of the social system, a sense of belonging and teach their children to have high standards and expectations in terms of values, beliefs, traditions, mores, ethnic-identify, and educational attainment. Some parents have maintained their bilingual and bicultural heritage, while others have been assimilated-acculturated into mainstream society suburban corporate America. The twenty-two constituents were influential parents who had made significant gains in educational reform. They are not the submissive parents who maintain a passive role in educational issues. Second generation parents have a high profile in school policy. In fact, they are engaged in school programs, parent involvement, and community organizations. They advocate the need for collective power and control in their children's adolescent development. They are engaged in their children's education. Most second generations parents have definite opinions regarding in school reform. Clearly, the findings showed they are not a silent minority; they are committed to high standards in

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education. Mexican American parents firmly articulated the expectations and norms of school programs and had a sense of a realistic assessment of school accountability. Some of the second generation parents maintained that there are expectations that prevail in all schools; however, the respondents indicated that it takes a "whole village to educate a child" and to meet the needs of all children in an increasingly diverse school population.

Although there have been many configurations of parent involvement models that exist for improving and increasing home-school collaborations as was analyzed in the empirical research, a model for second generation parents incorporated Epstein's typology. Moreover, certain themes such as parenting, home-learning activities, communication, a deeper sense of decision making, and parents as change agents/action researchers were reported to be major indicators that contributed to a richly collaborative model. Clearly, their perceptions and attitudes about school practices provide educators with avenues to ensure equal access and fairness in school reform.

The general conclusion from the findings in Chapter Four is that a commonly held perception of culturally diverse parents is that Latino parents are unresponsive. Clearly, the findings suggested that both first and second generation parents have a high value for their children's education in American society while maintaining their distinct history, culture, and language, making it difficult to make generalizations about Mexican and Mexican American parents. The urgent need to refute myths which distort and devalue the image of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in our society was illustrated in this study, especially by the parents' genuine concern for the well-being of their children (see Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3). Conclusive evidence supported the concept that the expert panel members used Epstein's components in illustrating and determining important factors in a parent involvement model. First generation parents placed heavy interest on home maintenance, high expectations in educational attainment, and social advancement. Second generation parents strongly emphasized parent advocacy, ethnic-identity, social capital on educational attainment, and parents as change agents that become action researchers.

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The bar graphs in figure 4.2 and 4.3, illustrated the commonalties that exist for all respondents. Communication, home-learning activities, decision making, and collaboration were the key concepts seen as vital in a framework construct. There was a discrepancy for parents as change agents since first generation parents felt it was a significant concept in the design of a Hispanic parent involvement model.

In the main, culturally diverse parents are powerful influential teachers in their children's education regardless of their educational attainment. The study showed that they are supportive of their children's education and play vital roles in their adolescent development.

Given that parent involvement programs can be critical to improving student achievement, it was determined from the study that a strong positive connection between the home and school must be ongoing and that the school must continually seek creative parent outreach for improving and increasing parent participation. It can be concluded that Mexicans and Mexican Americans may be empowered to create socio-political tensions in order to improve school reform. A look at the philosophies that undergird parent involvement programs revealed that an interactive model in which students, parents, and school personnel collaborated and worked closely benefited all constituents. A model such as Epstein's model was identified as having particular promise when there is a strong forge in home-school collaboration used to enhance student achievement. Epstein's typology of "overlapping spheres of influence in family, school, and community on children's learning" theoretical model showed that it may increase home-school partnership with certain adaptations as it applies to culturally diverse parents. With first generation parents, educators and practitioners need to use an interpersonal approach in which one understands and is aware of the social conditions of the particular culture. To continue with efforts in parental involvement in decision making whether in policy or curriculum, parent input is vital for school improvement.

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In order for parent involvement programs to increase, educators and practitioners will need to address issues of appropriate cultural and linguistic modalities. In addition, they will also need to address the socio-political indicators for effective parent practices, deliver effective parent training, and value parents as genuine constituents who bring rich resources as change agents in school reform. Mexican American parents have a clear knowledge base and take appropriate measures in order to meet the needs of their children's development and be responsive to their educational attainment. The findings showed that second generation parents played multi-dimensional roles as illustrated by their responses in the focus group interviews. With school personnel and Latino parents having collaborative efforts and mutual respect, a common vision will be a reality in school reform.

Thus, a critical reflection of the democratic participatory process is vital for Mexican and Mexican Americans parents who advocate quality education for their children, who want to empower other parents to promote equal status among all parents, and who actively engage in their children's education in order to sustain and create systemic changes in school reform. A deeper understanding needs to be considered in home-school practices, leading to conceptualization and praxis in providing a common vision for children to attain high standards and expectations in terms of personal growth and development in student achievement.

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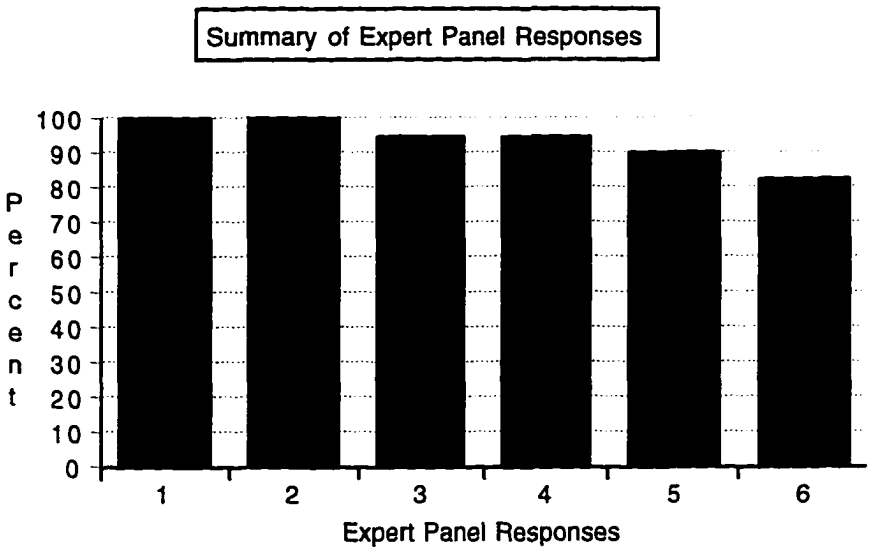
Figure 4.2 **Expert Panel Emergent Themes in a Parent Involvement Model**



1	2	3	4	5	6
Parenting	Communication	Home-Learning and Support Services	Collaboration with Community	Decision Making	Creating the Notion of Parents as Change Agents/Activism

NOTE: N=16 respondents

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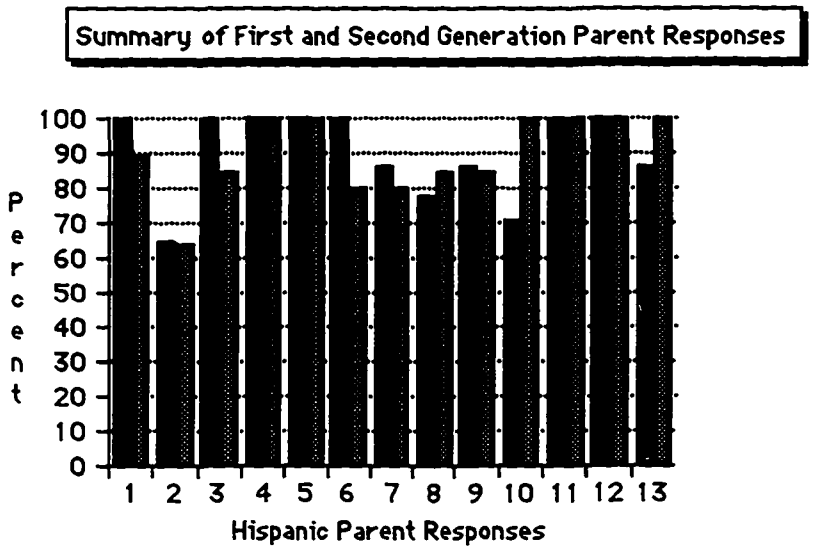
Figure 4.3 **First and Second Generation Themes in Hispanic Parent Involvement**



First Generation	Second Generation
A Better Future for Children	Parent Advocacy
Adolescent Development	Adolescent Development
An Understanding of Children	Parents as Change Agents
Communication	Children's Needs in Maslow's Hierarchical Structure
Family Support	Communication
High Expectations in Education	Decision Making
Home-Learning Activities	Empowerment
Parent Programs	Home-Learning Activities
Perceptions of Home-School Collaboration	School Policy Issues
School Programs	Self-Esteem
Self-Esteem	Social Advancement
Social Advancement	Student Achievement
Strategies to Motivate Children	Support Services

Note: N=52 Total respondents

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CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Background Issue

Understanding the complexities of adolescent development which children encounter during the middle school years demands critical attention in educational reform. Culturally diverse children in the United States show levels of academic achievement that are lower than our major economic competitors. Minority children also show poor academic achievement and high rates of dropping out. These children are overrepresented in special education programs and are underrepresented in gifted and talented programs (Casas and Furlong, 1994). The disturbing conjunction of the trends of (1) an increase of culturally diverse students, (2) greater diversity in the school community, (3) decreasing Hispanic student achievement, (4) a high dropout rate for Hispanic students, and (5) a surprising lack of parental involvement during the secondary level, a direct contrast to high parental involvement during the primary grades, results in a disturbing paradox for a future American society. Moreover, as the population increases and the communities become more diverse, this challenge needs to be addressed in order to fully achieve desired educational outcome for all students. Promoting mutual home-school collaboration among culturally diverse parents becomes a more critical issue as the change process evolves in educational reform.

Educational practitioners in the 1990's are faced with mandates to educate all children and to increase student achievement. In particular, school personnel are faced with the demands of accountability to demonstrate improved quality in: (1) curriculum, instruction, assessment, and technology, (2) standards and accountability, (3) health and

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human services, (4) public support and engagement, and (5) high performance organization for effective school improvement.

Given the assumption that educators cannot meet all the required mandates alone, school personnel need continuous collaborative efforts from all constituents to work and link forces together. The need for a major theoretical and methodological approach to pedagogical reform in school and communities has been recognized by educators, practitioners, and researchers. Delgado-Gaitán and Trueba (1991) pointed out that having a genuine concern for the social and cultural context of learning is intimately related to the profound understanding of the role that family and community members have on academic achievement. The authors indicated that a "number of reports about the urgent need to resolve our educational problems often end with sterile allusions to the empowerment of teachers and the need to reform teacher education. Efforts to launch an educational reform intended to change the status of minority group inequity and underachievement for culturally diverse children need to be voiced in school reform" (p. 162).

Despite the generalization that culturally diverse parents are perceived as apathetic and uninvolved in their children's education, minority parents, especially first generation parents, are often reluctant to engage in parent involvement programs because these parents do not know the procedure for becoming involved. Research has suggested that it is due to language, culture, beliefs, perception or a lack of understanding of how the educational systems works in a bureaucratic organizational structure (Epstein, 1992). However, the results of the findings, indicated that first generation parents value education and have high expectations for their children in student achievement. Second generation parents also valued educational attainment and have high standards and expectations for their children but place more emphasis on cognitive development and decision making in school reform.

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Latino parents play a vital role in their children's education; they are powerful teachers who have major influence in their children's development. Often, constituents in mainstream America view culturally diverse parents as parents who do not play a meaningful role in their children's education. Sotomayor (1991) pointed out they are perceived as being impoverished with low socioeconomic status, uneducated, in poor health with inadequate nutrition, existing in impoverished living conditions, with a lack of cultural opportunities. They are portrayed as apathetic, unresponsive, or uncaring parents who are not involved in their children's education. Although this stereotype may exist for the Latino population, this assumption was refuted by Casa and Furlong (1994), Comer (1988), Delgado-Gaitán and Trueba (1991), Epstein (1988, 1995), Núñez (1994), and Ochoa (1995) and others, as an unrealistic descriptor of Latino parents. The researchers found that culturally diverse parents have high academic expectations for their children; they value education as "a means to an end." Education is viewed by these parents as the key to knowledge, and it was ascertained that Latino parents view educational attainment as an avenue to economic and social advancement. In their responses in focus group interviews, first and second generation parents identified the importance of home-school collaboration which enhances active parent participation in student performance. There was a significant range in parent participation involvement; yet the findings showed that Latino parents want to participate in their children's education regardless of their socioeconomic status or educational attainment. If parents are unresponsive, it is often due to high life-stress factors which are affecting family dynamics in their social environment.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine factors that promoted Hispanic parent involvement at the middle school level and based on these findings, to develop a Hispanic parent involvement model. A collaborative theoretical model was identified

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as a framework for Latino parents. This model used a framework that was interdependent upon four dimensions in a theoretical square. They were: (1) parent development, (2) communication, (3) cognitive development, (4) and decision making, and parents as change agents in social and cultural processes by which Mexican and Mexican American parents become empowered and create systemic change in educational reform. This model was developed in order to increase parent participation so that Latino parents may become the catalyst for parent efficacy in school reform.

This study involved examining factors that promoted a successful collaborative model for Hispanic parents at the middle school level. The objectives of this research were:

1. To identify which changes in parent involvement programs Latino Mexican/Mexican American parents perceived as important indicators for improving effective practices in home-school collaboration.

2. To create a research-based parent involvement model for Latino parents and educators to improve home-school relationships.

3. To identify effective strategies which educators may used with culturally diverse parents as a practical application approach, integrated into a nurturing philosophy at the middle school level, and empower Latino parents to be active in a democratic participatory process.

METHODOLOGY

From a more pragmatic perspective, Casas and Furlong (1994) have noted in their research on parent participation that there is no specific correct program to reach all parents and be responsive to all parents. The authors advocated the development of programs that are comprehensive, ongoing, dynamic, self-correcting, and culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of Hispanic parents. In general, the researcher recommended that a collaborative model be used in working with Latino parents.

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The theoretical framework for Hispanic parents at the middle school level presented in the study was developed through analyzing current literature review on parent involvement and through suggestions submitted by 16 panel members and 30 first generation Latino parents and 22 second generation Latino parents. The method used to formulate the collaborative theoretical model for Hispanic parents was a triangulation analysis naturalistic inquiry, a multimethod or mixed design method. It included the following: (1) a review of current literature on parent involvement and on the variety of theories or perspectives on parent involvement, (2) questionnaire and interview responses with 16 expert panel members who possessed theoretical and practical expertise in the area of parent involvement, and based on their responses a formulation of key concepts in the design of a collaborative Hispanic model; a questionnaire designed for expert panel members, (3) survey and focus group interview responses with a total of 52 first and second generation Mexican and Mexican American parents.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The current literature review, expert panel members and first and second generation focus group interview responses indicated that a collaborative, participatory model approach needs to be used for Hispanic parents in order to improve, increase, and empower parents to be active constituents in school reform. From the findings, it was found that Epstein's typology of "overlapping spheres of influence of family, school, and community on children's learning" could be utilized in terms of working with culturally diverse parents. It is the schematic infrastructure which has proven to be effective in school improvement.

Conclusive evidence shows from the findings that educational practitioners and researchers use Epstein's typology in terms of working with culturally diverse parents when educators and researchers are planning, designing, implementing and evaluating a comprehensive parent involvement model. It was pointed out in the

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results of the study that clearly there are certain adaptations in utilizing Epstein's model for the specific cultural group being addressed.

The questionnaires designed for this study structured a group communication among the 16 expert panel members. The emergent component themes in this naturalistic inquiry were: (1) parenting, (2) communication, (3) home-learning activities, (4) decision making, (5) collaboration, and (6) creating systemic change for culturally diverse parents as change agents in a social and cultural context in education reform. In the main, these components are critical to parent typologies and as panel members indicated, "educational practitioners must use their artisan skills and ensure that educators connect with students and families in order to assure collaborative partnerships which will enable parents to participate actively in their children's education."

Questionnaire and interviews responses showed that first and second generation parents value their children and have high expectations for student achievement as a means to social advancement. However, first generation parents indicated that their primary efforts are on family maintenance, participating in the labor force, and maintaining family values, traditions, language and culture. For them, their most important issue at large is survival maintenance in society. Second generation parents, on the other hand, have social capital resources to further their children's educational studies, during the formative years, to include activities such as reading to their children and developing their cognitive skills so that their children may be successful in school.

There is conclusive evidence from the results that assimilation-acculturation indicators are important factors to be considered when researchers and educational practitioners work with second generation parents. Second generation parents are assertive in parent advocacy issues in terms of collaborating with school personnel in order to improve and increase parent involvement. These constituents address policy

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issues, engage in decision making, and empower other parents to form coalitions in order to have their issues heard in school reform. Second generation parents are empowered to make the appropriate changes in a socio-political context in educational reform. The research findings answered the investigative research questions in a qualitative study of a triangulation analysis. The research revealed that a collaborative participatory model approach for Hispanic parent is most effective for a theoretical structure in parent involvement.

Framework for Change: A Collaborative Model for Hispanic Parent Involvement

A qualitative research study was used in this triangulation analysis. It examined twelve investigative research questions pertaining to a comprehensive model for the general populace in parent involvement. This study examined factors that promote Latino parent involvement at the middle school level, which will serve as a framework for increased home-school partnership. The researcher developed a collaborative participatory model for Latino parents based on the data analysis reviewed, analyzed, and collected from the expert panel member interviews and first and second generation Mexican and Mexican American focus group interviews. Building on Epstein (1995), Chrispeels (1992), Núñez (1994), and Ochoa's (1995) parent typologies, the researcher developed a framework that outlined the most important concepts of a successful Hispanic parent involvement model. Parenting, communicating, volunteering, decision making, and collaborating with community resources are vital to successful parent involvement models. In fact, the "overlapping spheres of influence of family, school, and community of children's learning" used by Epstein (1988) addressing the six components need to be implemented in a theoretical context to work effectively for all constituents. The researcher's model differed to a certain degree from that of Epstein, (1995), Chrispeels (1992), Núñez (1994), and Ochoa (1995) in condensing the most important elements for a Latino parent involvement model based on the naturalistic inquiry studied.

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In the last six years, the researcher has worked with culturally diverse parents in the San Diego Unified School District in San Diego, California. Her field experience in dealing with culturally diverse parents has provided her with first hand experience in her research-based model in order for Latino parents to be empowered in a democratic participatory process. The researcher designed a model that incorporated the various elements that will assist parents in their growth development. She proposed a model that was collaborative in nature, and which included school personnel, and family-community working together in a joint fashion in order to promote a home-school partnership. It was a framework which validated a socio-political perspective; it was culturally sensitive, and it engaged Latino parents to become change agents in a democratic participatory process. It was a participatory model in which constituents forged a collective process for student achievement. The framework was illustrated in the form of a square with four interdependent dimensions. The components of parenting development, communication development, cognitive development and decision making development made up the critical elements that are vital for systemic change in a parent model. The four dimensions worked cooperatively; they did not work independently; they were interdependent.

A Collaborative Theoretical Model in Parent Development

As the theoretical model was developed for Latino parents, the researcher stated that parents, school personnel, and community stakeholders was in a horizontal continuum; it was a model in which all actors collaborated for student achievement. Constituents were in the same horizontal plane; it was not a model where collaboration existed from a hierarchical perspective or vertical continuum in which school personnel dictated to culturally diverse parents about school policies that had been planned, designed, and implemented without parent input. The researcher proposed a research-based model, established for the purpose of empowering Latino parents to be productive stakeholders in their children's education. It was a

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developmental model which engaged Latino parents to be connected to school culture in a democratic participatory process. The purpose of this model was for Mexican and Mexican Americans parents to become truly empowered, to examine factors, to engage in effective parent advocacy, to become reflective critical parents, and to have effective channels of communication for increasing levels of interaction with school personnel. In this model Latino parents may become empowered and take control of their destiny.

Freire (1970) posited that empowerment is based on social and cultural self-awareness that aims at "developing an ethnohistorical and cultural context to understand the nature of oppression suffered by disempowered people, and the need to create living conditions congruent with the rights of all members of the human species, regardless of ethnicity, color, social status, religion, wealth, political power, knowledge and other personal attributes." Empowerment according to Freire (1970), attempts to provide a broad sociocultural context from which to study the transition from disempowerment to empowerment as a major effort to create cultural adjustment and adaptation of minorities. According to Freire, minority groups such as Latino parents become not the oppressed minority but rather the empowered collective mass.

The first dimension of the model was a knowledge-base of parent development. The second dimension was communication and decision making development with parents and school personnel communicating effectively as joint constituents providing input in shared decision making in school reform. It was in a vertical continuum in which home-school collaborative measures were designed for a successful program in a quality education for children. The third dimension was cognitive development with parents actively engaging in home-learning activities in a collaborative fashion and with knowledge about the curriculum followed by shared decision making by all stakeholders. Mexicans and Mexican Americans are

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collaborative, flexible, adaptable, culturally sensitive parents who can provide systemic change and empower other parents to become parent leaders in school reform. The four dimensions interact collaboratively in order for the model to succeed with all constituents working with Latino parents. It is important to understand the socio-political perspective, as well as the respective culture, language, traditions, beliefs, and values in order to join in a collaborative effort to engage parents towards parent leadership development that transforms parents to move toward a greater understanding of their children's development and toward systemic change in educational reform.

The results of the triangulation analysis of the current literature review, responses of sixteen expert panel members who had expertise in parent involvement, responses of thirty Mexican parents and twenty-two Mexican American parents who participated in a focus group setting provided conclusive evidence that a collaborative model resulting from the findings is a model that is most appropriate for Latino parents. The emerging naturalistic model had four sides, and it was considered a developmental model since all the constituents were able to engage in a collaborative learning partnership in its design. It validated a collaborative model in home-school partnership which is illustrated by the four interdependent dimensions and is inclusive of the developmental stages in the model (see Figure 5.1).

In this contextual framework, the researcher found that in a collaborative model, parents have a knowledge-base concerning the stages of parent development in order to make a difference in student achievement. Culturally diverse parents need to have basic premises in effective parent practices. As the expert panel members and Latino parents pointed out in the interviews, parents need some knowledge-base of parenting.

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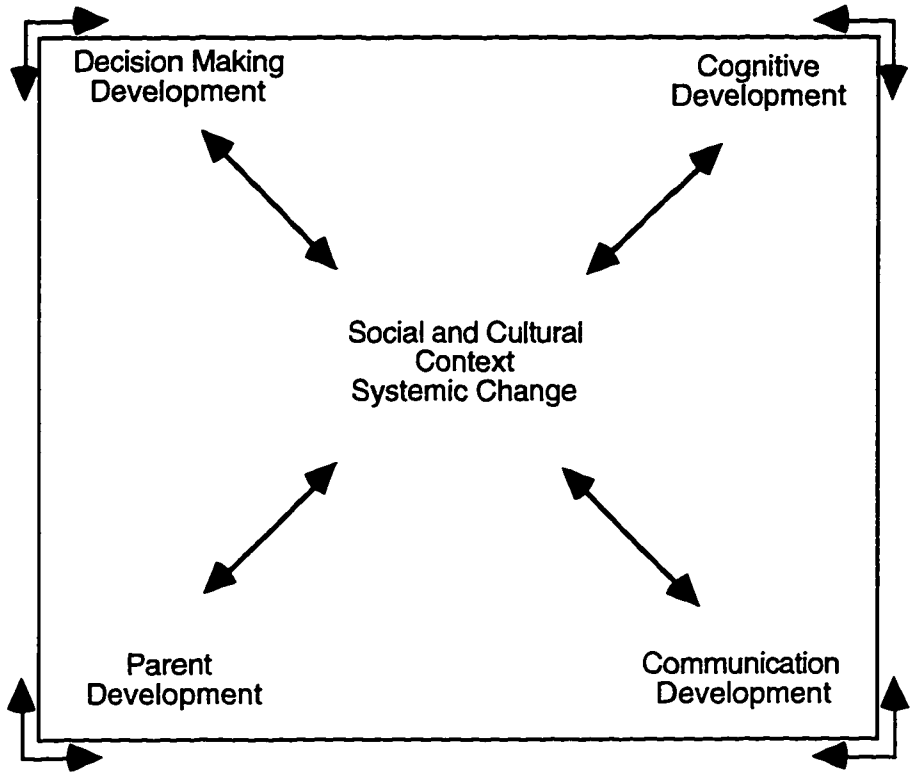
Figure 5.1 **A Collaborative Hispanic Parent Involvement Model**



Parents as noted, are the most influential teachers children have in their personal and social development. Social and cultural factors come into play; however, the nucleus of a family constellation is to provide a safe family environment in order for Latino parents to raise their children accordingly. As indicated in the findings, expert panel members and first and second generation parents indicated that parents are the most important members children have in their lives, and appreciation of this fact is a critical component for parent involvement programs.

It was found that Latino parents wanted to provide a nurturing, caring, stable and healthy family environment. Thus the first emergent component of the researcher's collaborative model enabled parents to sustain appropriate family maintenance which provides a safe environment for their children's development. Also, in terms of parent

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development with Latino families, Mexican and Mexican American parents provide the necessary human conditions for other actors in the home environment and the positive support to assist their children in home-learning activities in order for their children to have a quality education.

The collaborative participatory model presented for Latino parents included home learning activities. The researcher suggested that if parents are to be truly involved, it is up to the individual teacher at the middle level to inform parents of the quality of work their children are performing at school, focusing on the positive attributes of children and children's self-esteem, while at the same time providing solutions to problems. A teacher needs to build rapport first with Mexican and Mexican American parents and let them know that as the teacher, he/she is collaborating with parents in order for the student to change behaviors. Parents need to be informed of weekly homework assignments and be invited to classrooms, so that Mexican and Mexican American parents are assured that they are receiving effective communication concerning the progress of their students. In a similar fashion, school personnel need to provide parent training workshops in knowledge-based curriculum awareness to include family reading, family mathematics, computers, science, practical and fine arts in order for parents to assist their children in home-learning activities and monitor their children's academic progress. Latino parents want to be assured that the teacher is reaching out to students, in order to bring about change, and have a direct effect on student achievement.

As was noted in the findings, in most Latino families, women play a multiplicity of roles that affect their children directly and are primarily responsible for children's educational attainment. They oversee the educational roles of the children and provide a safe and supportive environment in the household. Women particularly Latina females who play different roles in the work force and in their household are confronted with all of the societal demands. For instance, the findings from focus group

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interviews with first and second generation parents, which included six males and forty-six female parents, revealed that in a society where both spouses work in order to have an average maintenance of living, the female alone maintains the home environment. More specifically, the female is the constituent who has the control of direct contact with school personnel, attends parent conferences, attends parent training workshops, and monitors her children's homework. In fact, the Latina female performs a multiplicity of duties as required by the norms of society so that home conditions for learning proceed accordingly.

The male maintains the provisions of the labor force with minimal time to interact with school personnel. However, he plays a role in student performance by encouraging his children to excel in their academics. It is vital therefore, to understand that in a collaborative model, the Latina female is a key constituent in parenting. In the Latino culture in terms of parent development, the female is the dominant figure who will contribute and exercise her power as an influential teacher to her children and become the active respondent in parent involvement programs.

Knowledge of the family's specific cultural, and socioeconomic roles helps practitioners to understand the importance of parent development with Latino parents. In fact, knowing the norms of the culture, language, values, and beliefs helps practitioners to assist Latino parents in their adult development. Perhaps the key is to understand family dynamics in which Latino parents are capable of becoming involved in one form or another in their children's education. The task of educators is to collaborate with school personnel and community members to identify the level at which parents feel most comfortable. Moreover, as educators, they need to provide a unique setting in which there is an awareness of the values that stem from their cultural perspective and not their own view of reality and, more specifically, provide first and second generation parents with various participation options.

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Providing support services and linking the community to community resources need to be supported by school personnel in order to increase and improve home-school collaboration. Utilizing schools to connect students and families with community resources that provide educational enrichment is a service appreciated by all culturally diverse parents. It was pointed out by expert panel members that a close linkage between the family, school, and community increases significant understanding and awareness in home-school collaboration.

In practice, Latino parents will be receptive and do as much as they are able to actively engage in their children's education. From a pragmatic perspective, the key is to ensure that language minority children are provided with the same social conditions as Anglo-Saxon students have in student performance.

A Collaborative Model in Communication Development

The second dimension of the collaborative theoretical model is communication development which empowers parents to become more actively involved in parental participation. The researcher contended that in a Hispanic collaborative model, school personnel and Latino families need to forge a strong partnership in order to have effective communication channels; it needs to be a two-way process of communication between home and school.

Understanding school programs and policies, interacting with teachers, and being able to articulate issues that pertain to their children's education is essential for Mexican and Mexican American parents in a collaborative model. Unfortunately, some Latino parents do not attend parent/teacher conferences or school activities due to culture, language, or possibly a negative perception that they may have encountered in dealings with school personnel. For Latino parents, the researcher posited that an amiable, friendly, personal approach with genuine interest in the concerns of Latino parents needs to be used in the design of this model. As with any relationship, establishing a mutual trust and respect benefits all constituents. For instance, first and

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second generation parents pointed out in the focus group interviews that a welcoming school climate is more aligned to the Mexican culture than an environment that is directive in nature. In this approach, educators need to manifest a shared commitment to student achievement with Mexican and Mexican American parents. Educators need to share that there is a mutual interest between the two parties and to reflect life experiences with which to assist children in student achievement and to express a willingness to become involved.

Because communication is important in student achievement, in the collaborative model, the researcher averred that addressing Latino parents with utmost respect is vital in channels of communication. For example, with first generation parents, educators need to know that with first generation Mexican parents will not address the teacher directly; it is considered a form of respect for the teacher. Educational practitioners, on the other hand, may have direct eye contact with parents. Educators need to be aware of the cultural and regional differences in which parents have maintained their traditions. When addressing first generation parents, school personnel need to be extremely amiable, have a genuine concern for their students, and portray an image that conveys respect, which is a is a key element in Mexican values. However, with second generation parents, direct eye contact with the educational practitioner is considered appropriate. When Mexican American parents are concerned, educators need to be direct and address the issue in question.

With first generation parents, communication needs to be articulated in the parents' primary language and a genuine interest manifested in involving all parents in their children's education. Clearly, with Latino parents, an effective strategy that works well with parents in channels of communication regarding family-related and school-related issues is to have them engage in focus groups rather than a lecture setting.

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In the researcher's model, she suggested that a substantial portion of parent training needs to be performed at a level where parents feel supported and are able to learn from presenters. Presenters need to realize that parents are capable and willing to experience new ideas if they are provided with the appropriate tools. Effective communication also demands that Latino parents interact with school personnel and monitor their children in academics. For instance, at the middle school level, students may comment to their teachers or counselors that their parents will not be involved in their activities due to language barriers or because Latino parents do not understand the curriculum, the grading system, discipline or other areas of school programs and that is why parents do not communicate to their teachers. Therefore, all constituents need to effectively communicate with all parties concerned and assure that parents are receiving appropriate communication. In fact, it was reported by the first and second generation focus groups that children welcome their parents in school practices.

In practice, the first barrier confronted by educators in effective communication is parents who do not speak English; it becomes a language barrier. The researcher suggested that because of social and culture stigma students not be asked to translate for parents. Students may be part of the conference, but providing the channels of communication to parents of what the teacher is informing in the parent/teacher conference is not appropriate. Children are not the adults, and school personnel need to have resources such as translation personnel to be responsive to the needs of first generation parents. As educators, we need to encourage culturally diverse parents to become actively engaged with their children's activities at school.

With this collaborative approach, culturally diverse parents need a sense of a belonging and a sense of a community spirit in which they have an ongoing communication with school personnel and feel that school personnel are responsive to their needs. Conclusive evidence suggested that panel members and first and second generation participants indicated that in order to strive for academic excellence,

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communication is a key characteristics in home-school collaboration. Accordingly they felt a need for mutual respect and trust in order that effective communication channels ensue with Mexican and Mexican American parents. Many educators recognized that the success of this effort will ultimately depend on the participation of parents in all aspects of their children's education.

A Collaborative Model in Cognitive Development

In practice, the third dimension of a collaborative theoretical model is cognitive development. In this dimension Latino parents who already have a knowledge base want to transform leadership skills they have acquired from their educational, social, and economic opportunities into assistance in empowering other parents on the improvement of their quality of life. It is a process which has generated an analysis of issues into *praxis* (acting on issues). Ochoa (1995) indicated that parents are seen as brokers and provide a common experience on which they learn to reflect critically. Ochoa (1995) contended that through experience, reflection, conceptualization and praxis, parents internalize issues, behaviors, expectations and personal growth.

The researcher suggested that in cognitive development, Mexican and Mexican American parents have a knowledge base, understand the socio-political process, and generate ideas, strategies, problem-solving, and maintenance in which parents are self-sustained. As second generation parents indicated, they influence other constituents to make critical decisions about their quality of life. In particular, Latino parents take action on issues of socio-political change which result in systemic change in school reform.

In this model approach, culturally diverse parents empower other parents to challenge issues and to assure that school policies are pushed through in school reform. Mexican and Mexican American parents become change agents who influence others to make decisions in a democratic participatory process in school reform.

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Parents, students, and staff work together and have their voices addressed. It is essential for parents to empower other parents to make change in the systemic reform process. They are not shielded in a glass ceiling as often happens with parents. Clearly it can be assumed that in a collaborative participatory model, Latino parents have a voice and have embedded assumptions of school reform. They are focused on being active change agents. In brief, they are not considered passive observers and their likely interest is parent advocacy issues.

The investigator ascertained that in a cognitive development dimension, first and second generation parents take immediate action on issues; they do not consider themselves the oppressed minority. Latino parents learn to work collaboratively in order to impact student achievement. For instance, students, parents, and staff work collaboratively in the restructuring process where all stakeholders have a sense of vision that they are providing systemic change and are collaboratively working together for school reform. As mentioned by the expert panel members and first and second generation parents, culturally diverse parents gained skills in which there is a true commitment to making a difference in their children's education by becoming actively engaged in school programs and addressing issues that would change existing policies in school reform in order to increase student achievement.

A Collaborative Model in Decision Making

In a collaborative participatory model, the researcher indicated that expert panel members and some culturally diverse parents differed in philosophy about the importance of their participation in the decision making process and how it affects Latino parents in school policies. It was pointed out that in order for Latino parents to be actively involved in a collaborative participatory process, Mexican and Mexican American parents need to learn practical parenting skills about school policies and how they as parents, can make a difference in school reform.

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To make a difference in school policies, Hispanic parents need to be empowered in leadership roles. Mexican and Mexican American parents need to be active democratic participatory constituents, assume leaderships positions in school governance teams, have a sense of ownership of the school, understand that schools exist for the purpose of serving children, be provided with physical space/parent room center in which they can meet for parent meetings and/or social or multicultural events, and attend leadership conferences so that they can empower other constituents in school reform issues.

School personnel need to understand that culturally diverse parents play a critical role in shared decision making. They need to implement effective strategies in their school restructuring process in order to provide parents with appropriate leadership skills in decision making. It was found that in order to have a collaborative model, Latino parents need to have leadership skills, assume parent leadership positions, serve on site-level, district-level, and state-level task force committees so that they can make a difference in school reform as partners in all aspects of school governance.

The researcher urged school personnel to actively recruit parents to serve in leadership positions so that they can make decisions that are in the best interest of all constituents at large. Many first and second generation parents are willing to be involved in the decision making process of school policies. However, some culturally diverse parents do not have the necessary skills to participate in school decision making. In this model the researcher proposed that certificated school staff members inservice parents in leadership and communication training so that those parents may participate in site-based governance, resulting in effective shared decision making. If the school does not have these certificated or classified personnel, who are able to provide this training, all efforts need to be explored for hiring a parent consultant to

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train parents in leadership positions. This would be a strategic solution to create positive outcomes for effective parent practices.

The researcher asserted that culturally diverse parents are able to increase their understanding and awareness in school reform if given the appropriate tools. In fact, she purported that parents' voices are critical to school reform that affects children's achievement. Furthermore, the social benefits of connecting and empowering ethnically diverse parents to become involved in the education of their children would improve the quality of life of families and community members.

If school personnel enable parents with resources that provide a sense of empowerment, there will be a sense of community action which will show parents that their decisions are important in school improvement. If Latino parents are provided with support to involve all parents in shared decision making as was pointed out by second generation parents, they can be empowered and have their voices heard in school reform. As stated by Ochoa in the expert panel interview, culturally diverse parents need to be empowered in order to make a difference in school reform.

In this Hispanic collaborative participatory model, the researcher recommended that parents need to be trained and be empowered in parent advocacy. Not all constituents are provided with the appropriate skills; however, if parents are to be leaders, they need to have skills pertaining to school policy issues. For instance, if parents want certain issues addressed by the district personnel or by Board members, Latino parents need to know what their due process procedures are regarding their children's education. The researcher who has worked with culturally diverse parents, knows that some Latino parents do not understand the uniform complaint procedure or how to go about giving input to important issues that pertain to school reform. However, school personnel have an obligation to provide parents with shared decision making training so that they are able to exert a direct impact in school reform.

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Although schools have responded with socially and academically promising practices to address school-site based governance issues and provided lip service to do so, not all schools want parents to be involved in the decision making of school issues. Constituents need to have a mutually salient interest in parent advocacy so that the focus is student achievement and not be dependent on other factors. The greatest benefit of the researcher's collaborative participatory model for Latino parents is that students, parents, and staff will benefit from working together in order to strengthen home-school collaboration. The adolescents they serve will become productive citizens in society.

Although there were variables that are often entrenched in underachievement in student performance, the driving force is to create a community where all stakeholders-students, parents, and staff-create a community of action in which there is systemic change in educational reform.

A Collaborative Model in Social and Cultural Context for Systemic Change

The design of a collaborative framework for culturally diverse parents calls for true collaboration among all constituents. A partnership is linked between the family, school, and community in which all constituents are responsive to student, parent and staff needs. Stakeholders in educational reform shoulder individual sets of responsibilities that contribute to the learning environment but constituents should have a shared vision which is critical to systemic change in which all actors are responsible for student achievement.

A Hispanic collaborative model seeks systemic change; it strives to embody equity for all stakeholders. Most importantly, students, parents, and staff have a common purpose, a collective unity, and actors are empowered with a knowledge and a developmental base of learning. A commitment to school reform, to mutual trust and respect, a sense of belonging for school community, and an understanding of culture sensitivity is essential.

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The concepts of parent development, communication development, cognitive development, parent advocacy, and social and cultural development are of utmost importance in a Hispanic collaborative model for school improvement. In particular, a socio-political and cultural perspective is vital in a developmental process in which stakeholders forge a strong partnership relationship.

For culturally diverse parents, parent development and communication development were found to be important components. In order to work with any culturally diverse first generation parents such as Arabs, Chinese, Europeans, Native Americans, Southeast Asian, and South Pacific Islanders, parent development and communication development are critical components that are applicable to all groups and the procedures necessary are uniquely different from those which are used for second generation parents.

Epstein (1995) posited that in a comprehensive parent involvement typology, stakeholders of students, parents, and staff collaborate together in order to be responsive to the needs of school, family, and community at large. Student learning benefits students, parents, and staff. For Latino parents, the researcher suggested that there abound a mutual interest in student achievement and meaningful home-school collaboration. In fact, to work effectively with home-school partnerships, school personnel as well as Mexican and Mexican American parents, need to have a deeply passionate belief that Latino parents are powerful influential teachers who can create socio-political and cultural change in systemic reform in education.

A Hispanic parent involvement model was designed for first and second generation Latino parents. The researcher illustrated the components of parenting development, communication development, cognitive development, decision making development, and social and cultural processes in systemic change as the important concepts that need to be used in a collaborative model. These key concepts outlined the important elements which the responses of the sixteen panel members and first

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and second generation parents indicated. Given the importance of the vital components as outlined in this chapter, a Hispanic collaborative participatory model was designed for language minority parents.

In order to understand the contentious issue of parent involvement for Latino parents, it is helpful to consider the assumptions and questions underlying some of the more articulated arguments related to parent involvement. Given the findings of Chapter Four, the researcher found the following assumptions to be true for the design of a collaborative Hispanic model based on the themes that emerged in the naturalistic inquiry.

Conclusive evidence from the data analysis revealed the following assumptions:

1. Since basic obligations of Latino families include health, safety, and a positive home environment, providing home learning activities for parenting development is important.
2. Basic obligations of school personnel are to increase communication through an empowerment process. Effective communication is seen as a two-way vehicle for Latino parents in student achievement.
3. Latino parents need to actively engage in advocacy in order to create systemic change in school reform. Parents are change agents and become action researchers in a praxis context for school improvement.
4. School personnel and Latino parents need to work collaboratively as joint forces in order to provide a quality education for children. All the constituents-students, parents, and staff-need to promote and advocate a quality education for children.

The researcher identified the key elements of a collaborative participatory Hispanic parent involvement model which was based on the uniqueness of the responses of the expert panel members and most importantly, on the perceptions and attitudes that first and second generation parents have about education reform. The four components of the model include parent development, communication development, cognitive development, decision making, and social and cultural context in systemic change. Sixteen expert panel members indicated that parenting, home-learning

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activities, effective communication, decision making, collaboration with community, and creating the notion of parents as change agents are the critical components that make up an effective parent involvement program.

First and second generation parents indicated that developing a better future for their children, effective communication, having high expectations in educational attainment, incorporating home-learning activities, and being active in parent advocacy are key characteristic elements that are vital to a parent involvement design as was noted in figures 4. 2 and 4. 3, in the summary review of their responses.

It was found that Latino parents maintain family traditions, have high expectations, want a sense of empowerment, and most importantly, want a quality education for their children. They are seen as responsive stakeholders who have a sense of belonging, mutual trust and respect, collaboration, empowerment, and knowledge. In particular, Mexican and Mexican American parents have a commitment that all constituents empower others in a socio-political and cultural context for systemic changes in effective school practices in educational reform.

Effective Strategies in the Change Process for First Generation Parents

The strategies that educators need in working with Latino parents in the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation process are the following:

1. Educators need to do a needs assessment of the specific targeted audience addressed. What is it that parents and school personnel would like to accomplish in the restructuring process? What is the purpose and what is the outcome? How is it going to be implemented and how it going to be evaluated? These are essential questions in a collaborative program that need to be considered before a plan is designed that fits the appropriate targeted audience.
2. As school personnel plan to provide parent training programs for culturally diverse parents, an amiable personal approach is more conducive and

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effective than school flyers, principal's newsletters, or electronic telephone masters. If a school employee is designated to assume the assignment of contacting parents, that school employee needs to portray a friendly approach, a sense of warmth, and manifest a sense of welcoming community spirit. Student work or portfolio exhibits such as school wide enrichment programs, student award assemblies, student exhibitions, student performances, student portfolios, multicultural events, Family Nights, Open Houses, restructuring school initiative reforms, and uniform policies are events which parents will be interested in attending. Dynamic parent training workshops to develop leadership and self-empowerment, to understand school accountability and the use of community organizing strategies, to plan community actions with school personnel, to learn about the various programs are other strategies that promote full democratic participation in school attendance. Translation units, child-care services, and reward incentives need to be considered.

3. Culturally diverse parents manifest a high interest if practical application workshops programs such as self-esteem, effective communication, problem-solving, chemical substance awareness, family literacy, computer skills, gang awareness, human and civil rights, affirmative action, and restructuring school initiatives which will impact their children's education are provided. Parent training in focus group settings is desirable, and workshops need to be ongoing in the school year. Parent training workshops need to be scheduled in the morning or mid-evening for parents. Educators need to promote home-school collaboration and be given a flexible schedule or a stipend for additional services included.
4. A community aide or liaison needs to work collaboratively with students, parents, and staff and be able to work on a joint force with all other

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constituents. Culturally diverse parents identify with an assigned employee who is in charge of parent coordination services. It is desirable that this person be bilingual, have a sense of commitment for parents, and be seen as the advocate for parents.

5. A parent room or parent center needs to be established in order for parents to interact on a daily basis with other parents, and this room needs to be conducive to parent needs. Attention to detail and interior design give a parent room a welcoming motif. Amenities such as telephone services, computers, typewriters, round tables, and a conducive setting, assuring parents that the school has a welcoming community spirit is essential.
6. A Family Telephone Tree in which there is a cadre of parents that invite other parents to school activities needs to be established in order to build a clientele of culturally diverse parents in which parents are the collaborators, particularly the voice of the people empowering other Latinos to join forces in school reform.
7. It is vital that a school personnel designee know community resources, make home visits and provide linking services for home-school collaboration. If parents do not have transportation services or cannot meet at the school site, meeting at the recreational centers, churches, and libraries is encouraged so that culturally diverse parents know that the school personnel designee has a genuine interest in promoting home-school collaboration.
8. School personnel need to focus and maintain high standards of student achievement, and parents need to know about school programs, restructuring initiatives, alignment of the curriculum, and effective teaching strategies such as interdisciplinary team approaches implemented in middle school settings. Parents need to be involved in the initial process of school reform. Administration, certificated, or classified staff personnel need to involve and

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engage parents in the process regardless of the demands educators encounter on a daily basis in order to have a buy-in of the particular process. If this objective is accomplished, parents will inform other parents about the change process occurring at that particular school. A data collection instrument of evaluation needs to be utilized as a form of measurement to improve comprehensive programs and to obtain information about programs.

Effective Strategies in the Change Process for Second Generation Parents

The strategies that educational practitioners and researchers need to employ when working with all culturally diverse second generation parents in the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation phases are the following:

1. Educators need to do a needs assessment of proposed changes or program services which the school is implementing. Second generation parents need to be involved in the initial stages of the planning, design and implementation process in order for them to employ their cognitive development skills in decision making. Parents need to give input on how new textbook adoptions are going to impact student achievement. All stakeholders need to focus on the critical path of student achievement.
2. As schools strive to empower all parents, second generations parents, who are assimilated-acculturated want to engage and be active participants in school policies and make systemic changes in school reform. For example, if a new school is opening or is in the process of selecting a new principal, second generation parents want to be involved in the selection process and help establish the school policies. Second generation parents are truly active stakeholders in school reform.
3. Because second generation parents, for the most part, are often highly educated, it is important for educators to be aware that communication needs to be handled in a distinct and concise manner when addressing second

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generation parents. In fact, some second generation parents do not want to be identified as linguistic minority parents, and as educators, we need to address the factor, that in essence, they are parents that come from an Anglo-Saxon perspective and want to be identified as such.

4. It is important to involve second generation parents as possibly the change agents that can not only create positive systematic change for the school but that often, can make a difference not only at the school-level, district-level, but also at the state-level depending on their involvement in educational policy.

From a pragmatic program perspective, the researcher summarized a collaborative participatory Latino model that could be used in empowering Mexican and Mexican American parents as change agents in home-school collaboration. It summarized the emergent themes that were espoused by the sixteen panel members and the responses of the focus group parents that were pertinent in parent involvement programs. The methodology used in the study was a triangulation analysis: reviewing current literature on parent involvement, analyzing the responses of the expert panel members and the critical voices of the masses which was the collective Latino community in their perceptions and attitudes of parent involvement programs. It was a joint collaborative effort in which Latino parents were critical reflective constituents and were driven to be powerful teachers in their children's education as well as to have a realistic notion of how the social and cultural context of the larger society influences the organization of schools and the quality of instruction.

IMPLICATIONS

The emerging themes revealed from the triangulation analysis in a naturalistic inquiry have implications for other investigative research in the area of Hispanic parent involvement. First, the researcher suggests to educational practitioners who work with culturally diverse parents that they be socially and culturally sensitive to all parents

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regardless of race, creed, color, religion or wealth. An equally important view is that all constituents be treated as equal stakeholders in educational reform.

Educators have an ethical obligation to be responsive to the needs of students, parents, and staff; they hold the key to their children's academic success. This model may be used for practical application purposes in involving parents as partners in school governance, establishing effective two-way communication with all parents, respecting the diversity and differing needs of families, developing strategies, and developing programmatic structures at schools to enable parents to participate actively in their children's education, providing support and coordination for school personnel and parents to implement and sustain appropriate parent involvement, K-12, and to utilize schools to connect students and families with community resources that provide educational enrichment and support.

A major significant contribution to this study is that the researcher started from the inception by developing a model specifically, for Mexican and Mexican American parents, but in reality, she found that her collaborative participatory model is applicable to *all* first and second generation parents. In addition, she pointed out that there is a clear distinction between the two generations. For example, it was found in the study that for first generation parents, educators and researchers need to focus on parent development and communication development and on what the school can do to meet the needs of the individual child. For second generation parents, on the other hand, educators and researchers need to focus on cognitive development and decision making. For example, as noted in Chapter Four, second generation parents have a critical understanding of school programs and school policies; they do not want emphasis on parenting or communication development. In essence, they are cognizant and have prior knowledge experience of school programs. They are more interested on the overall design of high performance organization for effective school improvement.

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The second implication of this study was that it can be replicated with other culturally diverse parents, specifically, first generation parents since language minority parents want a safe and healthy home maintenance in a global society. In particular, first generation parents focus on family survival needs and desire to work in the labor force so that all constituents become responsive to the needs of the family members. As mentioned, with first generation parents, one needs to focus on the individual student's achievement. In general, second generation parents have social capital resources; however, they are likely to be interested in advocacy or endorsing a political stand on issues of interest.

The researcher suggests that the study can be replicated for other culturally diverse first generation parents, newcomers of other cultures, who seek stability in a mainstream society. There is evidence based on the findings that first generation parents seek maintenance of family unity, family values, family respect, family belonging, and educational attainment for social advancement for their children. It is important to acknowledge culture, language, traditions, values, belief, and social-class and racial differences of any first generation parents being studied. Social and cultural implications of first generation parents of various cultures will be different; nevertheless, the study may be replicated.

The researcher indicated that the study can also be replicated for second generation parents; however, a major difference exists. A unique contribution from other empirical research studies in parent involvement is that with second generation parents, one needs to start from a cognitive development and advocacy perspective when working with second generation culturally diverse groups. In fact, implications of the socio-political context of second generation parents will differ, but the generic concepts of cognitive development and advocacy will remain as unique components in the study. For instance, the researcher indicated that one cannot equate the same classification or social needs with Asian Americans or Native Americans as with

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Mexican Americans parents, due to different variables such as national origin, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, urban versus rural life, gender equity, advocacy, level of acculturation-assimilation, and demographics, or geographical residence; however, the cognitive development and decision making will remain the same and will be applicable to all second generation parents. The socio-political context of the particular group needs to be closely studied in terms of validity for second generation parents.

The third implication in the triangulation analysis is that the researcher suggests that based on the findings, certain procedures need to be implemented in a collaborative participatory democratic process of a generic parent involvement model. The findings support the concept that all constituents have a commitment and a common vision in student achievement and suggest that educators must be able to: (1) establish partnerships for student learning, (2) establish ongoing two-way channels of communication for parents, (3) build comprehensive networks of support services for parents, (4) restructure schools for effective collaboration in student learning, (5) implement shared decision making for all stakeholders, (6), collaborate with all constituents for systemic change, (7) build on various strategies for improving and increasing parent involvement for all first and second generation parents who have a personal voice in student achievement, and (8) design comprehensive programs that have a participatory approach and build on social capital with first and second generation parents. Parents are the advocates who can become catalysts for parent advocacy, and most importantly, parents are the most influential actors who can contribute to their own children's academic success in a democratic participatory process.

The fourth implication of the triangulation analysis is that future researchers may have preconceived biases or stereotypes of minority parents. The researcher advocated that parents regardless of their ethnicity: Caucasian, African-American,

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Asian, European, Latino, or Native American, are all unique constituents. Culturally diverse parents prefer not to be viewed as the oppressed minority, who have often been profiled as victims of society.

The researcher recommended that researchers maintain an objectivity in concentrated qualitative studies, specifically, in using a triangulation analysis method. The researcher warned that biases may come into play; however, it is important that research be objective in empirical studies if it is to have validity.

In reality, not all are parents can be viewed in the same way; there are many paradoxical lenses in nature. Some constituents are responsive to their children's needs while others are coping with high life-stress issues. With minority parents, social, cultural and ethnic identity must be carefully evaluated. As Sotomayor (1991), pointed out, there is a need to know each group's level of cultural integration, the extent to which any member of a particular cultural diversity group identifies, or is involved in a particular culture.

Finally, the researcher regarded the components of parental development, communication development, cognitive development, decision making, and social and cultural context as important components to be considered when working with culturally diverse parents, not only specifically, with Mexican and Mexican American parents but with all culturally diverse parents in parent involvement programs. A commitment and a sense of a belonging in a community of systemic change needs to be considered. In fact, the researcher suggested that social, cultural and political contexts are areas in which parents can become empowered and included in a collaborative participatory model which will effect social change for culturally diverse parents in a world view perspective.

RESEARCHER RECOMMENDATIONS

For the last six years the researcher has been providing parent inservice opportunities and has worked with culturally diverse parents in San Diego, California.

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The practical experience she has gained has been significant to her studies since she integrated both a theoretical perspective and practical application throughout her experience in working with parents. The research base and knowledge base has led her to believe that there are significant components that contribute to the development of a collaborative participatory Hispanic parent involvement model.

Guba and Lincoln (1981) noted that truth value is internal validity. While the researcher started from the contextual framework of developing a model for Latino parents, specifically, Mexican and Mexican American parents, she found in the triangulation analysis that based on the different methodologies used in the study, her model is applicable to all culturally diverse parents. The researcher discovered that she can apply this model to first generation Hungarian, Polish, Hmong, Cambodian, Laotian, Pilipino parents or other culturally diverse first generation parents at large. She also avers that the components of cognitive development and decision making are the points of departure when educators or researchers work with second generation parents. She asserts that she has made a contribution in the area of parent involvement in a broader sense because this model is applicable to any second generation ethnic group. Guba and Lincoln (1981) pointed out that:

> the process of triangulation permits multiple value perspectives to emerge from the same context or event and allows for their explication and presentation alongside one another. In the course of checking out facts, the naturalistic inquirer causes differing perceptions and values to surface. The multiplicity of values then becomes warp and weft of the contextual fabric (p. 257).

Conclusive evidence showed that the essential components for first generation parents are parent development and communication development. However, the researcher posited that cognitive development and decision making development are critical elements as these components are the salient points in terms of working with second generation parents. As a naturalistic inquirer, the researcher was most concerned with the various sources: expert panel members and focus group audiences from which her data were drawn; she found that the above

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components were critical and gave another dimension of an extended model to her findings. The investigator discovered that there were two distinct models for first and second generation parents. There were three truth-value questions that needed attention: (1) What can be done to produce findings that are more likely to be found credible in working with first generation parents? (2) What can be done to produce findings that reflect second generation values such as cognitive development and decision making development? How can credibility be tested with these sources in terms of seeking a model that is applicable to two distinct groups?

As stated, at the beginning of the field study research, the investigator felt that she was developing a model for Latino parents, specifically, Mexican and Mexican American parents. However, she found that as she evolved in the naturalistic inquiry, her model was applicable in a broader sense in that it contributed to all culturally diverse groups since it was generic in nature and would substantiate generalizability. The phenomena to be studied for culturally diverse cultures is different for first and second generation parents as noted in this chapter. However, the challenge for educational practitioners and researchers is to create environments in which students, parents, and staff can feel there is a sense of belonging in a community of learning and that those who have been silenced can regain a personal voice and affirm their own personal views toward a future with optimism as we construct systemic change in school improvement of all students, parents and staff as we continue to restructure school reform in the 21st century.

Moreover, for educational practitioners and researchers working with all culturally diverse parents, these concepts provide implications for dealing with newcomers as well as assimilated-acculturated parents in order to have a profound impact on student achievement and patterns of interaction with school personnel. Therefore, this model can be employed with all first and second generation parents if educators and researchers understand not only the cultural differences among the

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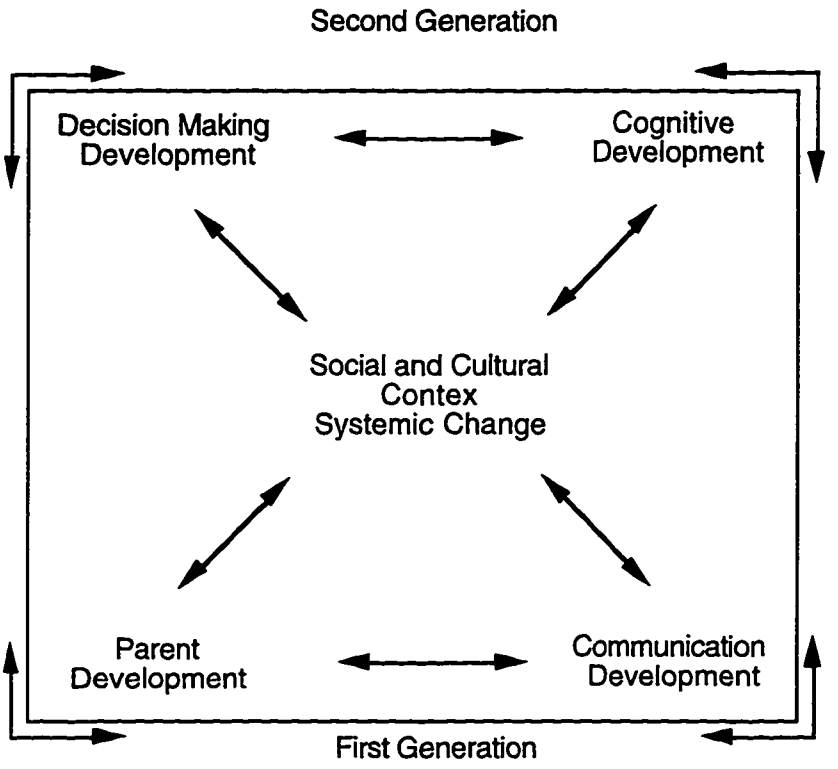
groups but the social conditions which differ between first and second generation parents who want to deal effectively with school personnel at the various levels (see Table 5.2).

Figure 5. 2 **First and Second Generation Collaborative Parent Involvement Model**



The triangulation analysis focused on obtaining key components which emerged from a naturalistic inquiry study based on the responses the expert panel members indicated in the interviews. The Hispanic focus group perspective gave the researcher a deeper understanding of what Latino parents have indicated to be the emergent themes or key components as discussed in Chapter Four.

The researcher developed a collaborative participatory model for Hispanic parents at the middle school level. If this study were to be replicated in the future, the researcher offers the following recommendations.

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1. In order to ascertain a true sample of representation of first and second generation parents in focus group interviews, the researcher proposes that a male sample needs to be addressed in future research studies. The researcher noted that there was not a true sample representation of Mexican and Mexican American parents who voiced their concerns on school reform. Of the respondents who participated in the focus group interviews, forty-seven were Latina females and five were Latino males. Clearly, in order to have a true sample representation, a study would address the male perspective and its relationship to parent involvement in terms of home-school collaboration.
2. Since all Latino respondents came from the same respective ethnic background, it is suggested that a future study needs to address the socioeconomic variables and social tensions at the various developmental stages of the different groups. For example, a study needs to address parents that are from urban versus rural areas to ascertain the social, political and cultural tensions that could exist with first, second, third, fourth or even fifth generation families. Conclusive evidence from the findings suggests that first generation parents have high expectations, value education, and have a high regard for their children. Second generation parents are more involved in socio-political processes. The researcher recommends that a study address parents who have children from third generation for assimilation-acculturation, and/or ethnic-identity.
3. The researcher recommends that a study examine inner-city youth or at-risk students of dysfunctional families from various ethnicities and the alternatives given for educators in working with students using effective teaching learning styles in order to reach out to all families.

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4. Second generation parents are more resistant and less willing to come to school activities, and it was a challenge to have second generation parents participate in focus group interviews. A study of the cause and effect of why there is such a lack of parent involvement among second generation parents versus first generation parents needs to be examined. A sample of twenty-four parents were to participate in the study. However, after considerable efforts, only twenty-two Mexican American parents participated, and, therefore, the researcher felt there was not a true representation in the focus group settings. A study on empowerment and the need to reform parent education programs needs to be addressed.
5. The researcher suggested that a methods course in Family Practices or Family Dynamics needs to be implemented as part of the intern process in student teaching classes in order for prospective teachers to effectively work with parents at K-12 level. This class would meet a portion of the competency required and would provide a cross-system training in education. Clearly, this recommendation needs to be explored in the university systems which prepare student teachers in the field of multicultural diversity in education. A practicum experience needs to be explored in the credential certification process and additional hours of support services in community-relations in parent practices added. Accountability of high standard criteria in order to receive a teaching credential needs to be explored.
6. The researcher suggested that administrators, certificated staff, and classified staff at K-12 level consider all efforts to develop and implement creative parent outreach strategies in home-school collaboration in order to increase the effectiveness of the overall school operations.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The research met the purpose and objective of this study. If this study were replicated in the future, the researcher offered these recommendations:

1. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of a collaborative parent involvement typology, a formative evaluation of this model could be used. The researcher chose a formative evaluation in lieu of a summative evaluation since she indicated that her model was to be a collaborative participatory model in nature, ongoing, culturally sensitive, and responsive to the needs of culturally diverse parents. Patton (1990) pointed out:

> Formative evaluation is limited entirely to a focus on a specific program, policy, group, staff, or product. Formative evaluation aims at "forming" the thing being studied. Formative evaluators want to help improve human endeavors. There is no attempt in formative evaluation to generalize findings beyond the setting in which one is working. The purpose of the research is to improve effectiveness within that setting. Formative evaluations often rely heavily, even primarily, on qualitative methods (p. 156).

This formative evaluation is a pedagogical technique used to evaluate a process that parallels a developmental learning cycle for all constituents in the effectiveness of home-school collaboration. Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggested that the aim of formative evaluation is refinement and improvement, which makes one think of the intrinsic aspects of entities being evaluated. It is an ongoing process that is continuous.

2. It is recommended that a study address racial tensions and prejudices that second generation groups face by looking at the social structure within which racial tensions/behaviors exist among culturally diverse second generation groups. For example, what are different characteristic behavioral traits among, Colombians, Cubans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, or other culturally diverse groups? What are the indicators of racial tensions second generation parents have which result in high life-stressors such as racial biases which

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place them in a victimization frame of mind. Studies should address high mobility index rates, social conditions, and motivation factors to determine if these indicators are prevalent with all culturally diverse second generation groups.

3. The researcher suggests that future investigation in parent involvement at the secondary level be addressed since there is a precipitous decline in the higher grades of student achievement and an increase in drop-out rate in student performance. What are the variables that determine Latino drop-out rates versus those of African American or Asian American culturally diverse students?
4. A future recommendation to be considered in undertaking program evaluation is to construct with parent input a needs assessment instrument of the necessary conditions for parent training programs to work in planning, design, implementation, and evaluation practices. Factors that need to be considered include appropriate bilingual services, site selection, schedule selection, and most importantly, appropriate cultural and linguistic modalities to deliver effective parent training among the stakeholders, to instill a welcoming ambiance in which all parents are unique constituents, and are critical to success in student achievement.
5. Finally, to ensure long term effectiveness of any contextual framework for parent programs, researchers need to collect data for the purpose of analysis and reflection as to the school's impact in improving and nurturing home-school collaboration. The long term effectiveness of any model can only be determined through ongoing collection of data and evaluation. The researcher indicated that a variety of data collection measures and approaches be included when formative evaluations are undertaken so that future

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researchers may take measures for evaluating the effectiveness of project research which has taken place.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presented specific strategies and implications that educational practitioners may use in effective teaching practices in working with culturally diverse parents. Making educators more responsive to the needs of culturally diverse parents is of utmost importance and a key point in school improvement. Educators need a schematic structure of what theoretical models and practical applications skills are available to work with culturally diverse parents. School personnel need to be aware and understand parent development, communication development, cognitive development skills, and decision making processes in order to empower students, parents, and staff and gain knowledge into the ongoing research design of parent involvement in systemic change.

Although parents from all ethnic groups are influential powerful teachers in their children's education, they differ in their involvement. They have various stages of growth and development. While first generation parents urged educators to teach important parental practices they want to learn what they as parents need to know in order to assist their children to be successful in student performance. As educators work with all first generation parents, it is important to be aware that they need to be facilitators in the areas of parenting development and communication development. Second generation parents differ from first generation parents in that second generation parents do not need parenting skills but aver that they are stakeholders who need to empower other constituents in the areas of cognitive development and parent advocacy in terms of educational policies and systemic changes that will influence all constituents at large.

As educators and researchers, it is important to have a multidimensional perspective as we start discovering truth values in the global vision of the specific

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group studied and to establish a point of departure in which school personnel are responsive to the needs of first and second generations parents, not only to Mexican and Mexican Americans, but to all culturally diverse parents that are in essence, critical reflectors in a democratic participatory process.

Education is a critical reform issue which has become more challenging and demanding as the change process evolves in educational reform. There are more school policies and mandates, designed for the site-level district-level, and state-level in which school personnel are accountable for student achievement. There is also an ethical obligation for school personnel to be responsive to the needs and demands of students, parents, and staff members in order to improve, increase and demonstrate improved quality in: (1) curriculum, instruction, assessment, and technology, (2) standards and accountability, (3) health and human services, (4) public support and engagement, and (5) high performance organization for effective school improvement in school reform.

As educators are seeing an increase in student diversity in the classrooms, educational practitioners and parents need to work together to forge a strong home-school collaboration in order to actively engage and empower all parents in parenting development, communication development, cognitive development and decision making, in social and cultural processes of systemic change in school reform.

Culturally diverse parents need to be critical collaborators in a democratic participatory process based on their developmental learning experience brought into a socio-cultural perspective in order to create systemic change. If there is truly going to be an impact on student achievement, it is critical that all constituents focus on a common mission which is academic success for all students. Including all stakeholders in the educational process is imperative so that our students become critical thinkers in a pluralistic society. In order for students to become successful citizens in a global society, their education must begin with parents as the most influential powerful

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teachers that children have. Clearly, if all constituents collaborate together and there is an environment in which students, parents, and staff can feel a sense of belonging in a community of learning and those who have been silenced can regain a personal voice and affirm their own personal assessment toward a future with optimism, then we construct meaning for systemic change in educational reform.

If the trend is to increase student achievement in a diverse population, there cannot be the disturbing conjunction that it is up to the school alone to educate children; it is a collaborative partnership. As educators, we can be truly empowered, if students, parents, and staff members work collaboratively and have the vision that, as constituents, we hold the key to student success if all stakeholders are engaged in student performance, and we empower parents to become reflective critical participants in parent advocacy in terms of student services.

Perhaps, Gonzáles (1996), poem best summarizes the educational context of student achievement by illustrating the vision in school reform. The researcher asserts that *Mi Familia* is indicative of a collective democratic unity in which culturally parents are united, engaged in a learning community and democratic culture, and empowered constituents who have a collective mission to educate all children in society. The poem is as followed:

Mi Familia

Somos una familia
whose traditions and customs shape
the very soul of our new and most prized gold, our children.

We are one in many, for our language is different.
We speak Spanish, latino, *mexicano*, chicano, *español*, and
English mixed.
How we are a mixture of Indian roots
of traditions que están entrejidas in the
contemporary sense of the state!

We need but to be proud for we have come
a long way from accepting and not denying,
for convincing and not begging
of who we are.
For believing that we are no longer kneeling,

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we are standing tall, forcing the stereotypes
to a weak state, to fall onto the very old ground
we inherited from our ancestors.

Our future looks to the past,
a glimpse of the old is always present,
to remind us to go forward in our communities
to do just what we can, and more.

Our children are precious, indeed!
We are here for the purpose of serving them,
to uplift them and to be there for them.
When someone else would rather not,
to walk beside them, not on top of them,
to be just who we are.

(Lourdes Gonzáles, BECA intern graduate, June 1996)

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SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS
MEMORIAL ACADEMY FOR INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PREPARATION
2850 Logan Ave., San Diego, CA 92113-2491
(619) 525-7400 FAX: (619) 238-2371

February 13, 1995

Dr. Steve Gelb
Chairman of the Human Subject Committee
University of San Diego
School of Education
5998 Alcala Park
San Diego, CA 92110-2492

Dear Dr. Gelb and Human Subject Committee:

Ms. Elva H. Mora is requesting entry to Memorial Academy for International Baccalaureate to do research for her dissertation in the doctoral program in the School of Education at the University of San Diego. I understand the purpose of the study is to examine factors that promote Hispanic parent involvement at the middle school level. The research will investigate the changes in parent involvement programs which Hispanic parents perceive as important for improving home, family, and school collaboration. A research-based parent involvement model will be developed to assist Hispanic parents and educators in improving the home-school relationship.

Ms. Mora intends to visit Memorial Academy on several occasions during the course of 1995-96. During those visits, she will gather information in various ways. She has informed me that she wishes to interview parents based on the questionnaire she has developed. These interviews will be audio taped and later she will transcribe her findings for data analysis. The tapes will remain in a safe place and will be erased at the end of the study.

In addition, she will interview one of our staff members as an expert panel on Hispanic parent involvement and will use the data interview in her research. Ms. Mora has given me a draft of her dissertation proposal and I am aware of the research design method.

Our Hispanic parents will participate on a voluntary basis. This means individuals may withdraw at any time without in any way jeopardizing their position here at the school.

There is no agreement, written or verbal, beyond that which is expressed in this consent letter.

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When someone undertakes research in a school, it is unclear in the beginning what they will discover. I am therefore, aware that it is possible that some findings arising from the study may not be to my liking but that is a risk I am prepared to take.

With the above understanding of what Ms. Mora intends to do, I am willing to give consent to her research at Memorial Academy to interview our parents on the proposed study of Hispanic Parent Involvement.

Sincerely,

Tony Alfaro
Principal

AA:bjt

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Appendix C

USD
University of San Diego
School of Education

CONSENT TO ACT AS A EXPERT PANEL MEMBER

Elva H. Mora, a doctoral student at the University of San Diego, is conducting a research study to find out more about the important elements of Hispanic parent involvement programs. I understand the purpose of the study will be to develop a successful Hispanic parent involvement model.

As an expert panelist, I understand that I will be making recommendations in an interview for effective Hispanic parent involvement models. I will be asked several questions in an interview which will be audio taped for approximately 60 minutes.

I understand that I may not benefit from the study personally, but the new knowledge gained will help the investigator with further research in developing a comprehensive model for Hispanic parent involvement. However, as a panel expert, I may use the research results for further research in the area of parent involvement. Participation in this study does not involve any added risks or incurred expenses.

Elva H. Mora has explained this study to me and answered my questions. If I have other questions, I may reach Elva H. Mora at (619) 496-8330 ext 225 or (619) 444-1749.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time.

Research records will be kept completely confidential, and any report resulting from this study will ensure participant anonymity. My identity will not be disclosed without my consent.

There are no other agreements, written or verbal, related to this study beyond those expressed on this consent.

_____ _____
Name Title

_____
Location

_____ _____
Signature of Subject Date

_____ _____
Signature of Researcher Date

_____ _____
Signature of Witness Date

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Appendix D

USD

University of San Diego
School of Education
5998 Alcala Park
San Diego, CA 92110-2492

Expert Panel Interview Questions

1. How have you been involved in parent involvement programs?

2. What research have you done in parent involvement?

3. What are the components of successful parent involvement programs for the general population?

4. What components, if any, are different for Hispanic parent programs?

5. What problems have you encountered in Hispanic parent involvement programs?

6. How do you recruit parents and Hispanic parents who are reluctant to become involved?

7. How do you make Hispanic parents feel comfortable in a school setting?

8. Are there ways schools can assist Hispanic parents in dealing with life stresses which inhibit their involvement in parent/school programs?

9. How can you overcome negative perceptions on the part of school personnel and Mexican/Mexican-American parents?

10. As a scholar in the field of parent involvement, what have you found to be an ideal model of Hispanic parent involvement?

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Appendix E

USD
University of San Diego
School of Education

CONSENT TO ACT AS A SUBJECT

Elva H. Mora, a doctoral student at the University of San Diego, is conducting a research study to find out more about the important elements of Hispanic parent involvement programs. I understand the purpose of the study is to develop a successful parent involvement model.

I understand that I will be answering a survey in Spanish or English on several open-ended questions in a focus group interview. The focus groups will consist of eight members and I will be with other participants. I will be audio taped for approximately 20-30 minutes. The focus group interview will be held at Memorial Academy.

I understand that I may not benefit from the study personally, but the new knowledge gained will help the investigator with further research on developing a comprehensive model for Hispanic parent involvement. Participation in this study does not involve any added risk or incurred expenses.

Elva H. Mora has explained this study to me and answered my questions. If I have other questions, I may reach Elva H. Mora at 496-8330 ext 225.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time.

Research records will be kept completely confidential, and any report related to this study will ensure participant anonymity. My identity will not be disclosed without my consent.

There are no other agreements, written or verbal, related to this study beyond that expressed on this consent.

_____
Name

_____
Location

_____ _____
Signature of Subject Date

_____ _____
Signature of Researcher Date

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Appendix F

USD
Universidad de San Diego
Escuela de Educación

FORMA DE CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PADRES HISPANOS

Elva H. Mora, una alumna del programa doctoral de la Universidad de San Diego, está conduciendo un estudio para conocer los elementos importantes contenidos en los programas para padres hispanos en una escuela segundaria. Entiendo que el proposito del estudio es examinar los factores que promueven la integración de los padres en el mejoramiento de la educación y el éxito académico de sus hijos.

Comprendo que contestaré un cuestionario oral, en español o inglés, en conjunto con un grupo de ocho participantes por aproximadamente 20-30 minutos y se usará una cinta grabadora en la entrevista en la escuela Memorial Academy.

Comprendo que no obtendré ningún beneficio de parte de este estudio, de cualquier manera el conocimiento obtenido del mismo servirá para desarrollar un programa de integración para padres hispanos. La participación en este estudio no requiere riesgos, ni costos para los padres.

Elva H. Mora me ha explicado el desarrollo de este estudio y ha contestado a todas mis preguntas. Para cualquier pregunta adicional puedo llamar a Elva H. Mora, al teléfono 496-8330 ext 225.

Mi participación en este estudio es voluntario. Puedo salirme del estudio en cualquier momento.

Los archivos del estudio serán confidenciales, y si el padre hispano no quiere dar su consentimiento puede quedar anónimo. Mi nombre no se dará sin mi consentimiento.

No habrá otros reglamentos o leyes escritas u orales, solamente lo que está escrito en esta forma.

_____
Nombre

_____
Lugar

_____ _____
Firma del Padre Hispano Fecha

_____ _____
Firma de la Investigadora Fecha

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Appendix G

USD

University of San Diego
School of Education
5998 Alcala Park
San Diego, CA 92110-2492

Hispanic Parent Focus Group Interview Questions

1. Are you involved at your child's school? If so, describe your involvement? How would you like to be involved?

2. What concerns do you have about parent involvement in this school?

3. What would help you as a parent become more active in your child's school?

4. Do you feel you need training to become an active parent in your child's school?

5. What factors do you feel promote Hispanic parent involvement?

6. How are you involved in your child's education at home? How would you like to be involved with your child's education at home?

    •How should the school be helping you in your children's education?
    •How could your children's teachers' be helping you in educating your children?

7. What is most important to you in Hispanic parent involvement programs?

8 What do you consider to be the major benefits of Hispanic parent involvement?

9. What do you consider to be the most helful of the parent involvement programs you have attended?

10. What concerns would you like to be discussed at future parent involvement programs? Do you have any suggestions for future parent involvement programs?

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Appendixe H

USD
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Escuela de Educación
5998 Alcala Park
San Diego, CA 92110-2492

Preguntas de Entrevista para Padres Hispanos

1. ¿Está usted relacionado con la escuela de su hijo/hija? Si lo está, describa en que forma está relacionado? ¿Cómo le gustaría relacionarse?

2. ¿Qué preguntas tiene usted sobre el programa para padres en esta escuela?

3. ¿En que le ayudaría a usted como padre estar más activo en la escuela de su hijo/a?

4. ¿Piensa usted que necesita entrenamiento para ser miembro activo en la escuela de su hijo/a?

5. ¿Qué puede hacer los administradores, maestros, consejeros para que usted se puede sentir mas confortable en relación con la escuela de su hijo/a?

6. ¿Qué papel desarrolla usted en la educación de su hijo en la casa? ¿Qué papel le gustaría tomar en relación a la educación de su hijo/a en casa?

7. Cómo debería la escuela ayudarle a usted en la educación de su hijo/a en casa? Cómo le pueden ayudar los maestros a usted en la educación de sus hijo/a?

8. ¿Cuáles considera usted que son los mejores beneficios, para los padres, de estos programas?

9. ¿Qué es lo que más le ha ayudado en los programas que usted ha asistido?

10. ¿Tiene usted sugerencias sobre lo que podría ayudar a los padres hispanos en relación a la educación de sus hijos? Tiene usted sugerencias para programas de padres?

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Appendix I

San Diego City Schools

Results: 1993 Survey of Parent Satisfaction

School: Middle/Junior High Schools

Item/Question	All Ethnic Groups		African American		Asian		Filipino		Hispanic		IndoChinese		Native American		Pacific Islander		White		Others	
	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem
#1. Do you feel that your child's school is safe?	Total Cnt 1,774	Total Cnt 1,624	Total Cnt 195	Total Cnt 158	Total Cnt 160	Total Cnt 174	Total Cnt 163	Total Cnt 185	Total Cnt 377	Total Cnt 349	Total Cnt 24	Total Cnt 22	Total Cnt 29	Total Cnt 23	Total Cnt 31	Total Cnt 18	Total Cnt 737	Total Cnt 662	Total Cnt 58	Total Cnt 55
Very Safe	9%	11%	10%	4%	14%	15%	12%	8%	11%	14%	21%	9%	3%	13%	16%	25%	7%	10%	5%	7%
Safe	65%	64%	70%	68%	67%	68%	55%	65%	70%	62%	58%	82%	62%	61%	52%	50%	63%	63%	72%	58%
Not Safe	21%	19%	16%	20%	13%	9%	25%	16%	15%	17%	13%	9%	28%	22%	23%	19%	27%	23%	17%	24%
Don't Know	5%	6%	4%	8%	7%	8%	9%	10%	4%	7%	8%	0%	7%	4%	10%	6%	3%	4%	5%	11%
#2. Is your child's school clean?	Total Cnt 1,798	Total Cnt 1,633	Total Cnt 198	Total Cnt 158	Total Cnt 161	Total Cnt 175	Total Cnt 164	Total Cnt 170	Total Cnt 380	Total Cnt 348	Total Cnt 24	Total Cnt 22	Total Cnt 30	Total Cnt 23	Total Cnt 32	Total Cnt 15	Total Cnt 751	Total Cnt 667	Total Cnt 60	Total Cnt 55
Very Clean	16%	15%	14%	8%	17%	17%	16%	11%	19%	20%	25%	27%	17%	22%	28%	20%	12%	15%	20%	11%
Clean	72%	70%	76%	78%	71%	68%	68%	77%	73%	70%	71%	50%	63%	74%	63%	73%	72%	68%	67%	69%
Not Clean	10%	11%	8%	10%	6%	8%	7%	8%	6%	5%	4%	14%	13%	4%	9%	7%	14%	15%	7%	18%
Don't Know	3%	4%	3%	3%	5%	7%	7%	4%	2%	5%	0%	9%	7%	0%	0%	0%	2%	3%	7%	2%
#3. Do you feel welcome when you go to the school?	Total Cnt 1,778	Total Cnt 1,642	Total Cnt 196	Total Cnt 160	Total Cnt 159	Total Cnt 176	Total Cnt 165	Total Cnt 168	Total Cnt 376	Total Cnt 348	Total Cnt 24	Total Cnt 22	Total Cnt 30	Total Cnt 23	Total Cnt 30	Total Cnt 16	Total Cnt 740	Total Cnt 675	Total Cnt 58	Total Cnt 54
Very Welcome	28%	26%	32%	24%	25%	25%	26%	24%	35%	30%	33%	23%	13%	22%	17%	19%	26%	26%	31%	22%
Welcome	63%	65%	56%	68%	67%	64%	65%	70%	59%	64%	63%	59%	80%	65%	63%	69%	66%	63%	55%	72%
Not Welcome	5%	6%	7%	5%	3%	5%	2%	2%	4%	4%	4%	9%	7%	9%	10%	6%	6%	6%	5%	4%
Don't Know	4%	4%	5%	3%	6%	7%	7%	4%	2%	3%	0%	9%	0%	4%	10%	6%	3%	3%	9%	2%

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San Diego City Schools

Results: 1993 Survey of Parent Satisfaction

School: Middle/Junior High Schools

Item/Question	All Ethnic Groups		African American		Asian		Filipino		Hispanic		IndoChinese		Native American		Pacific Islander		White		Others	
	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem
#4. Does the school staff show respect for parents?	Total Cnt 1,779	Total Cnt 1,639	Total Cnt 193	Total Cnt 158	Total Cnt 161	Total Cnt 176	Total Cnt 165	Total Cnt 169	Total Cnt 378	Total Cnt 352	Total Cnt 24	Total Cnt 22	Total Cnt 31	Total Cnt 22	Total Cnt 31	Total Cnt 14	Total Cnt 736	Total Cnt 671	Total Cnt 60	Total Cnt 55
Very Respectful	31%	29%	33%	27%	25%	27%	28%	28%	37%	36%	29%	41%	19%	32%	29%	21%	31%	28%	30%	25%
Respectful	60%	62%	58%	63%	65%	62%	62%	64%	58%	60%	63%	41%	65%	59%	55%	64%	61%	62%	58%	69%
Not Respectful	5%	5%	5%	6%	2%	5%	5%	2%	3%	2%	4%	9%	16%	0%	13%	7%	5%	7%	7%	4%
Don't Know	3%	4%	5%	4%	7%	6%	5%	6%	2%	3%	4%	9%	0%	9%	3%	7%	3%	4%	5%	2%
#5. Does the school staff expect your child to learn and be successful?	Total Cnt 1,790	Total Cnt 1,648	Total Cnt 196	Total Cnt 161	Total Cnt 160	Total Cnt 176	Total Cnt 162	Total Cnt 168	Total Cnt 377	Total Cnt 352	Total Cnt 24	Total Cnt 21	Total Cnt 30	Total Cnt 23	Total Cnt 32	Total Cnt 18	Total Cnt 749	Total Cnt 676	Total Cnt 60	Total Cnt 55
All Staff	33%	33%	30%	30%	42%	35%	34%	38%	33%	34%	33%	52%	30%	26%	34%	44%	32%	31%	28%	35%
Most Staff	45%	45%	44%	39%	38%	40%	47%	46%	46%	47%	46%	29%	50%	52%	31%	38%	46%	47%	42%	35%
Some Staff	19%	18%	24%	25%	15%	15%	13%	13%	17%	15%	17%	14%	20%	17%	31%	13%	19%	19%	25%	25%
Don't Know	4%	4%	2%	6%	5%	10%	6%	4%	5%	4%	4%	5%	0%	4%	3%	6%	3%	3%	5%	5%
#6. Does the school staff give your child extra help when it is needed?	Total Cnt 1,778	Total Cnt 1,626	Total Cnt 194	Total Cnt 159	Total Cnt 161	Total Cnt 174	Total Cnt 165	Total Cnt 168	Total Cnt 374	Total Cnt 346	Total Cnt 24	Total Cnt 22	Total Cnt 31	Total Cnt 23	Total Cnt 31	Total Cnt 18	Total Cnt 739	Total Cnt 664	Total Cnt 59	Total Cnt 55
Very Helpful	26%	26%	32%	25%	35%	28%	21%	29%	32%	31%	25%	50%	23%	22%	23%	19%	21%	22%	22%	18%
Helpful	55%	58%	50%	61%	57%	53%	62%	60%	56%	58%	63%	41%	48%	70%	39%	56%	54%	57%	59%	65%
Not Helpful	12%	9%	13%	8%	2%	7%	8%	3%	8%	6%	8%	5%	26%	4%	19%	13%	17%	13%	14%	5%
Don't Know	7%	8%	5%	7%	6%	11%	9%	8%	3%	5%	4%	5%	3%	4%	19%	13%	8%	8%	5%	11%

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San Diego City Schools

Results: 1993 Survey of Parent Satisfaction

School: Senior High Schools

Item/Question	All Ethnic Groups		African American		Asian		Filipino		Hispanic		IndoChinese		Native American		Pacific Islander		White		Others	
	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem
#7. Does the school staff let you know when there are problems or concerns?	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt
	1,983	1,908	204	193	199	208	200	172	317	314	47	28	35	27	32	32	879	855	70	79
Very Quickly	21%	18%	31%	16%	24%	21%	25%	19%	32%	32%	23%	21%	14%	19%	19%	9%	13%	12%	17%	16%
Quickly	38%	41%	31%	39%	49%	51%	46%	49%	38%	40%	51%	71%	37%	44%	41%	41%	34%	35%	36%	48%
Not Quickly	32%	30%	32%	36%	15%	14%	20%	21%	28%	19%	15%	4%	37%	37%	34%	41%	41%	38%	41%	25%
Don't Know	9%	12%	5%	7%	12%	14%	10%	10%	2%	8%	11%	4%	11%	0%	6%	9%	13%	15%	6%	10%
#8. Does the school staff treat children fairly?	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt
	1,992	1,908	200	195	197	207	200	173	318	314	47	28	38	26	30	32	892	854	70	79
Very Fair	17%	15%	16%	13%	21%	16%	14%	12%	20%	18%	19%	18%	18%	23%	23%	9%	16%	14%	13%	6%
Fair	59%	61%	57%	56%	58%	58%	62%	57%	56%	57%	57%	68%	53%	58%	53%	72%	61%	64%	51%	61%
Not Fair	13%	14%	15%	20%	13%	13%	8%	13%	14%	12%	9%	0%	21%	15%	10%	0%	12%	13%	19%	19%
Don't Know	11%	11%	13%	11%	9%	13%	18%	18%	9%	12%	15%	14%	8%	4%	13%	19%	11%	9%	17%	14%
#9. Are you satisfied with your child's achievement in school?	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt
	1,989	1,913	200	195	198	208	199	173	316	314	47	27	38	29	32	34	892	855	67	78
Very Satisfied	24%	31%	14%	26%	34%	36%	26%	30%	25%	28%	34%	44%	13%	24%	31%	12%	24%	31%	10%	36%
Satisfied	46%	49%	47%	43%	50%	53%	54%	54%	48%	58%	36%	48%	55%	59%	38%	56%	43%	45%	49%	46%
Not Satisfied	29%	19%	39%	30%	13%	9%	19%	15%	26%	12%	28%	7%	29%	17%	31%	32%	33%	23%	37%	17%
Don't Know	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	3%	1%

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San Diego City Schools

Results: 1993 Survey of Parent Satisfaction

School: Middle/Junior High Schools

Item/Question	All Ethnic Groups		African American		Asian		Filipino		Hispanic		IndoChinese		Native American		Pacific Islander		White		Others	
	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem
	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt
#10. Do you know whom to call at the school if you need information?	1,790	1,647	199	160	161	176	163	169	376	350	24	22	31	23	31	16	748	676	59	55
Very Sure	33%	34%	38%	36%	23%	24%	23%	28%	36%	35%	29%	32%	39%	43%	35%	38%	35%	37%	31%	42%
Sure	50%	49%	50%	48%	49%	45%	62%	54%	50%	47%	54%	50%	35%	43%	42%	50%	49%	49%	44%	47%
Not Sure	13%	14%	10%	14%	14%	20%	12%	15%	11%	15%	8%	9%	23%	9%	23%	13%	15%	13%	20%	11%
Don't Know	3%	3%	2%	1%	14%	10%	4%	3%	3%	3%	8%	9%	3%	4%	0%	0%	1%	1%	5%	0%
#11. Overall, how satisfied are you with this school?	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt	Total Cnt
	1,751	1,624	191	157	160	173	163	169	370	343	24	22	30	23	31	16	724	667	58	54
Very Satisfied	22%	24%	26%	19%	26%	27%	19%	23%	30%	29%	25%	23%	17%	26%	26%	19%	18%	21%	16%	26%
Satisfied	60%	60%	55%	60%	61%	61%	67%	71%	58%	60%	67%	68%	60%	65%	58%	69%	60%	58%	71%	52%
Not Satisfied	16%	14%	18%	17%	9%	9%	12%	4%	10%	8%	4%	9%	23%	9%	16%	13%	21%	20%	12%	19%
Don't Know	2%	2%	1%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%	4%

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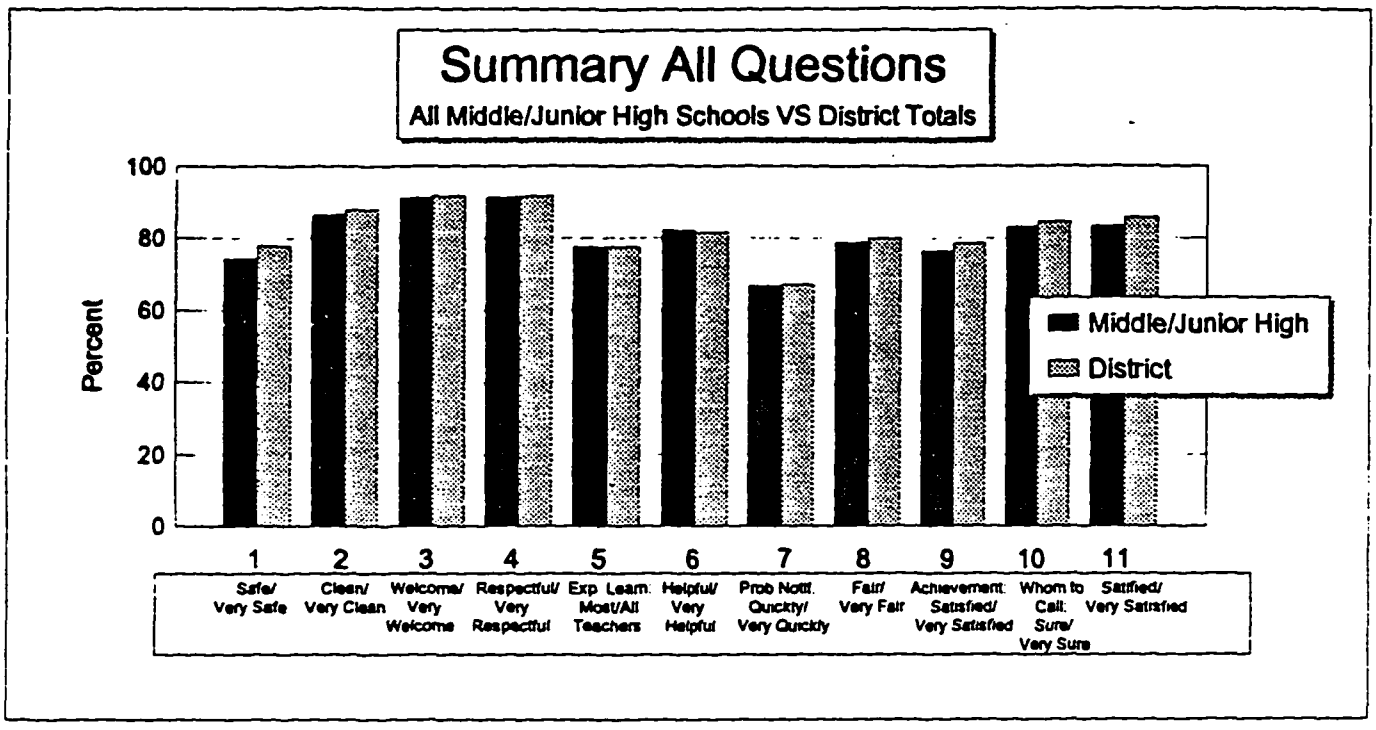

#1- Do you feel that your child's school is safe?

#2- Is your child's school clean?

#3- Do you feel welcome when you go to the school?

#4- Does the school staff show respect for parents?

#5- Does the school staff expect your child to learn and be successful?

#6- Does the school staff give your child extra help when it is needed?

#7- Does the school staff let you know when there are problems or concerns?

#8- Does the school staff treat children fairly?

#9- Are you satisfied with your child's achievement in school?

#10- Do you know whom to call at the school if you need information?

#11- Overall, how satisfied are you with this school?

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