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ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, KEEP YOUR EYES ON MS. CLARK: TWO MEXICAN IMMIGRANT CHILDREN MAKE THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN, by MARK B. COBB, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chair, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty. The Dean of the College of Education concurs.

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ABSTRACT

KEEP YOUR EYES ON MS. CLARK: TWO MEXICAN IMMIGRANT CHILDREN MAKE THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

by
Mark B. Cobb

Presented are case studies of two children as they make the transition from Mexican immigrant homes to kindergarten in an English-dominant school in the United States. In the first case, Victor adapts by keeping his attention focused on the teacher, which allows him to avoid disorientation and take on the role of exemplary student. In the second, Natalie adapts to kindergarten through her relationships with peers and the teacher. She often participates in class activities, however, without understanding the narrative or rationale behind them. Cross-case comparisons suggest that each student adapted in a way suited to his or her own needs and resources. The journey from disorientation to adaptation is described through the application of the holistic, systems-oriented, interactionalistic developmental approaches of Werner, Wapner, and Koizumi.

KEEP YOUR EYES ON MS. CLARK:
TWO MEXICAN IMMIGRANT CHILDREN MAKE
THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN
by
Mark B. Cobb

A Dissertation

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Doctor of Philosophy
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Georgia State University

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

The beginning of formal schooling is an important transition in a child's life. In many ways, the five-year-old is not an autonomous individual, but exists situated among parents, siblings, and other intimates. By age five, the child has commonly participated in a number of activities outside the home and family, but upon going to kindergarten, he or she is likely to be leaving home in unprecedented ways (Dockett & Perry, 2004; Fernie, 1988).

Compared to preschool, kindergarten is less child-centered, more formal, and more oriented toward achievement (Kemp, 2000; Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 1999). Kindergarteners are expected to work rather than play (Fernie, 1988), to earn praise through productivity (Entwistle & Alexander, 1999), and to satisfy sex-typed behavior norms (Jordan & Cowan, 1995; Paley, 1984; Sheldon, 1990). In kindergarten, children commit to roles that may set the stage for their long-term relationship with the school and society in general (Dyson, 1996; Jordan & Cowan, 1995; Koizumi, 2000; Nelson, 2004; Nesdale & Flessler, 2001; Skinner, Bryant, Coffman, & Campbell, 1998).

These demands constitute a drastic change in the lives of most children, and one that calls for considerable reorganization of their habitual ways of being (Koizumi, 2000; McCadden, 1997; Wapner, 2000). Situated within the institution of the school, under the

direction of the teacher, and in relation to fellow students, the child will not be the same person he or she was at home. This shift from a single, *master* context to a life shared between two main contexts calls for the acquisition of new identities and skills, and for an integration of the old and the new.

Many of the findings related to the transition to kindergarten can be summarized in a simple formula: it is easiest when the contexts of home and school are most similar (Love, Logue, Trudeau, & Thayer, 1992; Pianta, Rimm-Kaufman, & Cox, 2002; Schulting, Malone, & Dodge, 2005; Zill & West, 2000). The same formula sums up a number of approaches to explaining racial and ethnic achievement gaps in schools. According to cultural mismatch theories, students of color and others outside the mainstream lag behind their mainstream peers because the ways of being and working they bring to school do not meet the schools' expectations. Whether the blame is placed on the children and their families for not developing the requisite skills, or on the school for aligning itself with the particular talents of the mainstream group, the problem is seen to reside in the mismatch of the two cultures. For all children there is some mismatch between their preschool lives and their lives as students, between the culture of their homes and the culture of the school, and it is greater for some than for others.

While the challenges of smoothing children's transition to kindergarten and closing racial and ethnic achievement gaps can be summed up as a matter of difference between contexts, cultures, or communities, it does not necessarily follow that the solution is to minimize these differences. At five most children are developmentally poised to step into a new, more formal and more demanding situation. Rogoff (2003) notes that in cultures throughout history and around the world, children are given new

responsibilities and expected to take on new roles at about this age. Piaget's (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) evidence of a qualitative shift in children's cognitive abilities during this same period also supports the idea that a drastic transition is warranted. In the case of children crossing cultural lines, contact with the other cultures is also desirable. What is important is not that the child is protected from transitions and new contexts, but that the benefits and challenges of making these transitions are understood and taken into account when planning school policies.

Educational institutions can reproduce class divisions or they can help build a more just society. The current flow of Mexican immigrants into the United States offers both possibilities. Each year roughly 300,000 Mexicans move to the United States (Allen, 2005; Escobar, Martin, Schatzer, & Martin, 2003; Valdés, 1996). They adapt to their new environment, and are also shaping it. Public schools have an important part to play in this historic process of mutual accommodation. As a partner in the raising of children, the school intercedes in the transmission of culture from one generation to the next. As a familiar representative of the government, the school speaks for the community and its authorities. Public schools foster the assimilation of immigrants, and also serve as venues for negotiating the inclusion of foreign ways of being into the existing society.

At present, the service rendered to these students and the society is unsatisfactory by a number of measures. Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows little change in the white-Hispanic achievement gap over the last 30 years (Lee, 2002). Twenty-three percent of Hispanic students drop out of high school, compared to 11% of whites. Those still in school at age 17 score an average of four years

behind the norm for whites (Allen, 2005; Lee, 2004; NCES, 2005). Among Hispanics in the U.S., Mexican Americans have the lowest average test scores and the highest dropout rates (Ream, 2005). The public schools are surely rendering some service to Mexican-American students, but if their school experience overall is one of relative failure, then the schools are preparing them to enter the society at the lowest levels.

In addition to academic outcomes, becoming a part of American society through the schools will have psychological and other personal effects. Many Hispanic children who live in the U.S. come to prefer English at an early age, and either lose or fail to develop fully their ability to speak Spanish (Wong-Fillmore, 1991). In many cases, this alienates them from their family and their community of origin (Cummins, 1998; Heinz, 2001). Baez (2002) speaks of having to forget Spanish in order to become normal. This stripping of students' home culture and language is another way schools may do Mexican immigrant children a disservice.

Research Questions

Two goals, then, set the stage for this study. One is to understand the processes through which Mexican immigrants become Mexican Americans, and what role American public schools play in this process. The second is to learn more about how children in general make the transition to kindergarten.

Ideally, schools help Mexican immigrants become successful citizens, in economic as well as personal terms, and support the country in the task of incorporating them. A great number of disciplines, theories, and research programs could inform this effort, seeking insights about: ecological transitions; moving into and between communities; cultural difference and culturally responsive pedagogy; cultural identity;

second language development; bilingualism and biculturalism; postcolonialism; forming hybrid cultures or third spaces; and the particular ways in which these issues apply to Mexican Americans.

A good place to start mapping this long-term transition is to examine the initial transition from Mexican home to American institution at kindergarten. What happens at this moment influences the journey toward academic achievement by the end of high school, and toward emotional and cognitive well being as a bicultural person. This study takes an open-ended, ethnographic, phenomenological approach to this issue, with case studies of two children of Mexican immigrants through their entry to kindergarten. It focuses on the children's sense of the experience in order to collect insights that could later serve as part of explanations of the larger, long-term processes of education, assimilation, and accommodation.

This study also illuminates the nature of the transition to kindergarten apart from its application to the union of Mexican immigrants and American society. Starting school may be a critical moment in the development of most children, and is therefore worthy of careful study. While the focal children in this study are from immigrant homes, they faced many of the same challenges English-speaking, mainstream children face, such as learning classroom rules, making friends, and taking on new roles. This investigation, then, is expected to add to the larger discussion of how children experience the transition to kindergarten, and thus how schools can better support them.

The research questions for the study were as follows:

1. What were the most salient aspects of the transition to kindergarten for these Mexican immigrant children in an English-oriented U.S. public school?

2. How can their experience best be characterized or understood?
3. What challenges and supports had the greatest effects on their transition experience?

Theoretical Orientation

Ideals of groundedness and open-endedness guided the design and execution of this study. Given that the transition to kindergarten for Mexican immigrant children is a phenomenon worthy of study, open-ended case studies offer an opportunity for the apprehension of new insights about that phenomenon. The overall standard for decisions about the procedures of the study, however, was to maintain an open stance, to allow core problems and processes to emerge from the data (Glaser, 1978).

Another expressed in the research questions involves a focus on the perspectives of the children. Their transition experience could be approached or interpreted in any number of ways, with regard to any number of criteria (e.g., academic achievement, social adjustment, maintenance of their native culture, acclimation to the new culture). In making decisions about the form and direction of the study, the children's interests, interpretations, and concerns (whether expressed by them or observed by others) should remain the central focus. This phenomenological approach is supported by Schütz's (1967) contention that the person having an experience is in the best position to know its meaning.

Within this grounded and phenomenological approach, the study was necessarily conducted by a researcher with certain beliefs about children, kindergarten, transitions, and Mexican immigrants. This section describes four major theoretical orientations (ecological theory, sociocultural theory, Piagetian constructivism, and identity theory)

and the ways in which those orientations apply to the issues considered. An overview will also be given of theories that describe transitions in general.

Ecological and sociocultural theories are suited to describe children participating in multiple contexts, and the demands a shift to a new context puts on them. Ecological theory serves to organize the range of influences that act upon the child. Sociocultural theory describes how persons rely on shared activity and socially acquired means. Both offer a *situated* view of the child, a view of the child as a part of communities and cultures.

In contrast, Piagetian constructivism and identity theory describe the person's need to integrate his or her understandings of self and world into coherent wholes. Belonging to both school and home puts pressure on the child to be divided, to be multiple. Piagetian constructivism describes the child's need to maintain a single, coherent view of the world, while identity theory describes a need to maintain a single, coherent self. The tension between the child's situatedness and the need for unity is the organizing principle for this exposition of the four theories.

During analysis, a holistic, interactionalist perspective was also incorporated to understand the findings and to unify the above orientations. (That perspective will not be described until Chapter V since it did not influence the design of the study.) Each orientation offered a uniquely important vantage point with which to consider the transition to kindergarten.

A Situated View of the Child: Ecological and Sociocultural Theories

Ecological Theory

Throughout the life course, human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between

an active, evolving bio-psychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment. (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p. 996)

Ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) focuses on how elements of a person's environment affect that person's development. These contexts or settings and their interrelationships are often represented as a series of nested circles (see figure 1). This image of nested contexts helps researchers seek environmental influences on a number of levels, and see the relationships among those influences.

Regarding the transition to kindergarten, ecological theory offers a way to describe the move from one setting to another, and in the case of the Mexican immigrant kindergartener, it offers a way to describe the unique complex of influences acting upon a child whose roots are in two different countries.

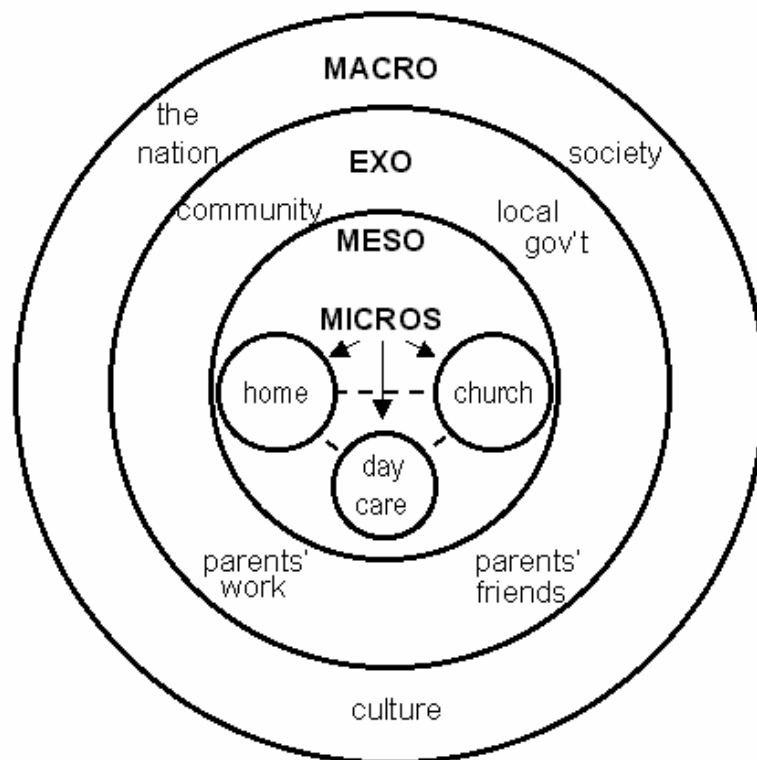


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological levels.

The *microsystem* is the most intimate level of context, the activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Children's development is influenced by their caregivers' ways of interacting with them, the food they eat, and the toys with which they play, and by the particular configuration of parents, siblings, and extended family or community members with whom the child comes in regular contact. In addition to life at home, a preschool child may participate directly in a number of settings, such as a friend's home, birthday parties, and church. The transition to school can be described as the addition of a new microsystem setting. Each microsetting has features (such as the language used at home) that can be traced to higher levels in the ecological system, but the child's interactions all occur here, and so every environmental influence is "delivered" to the child through some microsystem setting.

The *mesosystem* consists of the set of microsystem settings to which one belongs and the dynamic relationships among them. In the case of the transition to kindergarten, the relationship between home and school is of primary interest. When parents and teachers understand each other and share goals for a child, and when the child's ways of being at home serve him or her well in school, the transition is easier.

As the child may participate in settings other than home and school, such as a church, athletic team, or day care center, these may also play a role in the child's transition to kindergarten. If, for instance, a Mexican immigrant child is spoken to only in English at school, a soccer coach who speaks Spanish could be an important example of an authority figure acting through, and thereby validating, the child's home language. Without the team setting, the contrasts between home and school might have established

English as the language of institutional authority figures. The child's experience in the team setting makes this simple association less likely.

Exosystem factors are from settings to which the subject does not belong, but which indirectly affect him or her. These could include, for a child, the parents' workplaces and social networks, as well as local political and social groups. The parents' employability and income levels will play a large role in determining where the family lives, and thereby which school the child attends. Support from friends and community organizations often help parents know what to expect of school, and how to use school and other community resources. Economic hardships, such as the need to work multiple jobs or commute long distances, as well as legal struggles, such as deportation or arrest, may take parents out of their children's lives for inordinate amounts of time, or cause the family to relocate repeatedly.

The *macrosystem* is the most encompassing context, representing the cultural and political climate of the society as a whole. The experience of an American kindergartener is shaped by historical and current understandings and debates about the purpose and nature of kindergaren. From the 1930's to the 1980's, kindergartens in the United States gradually became a part of public elementary schools, and throughout that period there was tension between play-centered philosophy of the nursery school and the academic achievement focus of the elementary school (Walmsley, Camp, & Walmsley, 1992). In the 1980's and 1990's, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) led a movement for developmentally appropriate curriculum throughout the primary grades, while the National Educational Reading Panel Report of 2000 fostered a greater emphasis on the development of reading skills (Eisenhart &

Towne, 2003). The No Child Left Behind act of 2001 embodied the ideals of standards-based instruction and accountability (Stipek, 2006), and had a very direct impact on the classroom in this study in the form of the America's Choice (www.ncee.org) reform program which was instituted there.

Macrosystem factors include the prevailing morality and legal system. The Mexican immigrant child in kindergarten will be affected by attitudes and ideals related to cultural and linguistic difference, as well as national immigration policies. The Mexican immigrant family will be affected by economic policies and circumstances in both the United States and in Mexico.

Ecological theory offers a way to describe why the transition to kindergarten may be more difficult for some children than for others. Children vary greatly in how much they have left home before starting school. Some have had years in preschool or staying with babysitters, while others have only rarely been apart from their parents. In either case, the addition of the classroom as a new microsetting will create a new system of mesosystem interactions. Given the amount of time children spend in school, it is likely that school will now share a primary status with the home. Since the school has as its purpose the inculcation of new skills and knowledge, it may rival the home as the main context through which higher-level forces influence the child.

If the child's home life is situated within the same exo- and macro-system settings as the school, then the higher-level influences acting upon him or her, though now delivered in a new setting, will be familiar. For children of immigrant families, the transition from one macrosystem to another may involve a shift at all levels. Figure 2 represents this situation.

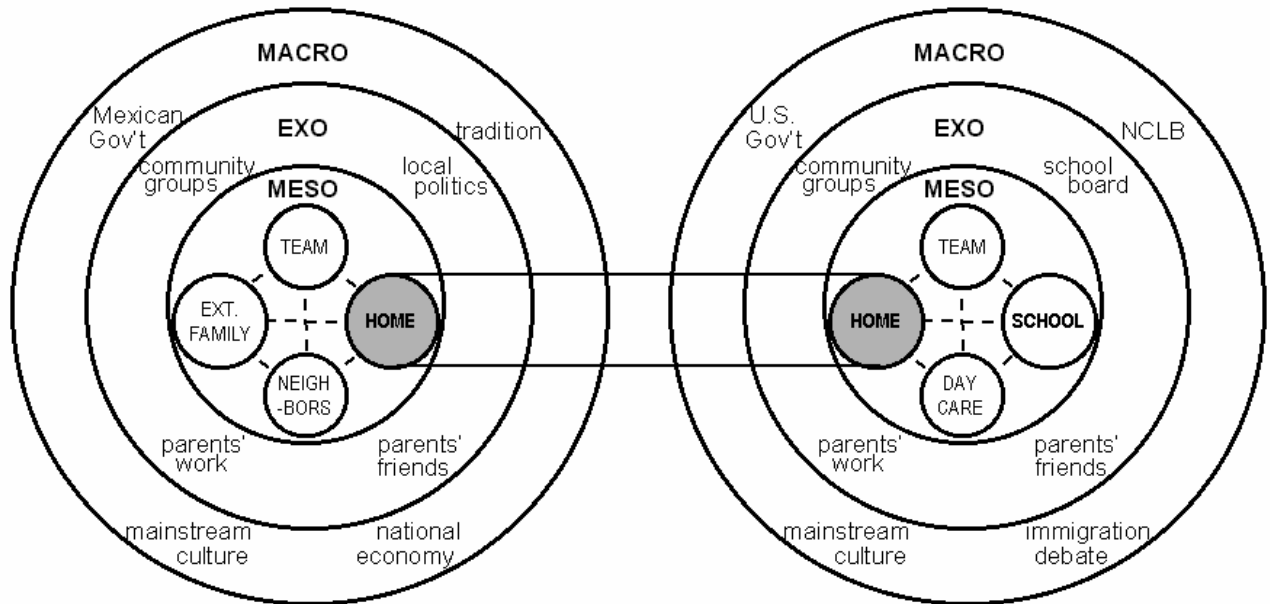


Figure 2. An example of an ecological diagram for a Mexican immigrant kindergartener.

In figure 2, the child's home is seen as belonging to two separate macrosystems. On the left are the family's roots in a Mexican town. Though the family now lives in the United States, their ways of being are still those developed within the Mexican macrosystem. Their values likely center on *respeto* and *familismo*, Mexican traditions that center life in the roles of the family and the duties these roles imply. Their move to the United States, an important transition in their lives, will have come as a result of macro- and exo-system occurrences in Mexico, such as the loss of a job or a connection to someone who has successfully relocated in the United States. Once here, there connections to Mexico may be maintained, as they send money to relatives or watch Mexican soccer in the local Mexican bar.

Being physically in the United States, however, involves interacting with landlords, employers, service providers, and government authorities. Thus the Mexican immigrant home is also described in figure 2 as being part of the meso-, exo-, and

macrosystem contexts of their new home. The family will be affected by the school and its policies, and therefore by the school board and such national policies as No Child Left Behind. They will be in contact with the values, food, music, politics and economic climate of the United States. Some families will cling to their traditional ways, while others will work to assimilate as quickly as possible. In either case, the forces of the American macrosystem influence the contexts within it over time. The family will be subject to influences from both cultures.

For most children, then, the transition to kindergarten can be described as the addition of a new microsystem context to their lives, which will affect the existing web of mesosystem connections. For Mexican immigrant children and others outside the cultural mainstream of the U.S., coming to kindergarten often means bringing the child and his or her family in greater contact with new exosystem and macrosystem influences. The child may be the first in a family to learn English. School registration and parent-teacher conferences may be unprecedented levels of interaction with U.S. institutions for the parents. Issues of cultural and ethnic difference, and their meaning within the wider culture, may be made more salient.

Ecological theory is important to this study because it addresses the individual's situatedness within multiple contexts. All individuals can be thus described, but for immigrants that multiplicity is complicated by the presence of dual exo- and macrosystems.

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory complements ecological theory as a promising way to examine the transition from home to school and from one country to another because it

focuses on how persons are situated within social groups; how these groups shape an individual's ways of being; and how individuals move from one group to another (Wertsch, 1991). A sociocultural approach supports a depiction of the Mexican immigrant kindergartener as a person acquiring the means to function in a new environment and situated within multiple environments.

According to sociocultural theory, the person is constituted within a social context, and cannot be treated as a discrete recipient of environmental influences (Vygotsky, 1978). The person does not move intact from one setting to another. Rather, the person is constituted in one setting and then in another, and may enact different ways of being appropriate to each.

Wertch (1991) summarized Vygotsky's sociocultural method in three ideas: that behaviors should be studied *historically*, as being situated within a course of development; that the higher mental functions originate in shared activity, on the *intermental* plane; and that individuals employ tools or *mediational means* from their cultures which enable them to act. Taking activity as the unit of analysis in order to see the person and the environment acting in concert is also a central concept (Cole, 1985).

Vygotsky's historical (also known *genetic* or *developmental*) method situates the child's skill within an unfolding process of development. Vygotsky challenged simplistic descriptions of children's skills, which suggests that researchers situate a child's performance at any particular moment within a developmental stream. Sociocultural theory challenges the image of a skill or piece of knowledge as something an individual either possesses or does not possess. What a child can do at any moment is understood as

a product of a number of factors: the child's history, the expectations of the group to which he or she belongs, and the supports available in the setting.

The child arriving at school for the first time is assessed and may be evaluated in terms of his or her "readiness." A historical approach suggests that such initial snapshots of the child should be treated with caution. Children arrive at kindergarten in the midst of a complex set of developmental streams and with ways of enacting and expressing their skills that are suited to the homes or preschools where they were acquired. One child may be willing to count only if asked in Spanish, another only if there is some purpose to the work, and another only when accompanied by a peer. The skills demonstrated by the child can be thought of as products emerging from particular sets of circumstances, rather than as qualities the child does or does not possess.

Vygotsky's most essential effort to treat learning historically is his contention that all the higher mental functions appear first on the intermental plane, as a social activity (1978). Individual learning and all higher *intramental* activities arise as internalized, adapted versions of shared processes. This insight has been applied in classrooms by describing teachers' facilitation of students' learning in terms of *scaffolding*. The teacher's role is to support the students or create supports for them that allow them to exhibit a targeted skill. Support is then gradually withdrawn as the child becomes able to complete the task more independently. While efforts to employ sociocultural scaffolding in classrooms focus on helping children meet instructional objectives, unintentional and affective aspects of the teacher's support may also be internalized. The child's work habits may come to include an imitation of the teacher's frustration or praise.

Sociocultural theory focuses on how a person's actions are determined by the social context in which he or she is situated (or has been situated). Context is said to determine action through tools and signs, also known as *mediational means* or *semiotic devices* (Wertsch, 1991). People learn to meet their needs and participate in social activities using the tools and signs particular to the groups in which they live. Thus, the community in which one lives determines both the tools one knows how to use and the tools that function inside that group. Mediation means may be as concrete as the tongue-scraper, a staple of Japanese oral hygiene, or as abstract as the Protestant work ethic. For the five-year-old, cultural tools at home may include standing on a chair to get a snack from the cabinet, or speaking to an adult in a whiney voice to be comforted. At school, the child may employ tools such as using an exaggerated posture to indicate compliance with the teacher's directions, or remembering that Friday is show-and-tell day.

From a sociocultural perspective, coming to school requires finding support for familiar practices, finding new ways to apply familiar practices, and finding ways to participate in unfamiliar practices. As suggested by the examples in figure 3, many basic desires the child has learned to satisfy at home will be satisfied by different means at school. A child who wants a hug may walk toward his or her mother with open arms and a particular facial expression, and may find this works with the teacher as well. It may be, however, that at school the best way to get affection from the teacher is to work hard on one's writing or to clean up after centers. Other desires, such as eating when hungry, cannot be fulfilled except by waiting for the designated time. While this list deals with examples of desires associated with both settings, kindergarteners are also likely to

develop new desires suited to classroom life, like achieving status as a well-behaved student or a good writer.

desire	home	school
food	ask mom	wait for planned time
drink	get own	ask at right time
rest	go lie down	wait for planned time
affection	sit with mom	show work to teacher
play outside	ask mom	wait for planned time

Figure 3. Possible mediational means employed at home and at school to fulfill five-year-old's basic desires.

Among the mediational means that children internalize within a culture, language stands out as the “tool of tools” (Luria, 1976). Language is the foundation for interacting with others and for internal cognitive processes (Hickmann, 2003). In an English-speaking kindergarten, English is needed to make requests, understand directions, and complete many academic tasks. English is needed both to understand the expectations of the teacher and to participate in many of the activities.

The primary language of the classroom is the most striking example of a tool that will be familiar to some new kindergarteners and that helps them participate in the group's activities, but there are many others. Children arrive at school with expectations about how they will relate to adults. When an adult reads a story, does one interrupt with questions? When an adults ask you a question, is it because they want to gain information, or just to test you? Children arrive with expectations about the purpose and value of activities such as reading, writing, coloring, listening to stories, singing songs,

public performance, and working with peers. In a number of ways, then, the transition to kindergarten can be considered in terms of the differences between the cultural tools (*mediational means* or *ways of being*) with which children are familiar and those that function at school.

The term “tools,” in its common usage, suggests something an autonomous individual could take up and employ as a means to some end. This is somewhat at odds with a sociocultural understanding of mediational means. Actions are performed by a person-acting-with-mediational-means (Wertsch, 1991), which is to say that just as much as the person employs the means, the means act through the person. The new kindergartener walking in line exaggerates his posture in order to signal his compliance to the teacher, but it can also be said that the local custom of signaling compliance in this way expresses itself through the child. This interdependence of person and means within a context results in a focus on action as the unit of analysis. It is in the action that these factors come into being together.

Lave and Wenger (1991) offer an apprenticeship model to describe learning in sociocultural terms. One enters a group on the periphery, as an apprentice. At first, the apprentice’s duties are simple, but through this *legitimate peripheral participation* more central aspects of the shared activity become familiar. One joins the group by learning its practices, but learns its practices through membership.

A newborn baby could be considered an apprentice to the family, first observing and participating in small ways, and then gradually making greater contributions, becoming more central to the family’s activities. As a preschooler, the child may join a group of playmates with established ways of interacting, and again take the role of

apprentice, gradually learning what games to play, how to manage problems, and other skills related to participating in and organizing the group's activities. When the time comes to go to kindergarten, the child again stands at the edge of a new group. Ideally, the child is able to participate legitimately in classroom activities from the first day of school, and that participation will allow gradual internalization of the group's practices, which in turn allows greater participation.

While the socioculturalism of Vygotsky (1978) and Wertsch (1991) describes learning as occurring through participation in shared activity, Lave and Wenger's (1991) focus on moving from the periphery to the center calls attention to learning as not only a product of, but also a means to participation in shared activity. The apprentice wants or needs to belong to the group, and enters into a recursive process of progressive belonging and learning.

The group may also be influenced by the participation of its new member. The practices employed by a community change over time. At home, parents may change their policies on bedtime as the child gets older, and on snacks if a child gets overweight. Children invent new ways to entertain themselves or rebel against adult authority, which necessitates the creation of new policies. The culture of a kindergarten classroom, including the procedures students are expected to follow, the way they are expected to relate to each other and the teacher, and the sorts of activities that will go on is planned by the teacher before the children arrive. When they arrive, however, they bring their own expectations and ways of being into the equation. Teachers often change their plans to accommodate these circumstances. Some child-initiated practices, such as trading food or bringing toys to school, may become established outside the teacher's policies.

The culture of the home may also be affected as students bring home practices they have learned at school.

All persons, then, exist within communities. One joins and operates within a community by employing the mediational means associated with it. The community's culture, however, changes over time as it is practiced. Children arrive at school with sets of skills and expectations derived from home and any other microsystem settings they have experienced. In many cases, those means may be operable at school, and the transition to kindergarten is not a drastic change. When students' homes are shaped by different ecological influences or employ different ways of being than those found at school, however, the transition to kindergarten may require the child to learn to participate in a great many novel practices, to employ drastically different ways of being.

The Need to Be One: Piagetian Constructivism and Identity Theory

If the human were entirely subject to the forces of the social contexts within which it resided, then the child could be expected to maintain separate ways of being at home and at school, and in several other settings as well. The need to enact different ways of being to suit the contexts in which one participates, however, competes with the need to hold a single, coherent view of the world and of oneself. Piagetian constructivism and identity theory address aspects of human nature that reject multiplicity, and work toward an integration of mental representations and of the self.

Piaget's Constructivism: A Consistent Representation of the World

Piaget describes children as active agents, working to make sense of their surroundings. Their minds construct and maintain a working model of the world and employ it to understand their experiences. The child uses this model to understand

experiences, but also uses experience to update the model. The dynamic interaction between the child's *schema* and his or her experiences is driven by the desire to bring the two into harmony, by a process Piaget calls *equilibration* (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory similarly holds that awareness of inconsistencies in one's cognitions causes distress, motivating the person to settle the discrepancy.

While a child may need to participate in several communities, he or she must organize these experiences within a single mental representation of the world. This puts some limit on the degree to which the person can be multiple, and begins to define a core person that moves among contexts. Given that many children in the world are bilingual, problems like the same object being called "chair" and "*silla*" are not insoluble. It is not as clear where more conceptual contrasts in ways of seeing the world may cause dissonance.

To illustrate, a child from a home where one takes off one's shoes upon entering may learn on the first day of school that one leaves one's shoes on there. It may be a simple matter to remember that the two settings have different rules, and that these rules treat shoes and inside environments differently. These rules, however, imply ways of seeing shoes and inside environments. Are shoes dirty or not? Are inside spaces to be respected or not? A child who understood the policies about shoes as reflecting their essential nature would experience dissonance. To avoid dissonance while accepting the opposing policies seems to require that the nature of shoes come not from the shoes themselves but from the system of values from which they are seen. In this way, moving

to a new setting with new standards may require a higher level of organization within the child's mental model of the world.

Piaget described cognitive development in childhood as a series of qualitative changes in the way children understand the world. At five, the central breakthrough in thinking Piaget predicts is that the child is moving beyond *egocentric* thought, beginning to *decenter*. The younger child attends to only one aspect of a thing, takes only one perspective on a situation, while the older child can consider two at once, as in "the water is higher in this glass, but the glass is thinner."

Similarly, research into children's development of a theory of mind suggests that five-year-olds are just beginning to understand that each person has his or her own perspective. In the classic test, a child is shown a Band-Aid box and surprised when it is revealed that it contains candies. At this point, the child is asked what another child will think is in the box. The three-year-old predicts that the child will know the box holds candies, and even deny there was a time when he or she held any different view (Moses & Flavell, 1990). Such a child has a mental representation of the world, but appears to think of this model as reality, evident in a single form to all. To answer correctly, the child must think of each person as carrying his or her own representation of the world and have some theory about how persons develop these representations. The child must think: "He won't know what's in the box because he's looking at the label and hasn't seen inside." The ability to make these calculations is generally acquired between the ages of three and five (Flavell & Miller, 1998).

That five-year-olds are in the process of developing these skills suggests both that it may be difficult for them to represent divergent views of the world, and that it may be a

good time for them to attempt such tasks. This newfound ability to imagine multiple perspectives may enable the child to handle complex definitions such as “shoes at home are dirty” versus “shoes at school are not.” Novel experiences at the appropriate level drive learning in both sociocultural and constructivist theory, and the demands of understanding contrasting settings and rules may be well suited to the development of the five-year-old.

The Mexican immigrant child entering kindergarten is challenged to make sense of two languages, two cultures, and to do so within a new community outside his or her family. These demands call for a higher level of cognitive organization, a representation of the world that can incorporate different ways of knowing, valuing, and behaving. A constructivist approach and theory of mind research, then, suggest the difficulty of maintaining a single representation of a life lived in different settings, but they also suggest that the five-year-old is prepared to build that complex understanding of life.

The individual’s need for unity—that is, the need to make of diverse experiences an integrated whole, is also expressed in a range of work on identity theory. Where Piagetian constructivism suggests the child seeks coherence, and therefore works to maintain a unified representation of the world, identity theory suggests that it is also necessary to create a single, integrated understanding of oneself.

Identity Theory

In the work of James (1890/1891), Cooley (1902/1964), Erikson (1950), and Marcia (1967), humans strive to create a sense of continuity and integration among the many experiences and expressions of self over time and across roles: a unified identity or self. If this is the case, then joining a new group requires not only learning how to

function within that group, but also how to make adjustments to one's overall sense of self.

James (1981/1890) postulated a material self, a social self, a spiritual self, and a pure ego. The social self was considered multiple (a self for each social role one plays or each person one knows), but all were organized in a hierarchical system. Cooley (1964/1902) thought of self-development largely in terms of taking one's many social selves and making a coherent whole of them. For Erikson (1950), the concept of identity centered on three kinds of integration. *Social identity* involves a synthesis of one's commitment to various groups, as a member and in accepting their beliefs and values. *Self-identity* integrates the roles one plays and the self-images one projects. *Ego identity* structures the whole of one's personality and creates a sense of continuity through time and space. Ego identity status theory similarly describes mature identity as striving toward sameness and continuity, seeking closure, consistency, and commitment (Schachter, 2002).

The claim that persons need to unify their many experiences and expressions of self into a unified whole is the basis for identity theory. According to this family of theories, one must understand oneself as a single entity, with characteristics that form a coherent, if not unchanging, whole. This need is understood as contrary to the universal human experience of multiple contexts, roles, and self-presentations.

The problem the kindergartener faces, then, is to belong to two different settings, and exist as both the situated child-at-home and the situated child-at-school, and yet construct a single identity that encompasses the two. When the kindergartener's home identity is rooted in the language, values, and practices of one macrosystem while his or

her school identity must develop within the language, values, and practices of another, creating a coherent whole may be difficult.

It has been suggested previously that five-year-olds are prepared to construct representational systems that account for context-dependent meanings and practices, and hierarchical structures have been suggested in identity theory literature (James, 1981/1890). It has often been suggested, however, that a single culture must be primary in one's identity, that it is not possible to be fully bicultural.

Baez (2002) recounted his own identity transformation as a Puerto Rican boy in American schools. Learning English and being accepted seemed to require that he forget his Spanish and his Puerto Rican ways of being.

“To learn a new language, one has to live it; one has to learn its sights and sounds, its practices and norms. To live here successfully, one has to learn English (“proper” English, that is). To learn English requires forgetting Spanish (and all the sights and sounds associated with it). Anyway, for me that was the case.” (p. 124)

The idea that people who find themselves between cultures must choose one or the other is disputed by Borne (2001), who sees children's “mother tongue” as just one of many registers from which they may draw. A further rejection of the dichotomous view is found in the concepts of *hybridity* (Gutierrez, 1999) and *third space* (Brittain, 2005; Lam, 2004; Max, 2005). These theories describe clashes between cultures result in new ways of being that draw from both. Again, these observations apply both to the transition from one country to another and to that from home to school. The question then becomes whether coming to school entails a choice between being the person one has been in one's family, or committing to a student identity as primary.

If it is necessary to identify primarily with a single culture, the Mexican immigrant child coming to an American kindergarten might have a choice to make, between being a Mexican child who acts in the expected way while at school, or in some more fundamental way becoming an American child. If, on the other hand, it is possible for children to create identities that accommodate separate cultures, then a third way is possible for the Mexican immigrant child. This might mean constructing a master identity that maintains separate personas for each culture, or a hybrid identity that blends features from both.

Similar observations could be made about a child who makes the less drastic transition from mainstream American home to kindergarten. Some children might remain more or less who they were at home, while others undergo a shift in overall identity, others maintain separate identities, and yet others construct hybrid identities. Commitments to aspects of the school self might also change over time. Standing up straight in line may seem a contrived and unnatural behavior at first, but later becomes an authentic way to express solidarity with the teacher.

Hence, forming an identity involves not only seeing oneself in a particular way, but becoming committed to that view, “identifying” with it. One may enact the ways of a new social setting without belonging to it. What remains unclear is to what extent belonging to one setting, in terms of being committed to one’s identity within it, means ceasing to belong to another.

Synthesis

In this study, children’s transition to kindergarten is examined through several lenses. The primary contrast among these is a familiar one in the field of child

development: the child as a participant in shared activities and in some sense as a medium for the tools and actions of communities versus the child as an agent working to understand and control his or her environment. These two perspectives view the child from different directions, but need not be considered mutually exclusive. Employing both reflects the author's sense that both are necessary for a satisfying understanding of child development, and that in this study, the tension between them is central to the questions posed.

Transition is a matter of moving between or among contexts (Koizumi, 2000). In the case of Mexican immigrant children coming to U.S. kindergartens, multiple and interrelated transitions among multiple and interrelated contexts are involved. The practical problems that form the rationale of this study—explaining current achievement gaps and determining how teachers and schools can better support students—are centered on the idea of difference between contexts.

Sociocultural theory, with a focus on persons as situated and constituted by the contexts in which they act, and on the tools that mediate their action, is therefore the central theory that guides this work. Sociocultural theory supports an examination of the cultural tools children employ before school, those they need to master in order to function at school, and the means by which they build on the former to acquire the latter. Further, sociocultural theory supports a consideration of how teachers support students' efforts to adapt to kindergarten, as well as how teachers and students negotiate and co-create the culture of the classroom.

Insights from ecological theory augment a sociocultural view by suggesting a broader range of environmental influences and offering a way to examine the

interrelations among a complex set of contexts. Applications of ecological theory enable comparisons of home cultures and school culture by identifying influences outside the child's experience that affect the transition experience.

These theories alone could have guided the study, but within the web of cause and effect relationships by which children's experience and actions come into being, the equilibrium-seeking mind of the child is assumed to play a central role. That mind appears here, through the application of constructivist theory, as a force opposing the division of the person implied by participation in multiple contexts.

Identity theory serves a similar function, since it describes the individual as seeking an integration of roles, but also serves as a framework for considering what roles are offered by the cultures of home and school. The challenge of becoming a part of a new community can be seen as a matter of finding an identity that functions within that community.

The ways these models function in concert to describe children's transition to kindergarten are not easily captured in a simple set of connections, and are therefore presented here in three stages. Their interaction will be described beginning with a constructivist view of the child and then "zooming out" to see how this view can be situated within a sociocultural model and then an ecological framework.

A Constructivist Model augmented by Sociocultural Insights

As illustrated in figure 4, the individual seeking equilibrium is the focus of attention within a constructivist model. An individual builds a model of the world through the process of comparing new experiences to the existing model. Experiences come to the individual and may fit his or her existing model of the world, or may require

that the model be updated. The individual also acts upon the environment, relying on current knowledge to satisfy needs and desires.

Adding insights from sociocultural theory to this model, the individual's efforts to make sense of the environment are conducted using conceptual and behavioral tools acquired from the environment. Language is the most outstanding case of this shaping of perception and thinking by cultural influences, as it brings with it a set of semantic categories and of syntactic interaction patterns. Values acquired from the culture will also influence the shape of the individual's model of the world, in terms of what is considered important and what the individual's role is within that world. The sociocultural environment will determine how the individual approaches the task of making sense of the world, and the kinds of sense that satisfy that desire.

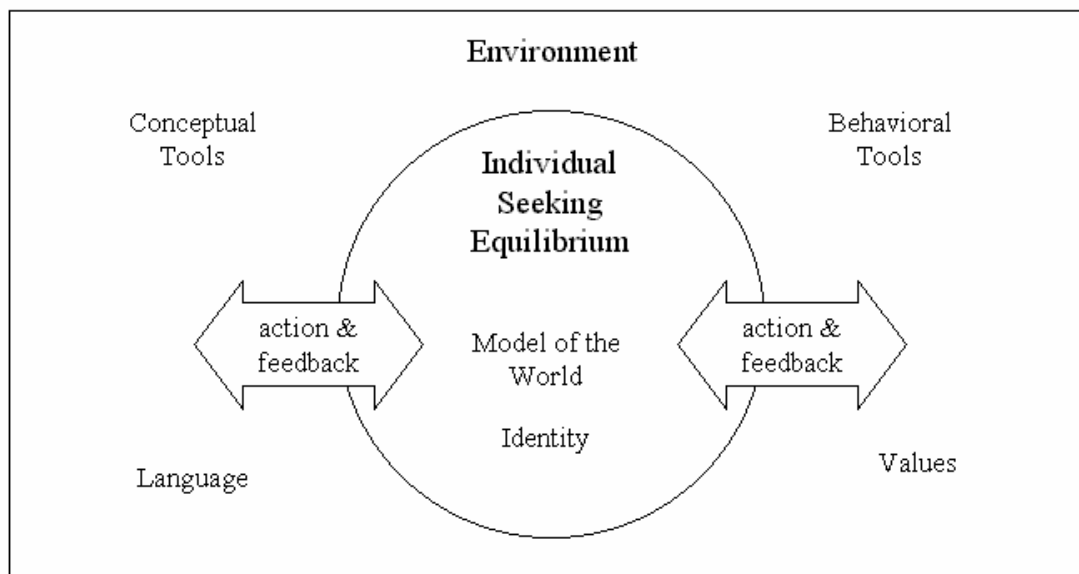


Figure 4. A constructivist model augmented by sociocultural insights: The individual seeks equilibrium guided by cultural tools.

Identity is here understood as a special case within the individual's representation of the world, as a representation of oneself. Identity, however, is not easily reduced to a matter of describing the self within the mind. Rather, identity is tied to practical matters of self-presentation in public. In this way, identity forms a kind of link to a more sociocultural approach. Developing a new identity is not merely a matter of creating an accurate model of external circumstance, but involves negotiating some shared vision of self among several roles and within multiple communities.

An Aside: Biological Influences

Although not examined in this study, biological drives and dispositions clearly contribute to the individual's actions and experience (Blair, 2002). For the purposes of the present discussion, biological influences need to be recognized as another source of the characteristics and actions of the individual. A child arrives at kindergarten with a set of resources, needs, and desires influenced by inherited characteristics, physical development, and a personal history reflected in his or her physical state.

Biological factors also offer a source of universal characteristics of humans, and as such can serve as a counterpoint to socioculturalist extremes, in that all humans share a need for physical well being and for such intangibles as feeling secure within a community. Human characteristics such as creating a mental model of the world have evolved through a joint process of biological and cultural evolution.

Biologically driven developments at around age five could also justify the practice of sending children into formal schooling at this time. If the transition to kindergarten is a shock and demands a reorganization of the child's worldview or

identity, it may be that such an environmental shock is needed to capitalize on new potentials.

A better model of the child would incorporate these insights about biological aspects of development. For the present effort to integrate Piagetian constructivism and Vygotskian socioculturalism, they are set aside.

At the Sociocultural Level

Sociocultural theory, as represented in figure 5, centers on activities (A) that the individuals (I) in a community engage in together. The child participates in a set of activities at home and a different set of activities at school. Through such participation, the child becomes progressively able to contribute to these cooperative activities, and also—at least in some cases—to carry them out independently and internally. The child is understood as a participant in these many activities, or—to put it more strongly—is enacted as a participant in them.

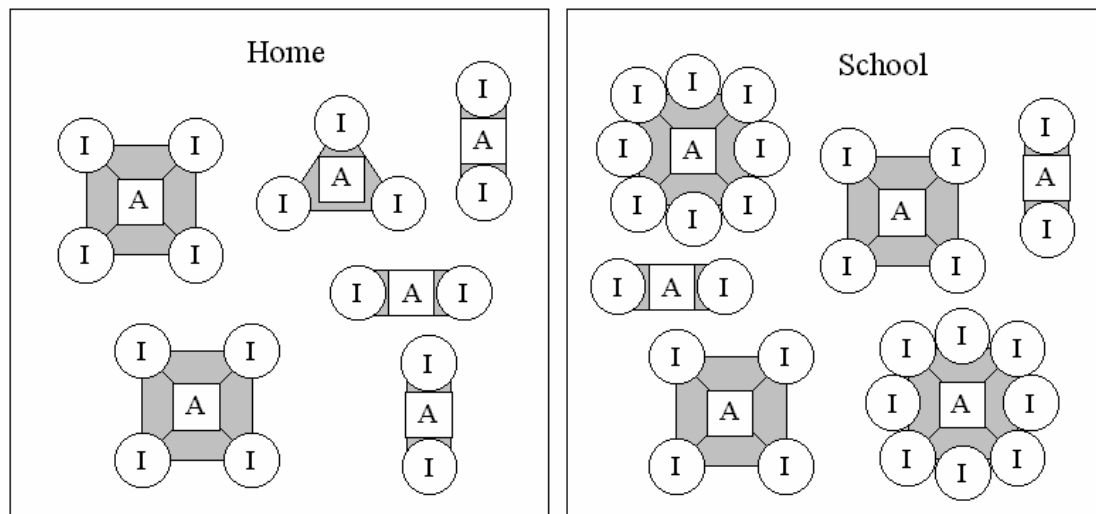


Figure 5. A sociocultural perspective: Communities consist of activities in which individuals participate.

In the diagram, home and school are shown as places where activities take place, shared by two or more individuals. Some of the activities at school might be the same as activities at home, like one child chasing another outside, while others would only occur in one setting, like watching television together at home, or walking in line at school. The activities of home and school contain within them (or are themselves) the cultural tools of the home and school communities. To illustrate, during circle time in kindergarten, a child may learn to raise her hand to go to the bathroom. Participation in the activity of “circle time” enables her to acquire the cultural tool of hand-raising, and to understand that she may not leave the room without permission, that the teacher gives permission, and so on. Activities, then, are a medium by which the child adopts conceptual understandings, procedural knowledge, and habitual behaviors. The child, in turn, is a medium through which the concepts and procedures of the classroom are given form.

The individual described by constructivist theory still has a role to play within this model. The equilibrium-seeking, model-building mind determines how to participate, and internalizes activities where appropriate (including matching roles and types of participation to the appropriate context). The individual also alters the means offered within a group, applying them in ways that suit his or her particular needs and the understandings and practices with which he or she employs in other settings.

When a child with little knowledge of school first arrives at kindergarten, he or she likely relies on the assumptions and mediational means of the home to navigate within the new environment. When those conceptual and procedural assumptions fail, the child receives feedback in the form of correction by the teacher or confusion when

actions fail to produce the desired results. As the constructivist model holds, faced with disequilibrium, the child will work to adjust the relevant expectations or habits to suit the new environment.

The Ecological Level

Another step back reveals greater complexity in the environmental influences acting upon the person. An ecological perspective situates the communities of home and school within their own contexts, and highlights interactions among contrasting contexts for children of Mexican immigrant families. Figure 2 (in Chapter I) is an effort to depict this complexity, and suggests that the immigrant's home might belong to two separate macrosystems, causing dual environments at every level of the ecological model. Now another ecological view of the influences on the Mexican immigrant kindergartener is proposed.

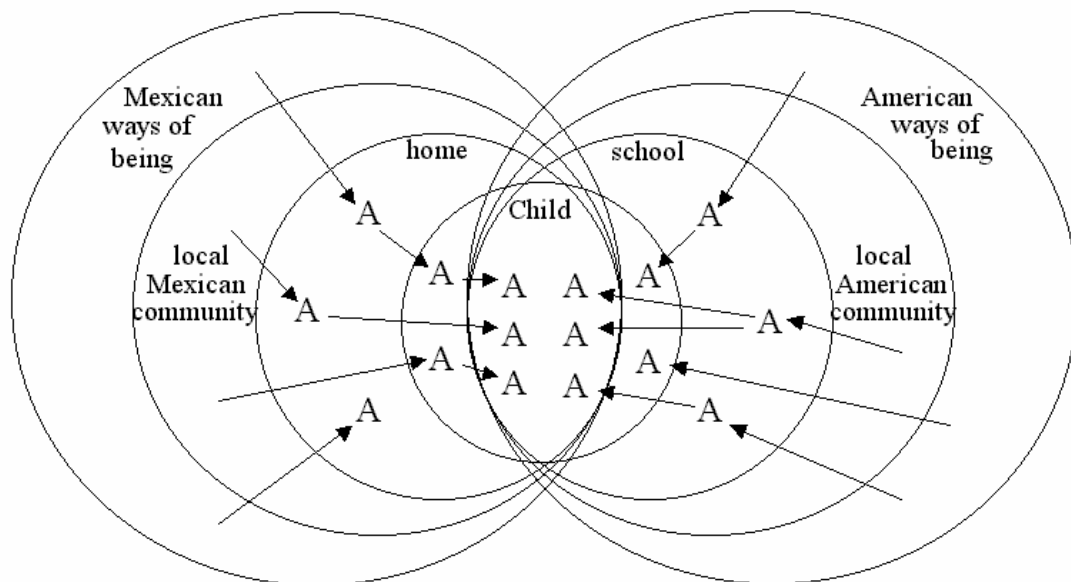


Figure 6. An ecological model augmented by sociocultural insights: Paths of environmental influence on the child mediated by activities (A).

In figure 6, the child returns to the center of the diagram, but the focus is on the way environmental forces influence the child through activities at various levels. Sociocultural activities also occur at the macro- and exo-levels of the ecological model, such as legislative sessions or debates at the neighborhood bar, but are depicted in figure 6 only where the child is a direct participant. American ways of being include competitiveness, which forms a part of activities at school. The child adopts competitiveness within those activities (such as a spelling bee), and at some point internalizes them. The child goes on to apply competitiveness within himself or herself at school, and may come to adopt it as a way of being at home as well.

The Mexican child at home would participate in activities that constitute more Mexican ways of being, such as *familismo* (family orientation). After participating in a variety of home activities that included this element, the child internalizes it, and employs it as a way of understanding and being when at home. The child may come to apply this activity internally when at school as well.

The diagram in figure 6 suggests that most of the effects of these influences occur within the child, as the internalization of cultural ways of being. These would include the child's conceptual systems, procedural knowledge, and habitual behaviors. The diagram suggests that some activities (or tools) are only participated in at home or school, but not internalized. Others are internalized for use at home or school, but not applied in both contexts. Still others (in the innermost circle) are part of the child's ways of being both at home and at school.

This series of depictions from the constructivist view of the child through a sociocultural view and then an ecological one is intended to illustrate that these

theoretical approaches are compatible. It is a complex matter to consider them all at once, but stepping from one to the other and back is both manageable and worthwhile.

Conclusion

This study examined how two Mexican immigrant children experienced and navigated the transition to kindergarten through the lenses provided by these theoretical approaches. The researcher observed these children in the classroom and interviewed them, their parents, and their teacher about their experience. The analysis of the data thus collected led to the application of a fifth theoretical perspective, the holistic, systems-oriented, interactionalistic method of Werner (1957), Wapner (1981, 2001), and Koizumi (2000). This approach offered a new level of integration of the four theories described here, and captured salient aspects of the data. Since this perspective was not employed in the design of the study or in the process of data collection, it is described at the beginning of Chapter V.

Research Questions

The theoretical perspectives described suggest a number of possible ways to approach and interpret the two case studies. The intent of the study, however, is to approach the experiences of the two children openly, allowing the data to determine the specific focus of the investigation. To that end, the study's research questions represent a broad inquiry into the phenomena:

1. What were the most salient aspects of the transition to kindergarten for two Mexican immigrant children in an English-oriented U.S. public school?

2. How can their experience best be described and characterized?
3. What challenges and supports had the greatest effects on their transition experience?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Over several years I have built a collection of articles and chapters from peer-reviewed journals and books covering the topics addressed in this study. I have repeatedly searched an array of databases at EBSCO Host (e.g., ERIC, Academic Search Complete, PsycInfo) to identify works on transitions, Mexican immigrants, identity development, and research methods that related to students in the primary grades and especially kindergarten. I built an EndNote database with over 900 entries, the vast majority of which I have copied, read, and filed in notebooks by topic.

For this review, I have set aside a number of topics that emerged in relation to these topics, such as narrative theory, critical discourse analysis, and cultural reproduction. The three categories presented here represent the most pertinent areas of study, and still cover a broad range of research. This broad survey approach is commensurate with the ideal of groundedness, as it leaves an opportunity for the study to be interpreted and to make contributions within a range of varied approaches and areas of interest. Relevant studies are reported in three main sections: predicting and supporting the transition to kindergarten, classroom culture and identity issues, and issues related to Latinos in American schools.

The first section offers general characterizations of the transitions in general and the transition to kindergarten, as well as factors said to affect the success of that

transition. Studies describing and evaluating transition practices employed by schools are reviewed, followed by conclusions related to this section.

The second section of the review treats the creation of classroom culture and kindergarten identities as interrelated processes. Studies conducted in kindergartens and preschools are included, with a discussion of relevant differences between the two settings. Relevant studies describe several ways kindergarteners come to understand themselves in school. Gender and racial identity are also discussed as affiliative aspects of identity.

The third section addresses issues related to Mexican immigrant and other Latino students in American schools. It begins with studies related to the loss of Spanish as one's primary language. There follows an exposition of the characteristics of Mexican culture as reported in the literature, and instructional methods designed to complement Mexican or Latino ways of being.

Predicting and Supporting the Transition to Kindergarten

This section will cover theoretical approaches to transitions in general, and the transition to kindergarten in particular. For some time the transition to kindergarten was understood in terms of children's readiness to start school, defining what they need to know and be able to do in order to succeed. As will be seen in this section, this view has been widely criticized as placing the responsibility for successful transitions on children and their families, rather than on schools. Despite this limitation, there is valuable information in the readiness literature. I have here grouped "ready schools" approaches with cultural mismatch studies, because they similarly interpret problems encountered by

kindergarteners of color, of poverty, and generally outside the American mainstream as symptoms of unequal treatment by the schools, and seek to address these inequities.

Finally, I will review the research that has been conducted on practices intended to support the transition to kindergarten. A number of studies have identified what practices schools and teachers employ, and others have evaluated several of these practices.

Characterizations of the Transition to Kindergarten

In general terms, transitions are often treated as mechanisms of development involving an ending, a period of disorientation, and a beginning (Bridges, 1980). The transition to kindergarten differs from this model in that the child enters a new role without (in most cases) giving up familiar roles outside of school. There may be some senses in which the transition to kindergarten involves an ending, but the literature on transition more often focuses on cases in which one leaves a familiar role behind.

Within both role theory (George, 1993) and the life course perspective (Elder, 1985, Marshall & Mueller, 2003), transitions have been treated as changes in status and role occurring at regular ages based on societal norms. They suggest a view of life as a series of stages, as a journey through a series of roles. This view highlights the importance of the transitions between roles or stages. Transitions are seen as an important part of individual development, and as a product of the individual's situation within a social setting.

The literature on the transition to kindergarten in particular does not offer a clear definition of a successful transition. It is understood that coming to school, whether from home or from preschool, is a drastic change for most children, and a challenge in

adaptation. If children like school, follow the rules, and learn, the transition is judged a success (Dockett & Perry, 2004).

Dockett and Perry (2004) surveyed kindergarten parents and teachers about what was important for children's adaptation to school. Overall, the items rated most important were: whether the child separates easily from the parent or guardian and vice versa; whether the child was eager to go to school, whether the child is pleased with his or her social adjustment; whether the child shows homework to parents or guardians; whether teachers are pleased with the child's social adjustment; whether the teachers are pleased with the child's academic progress; whether the child can follow school routines; and whether the child is scared to talk to teachers. While teachers and parents largely agreed, the teachers placed more emphasis on the children's feelings about school, whereas the parents more often said being able to read and count were important.

In another study, Dockett and Perry (2003) solicited the opinions of parents and students about the transition to kindergarten. Parents in the study expressed concern that their children not "stick out." Experienced kindergarteners were asked to help the adults describe the kindergarten experience for new students, and they stressed the need to learn the rules. The experienced kindergarteners were also asked to take pictures to document what the new students needed to know. Their photographs showed they considered it very important to know which spaces were restricted.

Fabian (2000) collected the opinions of children, parents, and teachers about starting school. Fabian found the first meeting between families and the school was important. Students and parents were anxious to meet the teacher, but were often inducted through large formal meetings and an overwhelming amount of information.

Children said they learned about school by listening to the teacher, asking their friends, and watching others.

Parents, teachers, and children in Hong Kong were asked about the difficulties of starting school (Chun, 2003). Most problems “settling in” were overcome by the end of the second month of school, though some children expressed a desire to return to preschool late in the year. The discontinuity between pedagogical styles between preschool and school was cited as problematic.

Readiness Approaches to the Transition to Kindergarten

The U.S. Department of Education study *Entering Kindergarten: Findings from The Condition of Education 2000* (Zill & West, 2001) examined the readiness of entering kindergarteners on a number of measures: early literacy and numeracy skills, general knowledge, health, social skills, and attitude toward classroom tasks. The average kindergartener was found to recognize the upper- and lower-case letters of the alphabet and understand that English is read from left to right, but was unable to associate the beginning or ending sounds of words with letters or read basic sight words. The majority of entering kindergarteners knew how to count up to 10 objects, identify patterns, and compare lengths, but could not add, subtract, or solve simple word problems.

Regarding social skills, roughly 75% of kindergarteners had few problems cooperating with other children. Fewer than 10% of children exhibited problem behaviors such as losing their temper or getting into arguments. Three-quarters of the entering kindergarteners were judged eager to participate in most school activities.

Zill and West (2001) also identified a number of factors that made children more likely to fall short of these norms. Being younger and being male were both identified as

risk factors, but the study focused on four family characteristics associated with higher risk: low parental education levels, a low-income home, a single-parent home, and parents who spoke a language other than English.

The effect of these risk factors was cumulative, in that children with multiple factors were at greater risk. A third of the children who had no risk factors scored in the highest quartile for reading scores, compared to 16% of children with one risk factor and 9% of children with multiple risk factors. Children were more likely to have multiple risk factors in urban and ethnic minority populations. Among Hispanic children, 33% had multiple risk factors, while only 6% of Whites did.

Other studies have focused on social skills as determinants of a successful transition to kindergarten. Aggressiveness and peer rejection are cited as causes for maladjustment, while social competence and a prosocial stance are considered supportive. Relationships within the family have in turn been associated with these characteristics.

For example, Johnson, Ironsmith, Snow, and Poteat (2000) found that aggressive preschoolers tended to be rejected by peers, and that rejection was associated with maladjustment in kindergarten. Ladd and Burgess (2001) similarly found that children who displayed aggressive tendencies as they entered kindergarten were at risk for psychological and school maladjustment by the end of first grade. Peer rejection and teacher-child conflict were predictors of maladjustment, especially when accompanied by aggressiveness.

Positive social behaviors have been associated with success in kindergarten. Denham, Blair, DeMulder, Levitas, Sawyer, Auerbach-Major, and Queenan (2003) found

that emotional competence assessed at 3 or 4 years of age contributed to kindergarten social competence. Beilinson and Olswang (2003) identified children with social communication interaction problems and trained them in peer-group entry skills, which assisted them in adjusting when they arrived at kindergarten.

Aggressiveness and social competence have both been associated with aspects of family interactions. Schmidt, Demulder, and Denham (2002) found that children who are less secure or who experience greater family stress in their preschool years are more aggressive and anxious and less socially competent in kindergarten. Criss, Pettit, Bates, Dodge, and Lapp (2002) gathered data on the families of 5-year-olds regarding child temperament and family adversity (e.g., marital conflict, harsh discipline). Measures of family adversity predicted maladjustment in the form of externalizing behaviors in kindergarten and first grade, but those effects were moderated by peer acceptance and friendships.

A study by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD, 2004) found that the most competent and least problematic children were those who had fathers who were sensitive and supportive of their children's autonomy, and whose parents maintained an emotionally intimate relationship. A study by Pianta, Nimetz, and Bennett (1997) found that the quality of mother-child interaction predicted teacher-reported social adjustment in kindergarten.

Birch and Ladd (1997) found that three features of the teacher-child relationship predicted school adjustment. *Dependency on the teacher* predicted poorer academic performance, more negative school attitudes, and less positive engagement with the school environment. *Conflict with the teacher* was associated with negative feelings

toward school and reduced cooperative participation in classroom activities. *Teacher-child closeness* was positively linked to academic performance, self-directedness, and school liking. In a related study, Mantzicopoulos (2005) found kindergarteners' reports of teacher-child conflict was associated with problem behaviors, teacher stress, instructional practices, and classroom climate.

Pianta and Stuhlman (2004) examined closeness and conflict in teacher-child relationship in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade for their relationship to social and academic skills in first grade. Moderate correlations supported the theory that greater closeness and less conflict in teacher-child relationships supports children's acquisition of academic skills.

Diamond, Reagan, and Brandyk (2000) studied parents' attitudes toward readiness. African-American and Hispanic parents were found to be more likely than Caucasian parents to express concerns about their own child's readiness for kindergarten. Caucasian parents were more likely than others to suggest that they would delay sending their child to kindergarten until he or she was older.

Ready Schools and Cultural Mismatch Approaches

Pianta and LaParo (2003) argue against readiness approaches to the transition to kindergarten. Readiness, they contend, is a property of a system of interactions, not a set of skills residing within the child. Given that areas with high poverty or ethnic minorities have been found less ready, they suggest that the quality of the schools that serve those areas should be improved. They found that in schools in high poverty areas, the classroom climate was less child-centered and less desirable overall, and that teachers had fewer positive interactions with children.

According to Skinner, Bryant, Coffman, and Campbell (1998), schools create “at-risk-ness” or a lack of “readiness” by the expectations they hold about the kinds of resources that will enable children to learn:

At-risk children are not lacking personal capabilities or caring families; rather, they do not conform to the speech patterns, styles of interaction, family structure, rules and routines, and other cultural knowledge characteristic of the white middle class, the culture that is validated and accepted as natural and desirable in most U.S. schools. (p. 298)

One of the seminal studies of cultural mismatch research was performed by Sara Michaels. She observed first grade children participating in a “sharing time” (show-and-tell) activity, and found that the white teacher, despite her good intentions, was unable to support the storytelling performances of her black students. They employed a perfectly valid and organized style in their storytelling, but one that she did not understand, and as such, the supports she tried to give only interfered with their practice. (Michaels, 1984, 1985; Gee, 1985)

Au (1980) found that Native Hawaiian children were more successful when teachers incorporated aspects of their home culture than when they employed standard educational practices. They did so by making lessons more like traditional Hawaiian storytelling sessions. They raised issues and allowed children to discuss them, without controlling their turn-taking. The teacher encouraged the children, but shared control of the class with them in what Au and Mason (1981) called a *balance of rights*.

Xu (1999) reported two case studies of Chinese-American kindergarteners in English-only classrooms. The two children lived in print-rich homes where they had some exposure to English. Classroom practices such as little opportunity for students to talk and a focus on skills worksheets offered little support for their acquisition of literacy.

Each child's case was unique in terms of the supports provided at home and how these interacted with school experiences. Xu found that continuities between home and school were not always beneficial, and that discontinuities were not always problematic. One child experienced continuity in the form of similar instruction from her mother and the teacher, when she might have benefitted more from different kinds of instruction. The other benefitted from the discontinuity of being free to read and write for his own purposes at home, an opportunity that was lacking at school.

Practices Used to Assist in the Transition to Kindergarten

A national survey of kindergarten teachers found the most common transition practice was talking to parents after school started. Low-intensity, generic contacts, such as large meetings or form letters, were common, while personal contacts and contacts before school started were rare. Teachers cited the late generation of class lists as a major barrier to transition support efforts. (Pianta, Cox, Taylor, & Early, 1999) In 2004, a study by Nelson found most schools had no comprehensive plan that allowed teachers and parents to exchange important information about child development and school expectations.

Results of a nationwide study of transitions to kindergarten was published in 1992 (Love & Logue). Schools that had prekindergarten programs and schools in larger districts were more likely to employ transition activities such as communication among the child's prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers and aligning curriculum between the two years. Administrative support and school climate were found to have the greatest influence on whether explicit efforts to aid in the transition to kindergarten were made, and whether they were successful (Love & Logue, 1992).

Schulking, Malone, and Dodge (2005) evaluated the effectiveness of school-based transition policies and practices. Teachers reported contacting parents by phone or by mail with information about school, parents visiting the school, parent orientation sessions at the school, and parent visits to the classroom as the most common practices. Student academic performance increased with the number of practices employed, especially for low- to middle-SES children.

McCadden (1997) described a series of rituals one kindergarten teacher employed to help the children make the transition from their home to school roles. These routines included songs, rhymes, gestures, and activities like putting away book bags, all of which happened at regular points in the schedule and signified changes from one instructional situation to another. While the teacher spoke about the routines in terms of maintaining organization in the classroom, McCadden suggests they facilitated students' transition into student identities.

One very successful case of kindergarten transition was found in a school with a multiage (K-2) classroom. The new kindergarteners were greeted and guided by 16 returning first and second graders. Fu, Hartle, Lamme, Copenhaver, Adams, Harmon, & Reneke (1999) report that the integration of the new children was easy and comfortable for all concerned.

Pianta and colleagues recommend that teachers make personal contact with families before students start school (Pianta, Cox, Taylor, & Early, 1999), and that schools are involved in a wide range of community-level processes (Pianta, Rimm-Kaufmann, & Cox, 2002).

Koizumi (2000) relies on an ecological framework to investigate anchor points that facilitate person-in-environment transitions, distinguishing among physical environments, interpersonal environments, and socio-cultural environments. Anchor points in a new setting may be found in any one of these dimensions, such as physical landmarks, a familiar face, or a shared custom.

Conclusions: Predicting and Supporting the Transition to Kindergarten

The reviewed literature provides sufficient means to predict whether the transition to kindergarten and general adaptation to school will be difficult. Making such a prediction would require knowledge of the child's home circumstances (economic status, home culture and language, family constellation, nature of relations within the family) and personal characteristics (physical disabilities, emotional dispositions, social competence), as well as knowledge of the school and classroom where the child would attend (transition practices, nature of teacher-student relations, instructional practices).

In cases where a difficult transition was predicted, the literature suggests a number of measures that could ameliorate that difficulty. Family characteristics seem the most difficult to alter. The elimination of factors like poverty, racism, and abusive or otherwise maladaptive relationships is desirable, but such efforts belong to a higher level of concern than the transition to kindergarten. The elimination of other factors that predict difficult transitions is not even desirable. Children come from homes with varied cultures and ways of being, and this kind of diversity enriches human life.

The literature suggests that the determining effects of family characteristics may be mediated by the child's personal characteristics: emotional dispositions and social competence. If entering kindergarteners at risk for a difficult transition could be

supported to develop more positive dispositions and greater social skills, the negative effects of their family circumstances could be ameliorated. The study reported by Beilinson and Olswang (2003) reported success in teaching peer-group entry techniques and could serve as a model for other programs, though the challenge of changing emotional dispositions may be greater than that of teaching interaction skills.

Classroom Culture and Kindergarten Identities

This study relies upon a view of the transition to kindergarten for Mexican immigrant children as a matter of acquiring the means to function in a new sociocultural setting, developing an identity that is appropriate to that new setting, and making a coherent whole of the multiple contexts and roles those acquisitions imply. Given this approach, it follows that the culture of that new context is an important part of the phenomenon. The roles available to children in kindergarten and the identity work they are seen to do there are also critical.

A kindergarten classroom at the beginning of the year is not a stable community accepting a new member. The processes of acquiring the cultural tools of the classroom and taking on roles within it occur as those tools and roles are taking shape in the interactions of the group. The teachers may have clear expectations about the sort of community they want to create, but only when the children arrive can it come into being. Among the children, there may be great variation in the tools and expectations they bring to the group. Some sort of negotiation of a new community must occur, and the children will contribute to it in meaningful ways.

A number of studies address the ways classroom cultures come into being, and how children take on identities within those cultures. These somewhat different areas of

interest are here reviewed together due to the author's sense that they are interrelated processes. A number of studies addressing these topics in preschool are included under the assumption that similar processes are involved, and differences between preschool and kindergarten that affect these processes are also discussed. This section also reviews studies related to other identity issues: literacy and identity, performance versus learning orientation, gender, and race/ethnicity.

The Co-construction of Classroom Culture and Identities

Skinner and colleagues describe the cultural world of kindergarten as a set of "rules, social relations, structures, classification systems, and actors" (Skinner, Bryant, Coffman, & Campbell, 1998, p. 300) mostly in place when children arrive. They studied kindergarteners creating their own understandings of that world and their identities within it in 14 classrooms. The researchers found that while teachers wanted children to be active explorers, they also wanted the children's behaviors to fit within established boundaries. Overall, children were evaluated on their compliance with classroom rules more than other skills or accomplishments. In specific cases, the ways teachers and students interacted around issues of control and evaluation within the first weeks of school seemed to establish paths toward success or failure.

Thyssen (2003) studied the creation of classroom culture in a Danish nursery school. Their communal life centered on dramatic play, which Thyssen saw as their means to develop an independent, autonomous life. Kendrick (2005) spent a year playing with a five-year-old, and found her developing identity was expressed and constructed in play. Her understanding of the roles within her family and what was most important for her often took the form of stories, rather than explicit facts or beliefs.

Keating, Fabian, Jordan, Mavers, and Roberts (2000) found that while kindergarten teachers believed in the value of play, they made clear to the students that “work” was more important. The students thought of “work” as sitting down with pencil and paper. Play was used as a reward, and as a way to keep children occupied.

Fernie (1988) observed students in preschool and kindergarten, and found that the culture of the kindergarten classroom was less open to student influence. Kindergartens were less accommodating of the child’s world and self and more focused on the curriculum.

Jordan and Cowan (1995) observed kindergarteners starting school and found a group of boys resisted the teachers’ authority after discovering that the “warrior narratives” that ran through much of their play were forbidden at school. The boys learned to express these narratives in quieter and more symbolic ways. The “social contract” of the classroom became important to the boys through this struggle, but remained relatively unnoticed by the girls in the class.

Corsaro’s (1988) observations of preschoolers suggested themes in their emerging classroom culture. Most prominent among them were *doing things with each other*, which evolved into a sense of being peers, and *challenging adult authority*, as when they complained about clean-up time. Corsaro considered this oppositional stance a critical part of children coming to see themselves as students.

Carr (2001) found that 4-year-olds in preschool enacted a number of different social identities, including *being good*, *being a friend*, *being a girl/boy*, *being a kindergartener*, *being a technologist*, and *being nearly five*. The children shifted from one identity to another and the identities merged and split. The children were open to

exploration of some of these identities (friend, technologist), but others were considered fixed and were only to be performed, not adjusted (being a girl/boy and being good).

Avgitidou (2001) examined how kindergarteners in Greece co-constructed the form and meaning of pro-social behavior and friendships in their class. The children understood friendship in terms of playing together and being nice (not fighting and being quiet in class). Inter-age relationships were important in the formation of empathy, as older children took care of younger and the younger ones appreciated this care.

Literacy and Identity

Children also develop their identities in kindergarten in conjunction with their development of literacy. In a series of case studies of kindergartener's writing, Laidlaw (1998) concluded that children's writing could be seen as a medium through which they re-write themselves and re-order their identities. She also found that teachers' evaluations of students construct "school identities" for them. In telling "stories" about children, teachers intend to describe and motivate children, but inadvertently set standards to which children try to conform.

Dahl (1995) extended the notion of "voice" in writing to voice in learning in an effort to understand children's perspectives. Listening to kindergarten and first grade children as they interacted around literacy tasks, Dahl and her colleagues found the children very quietly formed networks of writers, collaborating on projects that allowed them to think about and share their experiences. Their views of writing were shaped by their daily school experiences, what the teacher valued, and their own work with friends.

Performance versus Learning Orientation

Mulhern (2002) compared two kindergarteners working in the same classroom and found that one focused on writing as a way to please the teacher, while the other approached writing as a way to express his interests. This difference illustrates what Smiley and Dweck (1994) refer to as *performance or learning goals*. In their study, children starting school chose one orientation or the other. Those with a learning orientation persisted and made strategic efforts when faced with a challenging task. For those oriented toward performance goals, persistence and readiness to try difficult tasks depended upon their confidence. Carr (2001) found a similar orientation toward either performance or learning in four-year-olds.

Affiliation Identities: Gender and Race/Ethnicity

Identity is sometimes described in terms of affiliation with groups or categories (Nesdale & Flessner, 2001). Among affiliation issues, gender is the most salient in early childhood. Sex typing in early childhood manifests itself in: personality traits, knowledge of gender stereotypes, and toy and activity preferences (Maccoby, 2002). By four, children have learned and usually accepted a wide range of gender norms. Their choice of toys shows gender typing, and they sort occupations as masculine or feminine (Lloyd & Duveen, 1992). They generally believe that males are more likely to experience anger and females more likely to experience sadness. Four-year-old boys will often deny that they have experienced fear or sadness. (Fivush, 1998)

In kindergarten classrooms, boys are more aggressive and anxious than girls (Schmidt, Demulder, and Denham, 2002). Boys are under greater pressure than girls to conform to gender norms in early childhood (Sheldon, 1990), while the official culture of

the school rejects many of the traits (e.g., competitiveness) that are included in those norms (Mercurio, 2003, Jordan & Cowan, 1995).

Maccoby (2002) draws attention to research that suggests that much early sex typing may occur at the group level. As children congregate in same-sex dyads or groups, which they tend to do beginning around the age of three, many sex-typed behaviors arise as properties of those groups. Boys engage in more rough, physical play. Girls' play is interdependent. Boys also gather in larger groups, which is conducive to more conflict and competition. Girls are more often in dyads, which facilitate getting to know one's partner better.

The other important affiliation issue is with racial or ethnic groups. Racial and ethnic identities are often tied to ideologies about class, power, and claims of superiority. Rarely is it possible to explain what it means to belong to "ethnic group X" versus "ethnic group Y" without including the background about the relative power of the two groups and the history of their relationship (Ogbu, 2004).

The development of concrete operational thought has been found to affect what children know about race and its implications, and may account for the failure of some young children to identify with their racial or ethnic groups. Preoperational-stage children do not understand themselves or others in terms of personality traits (Harter, 1998). Older children can use their knowledge of associations between particular traits and racial or ethnic groups to see how they are like those who share their affiliations, and work to make themselves more or less like the profile of a "typical" member of their group (Corenblum, Annis, & Tanaka, 1997). Cognitive maturation also enables children to see how others see them, both in terms of assuming their affiliation with particular

groups, and assuming they have the traits associated with those groups. Coming to terms with how one is categorized by society, then, requires some level of cognitive maturity.

Nesdale and Flesser (2001) found that five-year-olds who were randomly assigned to groups quickly developed a preference for their group-mates and exaggerated the similarity among group members. The children worked to uphold and defend the status of their group. This suggests that when kindergarteners consider themselves affiliated with a gender or ethnic category, they will defend the status of that category and may try to align themselves with what they see as the qualities distinguishing that category.

Conclusions: Classroom Culture and Kindergarten Identities

Though the creation of classroom culture has been studied by a number of researchers, it still offers promise as a way to think about the relationship of educational institutions, teachers, and students. The study by Skinner, Bryant, Coffman, and Campbell (1998), “Creating risk and promise: Children's and teachers' co-constructions in the cultural world of kindergarten” is a striking example. The authors analyzed cases of kindergarteners such that particular events or interaction patterns early in the school year were tied to those students' attitudes toward school later in the year. These cases illustrated how classroom policies and teacher interaction styles constitute sources of risk for children.

Fernie's (1988) comparison of preschool and kindergarten cultures also stands out as a clear definition of the transition to kindergarten. According to Fernie, when children come to kindergarten, they become workers. They are expected to leave their own interests behind, and work to satisfy the goals of the institution. In the current climate of

maximizing achievement, many school systems and teachers have made kindergarten even less welcoming, even less accommodating of student interests. Fernie's work hinted at the dangers of treating students as sources of achievement to be maximized. Further research should work to establish the costs and benefits of the "student worker" role or of alternative ways kindergarteners might be constructed.

The idea that children have input in constructing the culture of the kindergarten classroom has implications for their sense of self-efficacy and belonging as they establish their relationship with schools and, in some sense, with the larger society. Many elementary school teachers consider it important to establish rules in a "class meeting" setting, though the resulting rules are generally those the teacher had in mind beforehand. It seems possible that a more democratic classroom would benefit students, but learning to comply with institutional authority may be an important benefit of attending kindergarten. Self-determination and discipline are both desirable character traits. The transition to kindergarten offers an ideal venue for examining these ideas, and little in the literature refers to them.

The literature reviewed here names a number of roles and identities that kindergarteners take on. Corsaro (1988) noted "doing things with each other" and "challenging adult authority," and Carr (2001) described preschoolers' sense of themselves as being friends, being good, and being a girl or boy.

Jordan and Cowan's study, *Warrior narratives in the kindergarten classroom: Renegotiating the social contract?* (1995) approached the development of identity in kindergarten in novel ways. First, the authors saw the children's identities in the narratives they acted out in play. This approach offers an alternative to relying on how

children say they see themselves, as five-year-olds' identities may not exist in a form that lends itself to explicit expression. Second, they watched how this identity-bearing play was first rejected by the teacher's authority and then found a way to be expressed.

Latinos in American Schools

For Mexican immigrant children, the transition to kindergarten is often the first step in their transition into American culture. The transition may also be more difficult for them since they are generally outside the American mainstream in both linguistic and more general cultural terms. This section will begin with research related to the concern that becoming a student and becoming an American may have negative consequences for children's development of their native language and connection to their native culture.

Second, efforts to name aspects of Mexican and Latino culture are described, Finally, instructional methods designed to accommodate those cultural preferences are described.

Language Status and the Loss of Spanish

Part of the rationale for this study is the concern that as students make the transition to kindergarten they take their first steps away from their home culture, and that some may eventually find themselves cut off from those cultural roots, especially if they do not maintain their primary language. A number of studies address these concerns.

Wong Fillmore (1991) and colleagues surveyed Spanish-speaking families with attending preschool. Among children attending English-only preschools, 63% shifted to English as their primary language at home. Of those in bilingual preschools, 47% shifted to English. They concluded that children entering school quickly learn that:

The key to acceptance is English, and they learn it so they can take part in the social life of the classroom. All too often, English becomes their language of choice long before they know it well enough to express themselves fully in that language, and they use it both in school and at home. (p. 334)

Moll, Sáez, and Dworin (2001) studied the writing of bilingual kindergarteners and third graders. The way bilingual classes were taught and the school's stance toward Spanish as a less desirable language raised attitudinal and emotional issues not adequately addressed in the literature.

Martínez-Roldán, and Malavé (2004) describe the case of a seven-year-old Mexican-American boy whose participation in literature discussions revealed that he thought of Spanish speakers as less intelligent than English speakers, and more generally held a negative image of Mexicans. The researchers located the source of these attitudes in his parents' discourses that privileged English over Spanish. These discourses served as the means through which the boy interpreted his experiences at school. The authors note that language and identity are often intertwined.

Heinz (2001) interviewed bilingual adults, all of whom said that they used their two languages for different purposes. Things that were hard to say in their first language because of intense feeling could be said easily in the second language. Their first languages were tied to intimacy and heartfelt expression, while the second language allowed them to be detached. These findings suggest that an identity developed in a secondary language might be less authentic than one developed in one's home language.

Characteristics of Mexican Culture

A number of researchers have identified characteristics of Mexican culture that affect how Mexican immigrant children perform in and adjust to school in the United

States. Other characteristics of Mexican culture are understood to affect the way parents interact with the schools. Instructional practices congruent with Mexican (and more generally Latino) culture have also been recommended and evaluated.

Mexican culture is centered on the concept of *respeto* (respect)(Hancock, 2005). *Respeto* refers to an elaborate system of roles within the family and society. Children are expected to treat their parents and other adults with respect, which includes being obedient and not questioning their authority (Arcia & Johnson, 1998; González, 1998; Hancock, 2005; Valdés, 1996). Mexican children may therefore be confused about their roles when teachers are overly playful or allow children to question their judgment.

According to Valdés (1996), *Familismo* (being tied to the family) is another basic facet of Mexican culture. While many Americans would identify themselves as “pro-family,” Mexicans generally rely more heavily on their families and do more things together. Collaboration within the family is part of *familismo*. Mexican children are expected to help each other with schoolwork and chores, and parents often help children with grooming, eating, and dressing in ways that Americans find excessive (González, 1998).

In Mexican homes, children learn primarily through observation and practice, rather than through explicit instructions (Huerta-Macias, 1998; Wong-Fillmore, 1988). Oral instruction is considered important, however, for children’s moral development. Such instruction is often in the form of *dichos* (proverbs) and *cuentos* (stories)(Valdés, 1996; Tapia, 2004).

Arcia and Johnson (1998) interviewed Mexican mothers about their perceptions of child development. The mothers described children as relatively inactive learners

whose ability to understand develops slowly over the years, and is dependent on parental direction and instruction. Delgado and Ford (1998) interviewed Mexican-American families and found that parents considered social skills and moral values as important as cognitive and motor development.

Loretta (2004) studied Mexican American mothers' experiences with schools in individual educational plan (IEP) meetings that determined the special services their children would receive. Although the mothers wanted to be involved in the decision-making process regarding their children, they were silenced by overt and covert messages that implied their voices were not valued.

Valdés (1996) examined the interactions of Mexican immigrant parents with schools and their support of their children as students. She identifies ways programs designed to increase parent participation fail for lack of understanding of Mexican culture. In one example, children were put in a position to insist that their parents complete a school project with them when more pressing needs demanded the family's attention. This ran contrary to the system of *respeto*, which required that the parents, not the children or their teachers, make decisions about the family's priorities.

Instructional Methods Recommended for Mexican-American and Latino Students

Instructional practices suggested for Mexican-American and Latino students generally involve efforts to incorporate the strengths or interests from their home cultures into classroom practices. Case studies of Mexican-American children have added to this literature. Several recommendations are described here.

Mulhern (1997) described how a Mexican-American kindergartener became literate at home and at school. The child had his own agenda about what he wanted to

learn and his own purposes for reading and writing. He made connections between the literacy contexts of home and school in ways that the author suggests could inform teacher practice. Mulhern advised teachers to connect skill instruction to meaningful contexts, and to pursue more of these connections by learning about students' out of school lives. He also noted that the practice of reading with children is relatively unfamiliar in Mexican culture, and that Mexican-American parents should be encouraged to employ it, especially by sending more books home with kindergarteners.

Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) worked with classroom teachers and Mexican-American families to identify various funds of knowledge those families held. They found a broad range of knowledge and skills were essential to household functioning, and compared the ways Mexican-American children were taught at home to the ways they were taught at school. At home, teaching was accomplished through flexible, adaptive, and active networks that often included persons from outside the family. Interactions within these networks occurred within a sense of mutual commitment and reciprocity. One of the teachers involved in the study created an instructional unit around the theme of candy, after seeing that Mexican-style candies were made, sold, and appreciated in the community.

Martínez-Roldán and López-Robertson (1999) examined the use of literature circles in a first grade classroom that included many Spanish-English bilingual children. The literature circles gave students the opportunity to reflect critically on the works they were reading and tell their own stories. The Spanish-speaking students displayed higher levels of interest and told more stories than the English-speaking students, suggesting a

cultural propensity toward these activity types. The relationships among teachers and students also contributed to the program's success.

Poveda (2002) studied a five-year-old Gypsy boy entering school in Spain as an ethnic and linguistic minority. The boy was behind the other children in his academic knowledge, but became a leader in the class through his participation in a daily opportunity to tell stories known as "*la ronda*" (the round). Storytelling, recognized as an important part of Gypsy culture, became a means for an apparently disadvantaged boy to be successful in kindergarten. Poveda suggests this story as a counter-example to Michaels (1984) stories of children whose cultural difference from the teacher led to frustration at "sharing time."

Cook-Gumperz and Szymanski (2001) described a Spanish-English bilingual kindergarten classroom in which the children were organized in "families" to draw on the value of *familismo* in Latino culture. The authors considered the use of "families" a *legitimizing metaphor* for group activities in the class. Students were observed developing fundamental aspects of their social and especially gendered selves. The Latino students brought traditional gendered roles and interactional practices to their small group work.

Jiménez, Gersten, and Rivera (1996) reported the practices of a Chicana fourth grade teacher, who suggested that Mexican parents found it rude when teachers gave them a specific time to attend a parent-teacher conference. In order to align her practice to their standards, she stopped assigning times and just asked them to come sometime during a given afternoon. She reported the parents responded positively to this accommodation.

Conclusions: Latinos in American Schools

As discussed in the rationale section of Chapter I, I am concerned that Mexican immigrant or other non-mainstream children are in some way separated from their home culture in the process of becoming students. Efforts by researchers such as Wong-Fillmore (1991) and Cummins (1998) have received little attention. Moreover, the prominent related issues—bilingual education, English-only laws, and immigration policy—overshadow any concern for the value of maintaining the child's native language or culture.

If the Mexican immigrant children are cut off from their home culture as a part of the education provided them by American schools, this is surely a disservice. A culture's language, logic, and values develop as an integrated whole over many generations (Hilliard, 1982). A child who rejects the language, logic, and values of her parents has no whole system with which to function, and becomes a mother who passes on a partial, borrowed culture to her children. As unprecedented numbers of Mexican immigrant children enter American schools, a generation of Mexican-Americans may be undergoing this separation from their cultural roots. To discover the processes involved in and the long-term effects of such separation is an important task for educational researchers. This study is intended to contribute to that effort.

The characterization of Mexican culture in the literature reviewed here echoes descriptions I have encountered in less formal writings and in conversations with Mexicans. The culture is described here primarily in order to introduce approaches to accommodating Mexican students through culturally appropriate instructional methods. References to *respeto*, *familismo*, *dichos*, and *cuentos* also serve to suggest what is being

lost when children cut themselves off from their heritage in the process of becoming Americans. In addition to these generalized aspects of Mexican culture, each family has its own traditions and ways of being. Children are the bearers of tradition from any number of cultural groups, such as churches, neighborhoods, and professional associations. Such traditions cannot be reduced to being Mexican or American, or Spanish- or English-speaking.

The instructional methods that seem most promising have in common a faith that there is a way for every child to be successful. Poveda's (2002) study of the Gypsy boy with a gift for storytelling served as a counter-example to Michael's (1984) "sharing time" story because sometimes teachers see a child's talent and allow the child to exercise it, even when it does not fit their expectations.

This review suggests a number of contrasts between Mexican and American culture that could be construed as obstacles or opportunities. Mexican children are said to be more dependent on their parents for tasks like dressing and eating (González, 1988), but may be socialized to rely on peers (Cook-Gumperz & Szymanski, 2001) in ways that make them less dependent on the teacher. Mexican parents are less likely to spend time reading with their children (Mulhern, 1997), but more likely to instill in them a talent for oral storytelling (Martínez-Roldán & López-Robertson, 1999). Again, I suggest that these insights should be taken as examples of the kinds of ways children may differ from teacher's expectations, not as keys to understanding Mexican children.

This Study

This review demonstrates the wide range of issues related to the transition to kindergarten. While a long history of investigation enables one to predict difficult

transitions and maladaptation to school, overcoming those difficulties requires that we understand the processes by which children first adapt to school. Case studies of children entering kindergarten have the potential to reveal some of these processes, enabling schools and teachers to foster greater adaptation to school, which can have long-term beneficial effects for the students and for the society.

Regarding the treatment of Mexican immigrant students in American schools, this study is intended to provide insights into the ways language and culture differences between home and school affect the transition to kindergarten. The findings should suggest ways kindergarten teachers can support Mexican immigrant children in that transition, but this work is also intended to serve as part of a larger effort to describe how children manage the transition from one culture to another as they grow toward adulthood. Within that effort, close examinations of children's initial contact with the school and first steps toward developing an identity within the school and within American culture will be critical.

This study will also add to the existing literature on children's adjustment to school apart from their cultural or language backgrounds. Existing descriptions of how children become students through new ways of seeing themselves, taking on new roles and new cultural tools, and working out their identities through play suggest a rich field of possible discoveries. The experiences of these two children are intended to lead the researcher and the reader to new insights into the transition to kindergarten.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This study describes the transition to kindergarten for two children from Mexican immigrant families in an English-oriented, mainstream public school in the United States. Because the goal was to understand the lived experience of the children, this study was guided by principles of a naturalistic investigation. A naturalistic approach to the issue allowed the investigator to derive interpretations from the events observed, rather than determine them *a priori*. Such an approach is appropriate where existing theories are incomplete and new organizing principles are needed. The data have been analyzed as separate case studies, and then for cross-case similarities and differences.

Setting

The study took place in an elementary school in a large school system outside a metropolitan area in Georgia. For the 2004-2005 school year, the school's enrollment ranged from 840 to 900 students, with a student transient rate of 46%. Eighty-six percent of the students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch according to federal guidelines. Fifty-six percent of the students were Hispanic, and 287 students received English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services. (C. Metcalfe, personal communication, June 6, 2005)

During the year of the study, the state of Georgia applied the mandates of the No Child Left Behind act through a standardized test and other measures to assess school quality. Low scores for two consecutive years had brought this school under a mandate

reform program, America's Choice (www.ncee.org), which brought to the curriculum a focus on standards and readers' and writers' workshops. Just as the study began, the school was removed from the "Needs Improvement" list, after having met the Annual Yearly Progress standards for two years.

State regulations also shaped the formation of classes at the school. The state's Early Intervention Program (EIP) funded extra teachers based on the number of students who qualify as being below grade level in academic ability. The amount of funding a school receives through this program depends on how the students are served. In response, at the school where the study was set, "EIP classes" in which all the students were judged to be performing below grade level, were formed to maximize the school's state funding. In kindergarten, the EIP classes were made up of 14 qualifying students, served by one certified teacher.

The number of students entering the school with limited English proficiency had grown steadily since the school's inception. The area's growing Hispanic population contributed a majority of the school's students for the first time in the year before the study. Most of these students' families were from Mexico, though there were immigrants from a number of other Latin American countries, including Honduras, El Salvador, and Brazil.

While 56% of the school's students were from Hispanic backgrounds, the school's practices remained rooted in English-oriented mainstream culture. The school adjusted to the needs of the Hispanic community by offering Spanish versions of most official newsletters and notices, by working to provide interpreters for Parent-Teacher conference week, and by holding a Latin Festival every September. These

accommodations did not constitute a fundamental reorganization of the school, nor did they alter practices in the general education classrooms.

The school system's policies toward students with limited English proficiency (LEP) called for general instruction in English combined with ESOL support. The school had six full-time ESOL teachers during the year of the study. ESOL teachers provided small group instruction to LEP students 45 minutes per day.

Participants

The study's participants were a boy and a girl whose parents are Mexican immigrants, their parents, and other members of their households, and their teacher. The selection of the focal children was based on the following definitions:

Mexican, American, Mexican-American, and Mexican Immigrant. The use of each of these terms is problematic. A "Mexican" is a citizen of Mexico, but when one immigrates to a new country, the label could take on more meanings. Some immigrants may always see themselves as belonging to their home country, while others come to identify with their new home. Thus a person of Mexican descent who has lived in the United States could be a Mexican, an American, or a Mexican-American, depending upon his or her own values and approach to the question. In this work, "Mexican immigrant" is used to indicate a person who came from Mexico, without committing to any one of the three identity or citizenship labels mentioned.

The term "American" is used here to mean, "associated with the United States." This usage is problematic because, of course, America is a pair of continents, not a country. To speak of United States citizens as "Americans" can imply that they are more important than other inhabitants of North and South America, or perhaps that America as

a whole somehow belongs to the United States. Despite these problems with the term, it is used here in reference to the United States because the alternatives in English (e.g., “in the United States”) are relatively awkward, and because the author’s experiences suggest that “*americano*” is overwhelmingly the way Latin Americans refer to the people and culture of the United States. Like “American,” “Mexican” is used here to refer not only to persons from Mexico, but to the ways of being common to them.

Mexican Immigrant Families. Selection of participants was based on the parents’ backgrounds, not on the child’s place of birth. The search for focal children was limited to those whose parents are Mexican, rather than Latin American or Spanish-speaking. Given that cultural differences between home and school were one focus of the study, including only children whose families were from Mexico somewhat narrows the cultural background represented in their homes. While cultural background could vary predictably among Mexicans based on their socioeconomic class, region, or urban/rural history, none of these factors was considered in the selection process.

Children without English. The ability to speak English is employed here as an indicator of the degree to which an immigrant family is acculturated to life in the U.S. Students who do not live with anyone who speaks English are assumed to be more strongly embedded in or affiliated with Mexican ways of being. The value of this indicator is limited, but it is a simple way to define a group likely to be more Mexican than American.

Selection of Focal Children

The boy and girl selected as focal children belonged to Mexican immigrant families and did not speak English upon starting school. Neither had been enrolled in day

care, nursery school, preschool, or prekindergarten. At the beginning of the school year, he was five years and nine months old. She was five years and two months. They had both been assigned to the class of the classroom teacher, and their parents expressed interest in participating in the study.

Classroom Teacher

The teacher, Ms. Clark, was in her third year of teaching, and was an eager participant in the study. She was confident, having taken on leadership roles in the school despite being relatively new to the profession and the school. She professed a strong interest in the welfare of the Mexican immigrant children she served. Her philosophy and practice of teaching are described in greater detail as part of the study's findings in Chapter IV.

Data Collection

Several types of data were collected so that they could inform and complement each other. The organizing principles were to understand the children's perspectives on their experience and to avoid imposing theories on the data as much as possible, as described in Chapter I. To interview the families, observe the children at school, speak informally with them during those observations, and interview the teacher offered a number of ways to learn about those experiences. Groundedness was sought through open-ended interviews, and by returning to issues raised by early interviews and observations.

I conducted 9 family-child interviews in the children's homes, usually with the focal child, both parents, and siblings present. I observed the focal children at school on 17 occasions, and spoke informally with them during these observations. I conducted 4

interviews with the children's teacher. I also collected documents from the classroom teacher, the children's English as a Second Language teacher, and the school clerk. (See figure 7 for a summary of the data collection.)

	Natalie		Victor		Clark
	Observation	Interview	Observation	Interview	Interview
week 1				day 1: 8/10	
			day 2: 8/11		
			day 4: 8/15		day 4: 8/15
week 2	day 6: 8/17		day 6: 8/17		
	day 8: 8/19	day 8: 8/19	day 8: 8/19	day 8: 8/19	
	day 10: 8/23				
week 3		day 13: 8/26	day 13: 8/26	day 13: 8/26	
week 4	day 16: 8/31				
	day 18: 9/2				
2nd month	day 22: 9/9				day 22: 9/9
	day 29: 9/20		day 29: 9/20		
			day 37: 9/30		
	day 39: 10/4		day 39: 10/4		
3rd month		day 42: 10/7		day 51: 10/21	day 50: 10/20
	day 59: 11/3		day 59: 11/3		
4th - 5th month	day 79: 12/9		day 83: 12/15		
	day 85: 12/19		day 96: 1/20		
7th month		day 128: 3/9		day 134: 3/17	
follow-up					5/21/07

All dates except follow-up are during 05-06 school year of 180 school days.

Figure 7. Data Collection Summary

Family-Child Interviews

Interviews with the families of the focal children in their homes were the primary data source. Given the goal of understanding the child's perspective on the transition experience, and the difficulty of getting five-year-olds to reflect on and make generalizations about that experience, parents were considered the most reliable source of information about which aspects of school were salient for their children. The family-

child interviews also served as the sole source of information about the children's lives at home and family background. These interviews were conducted in Spanish and audio recorded. They lasted roughly 45 minutes each.

The children were present during these interviews so they would have the opportunity to participate without feeling pressure to answer questions or carry the conversation. Some questions were directed directly to the children, but the parents often served as mediators between interviewer and child. Parents repeated and often re-worded my questions, encouraging the child to answer. They often corrected the child or added something to the child's answer.

This family-child interview method follows from a view of the child as existing and making meaning as part of a group, and a belief that meaning making goes on in families through the co-narration of personal events (Flannagan, 1996; Miller, 1992; Ochs et al., 1992; Ochs & Capps, 2001; Wang, 2001). Children, parents, and other family members were asked to reflect on the child's school experiences as a group, so that some of the regular intermental work they do around such narratives could be observed.

In order to find out what features of the transition were salient for the child, questions were generally open-ended, such as "What did he say about school today?" Such questions opened conversations about school that allowed the child or family members to bring out tangential observations, stories, or evaluations. Subsequent questions sought clarification of themes raised by the parents or the child.

An effort was made to let the conversations flow naturally, with questions interjected only when necessary to keep the conversation moving or address topics that

had not come up naturally. In this example, Victor's mother was talking about how it was difficult for her to help him with school work because she did not know the English alphabet, and I took the opportunity to ask Victor about knowing the alphabet.

M: I already forgot it. It's that since my sister-in-law taught me
 I: uh-huh
 M: She knows the alphabet, but she only taught me like three times
 I: that's fine..
 M: ____ ____ ____
 I: (to Victor)..and ____ the alphabet?
 V: uh?
 I: Do you know the letters? The alphabet?
 V: mm.. one (in English)
 M: No.
 I: Those are the numbers.
 M: A-B-C (in English)
 (pause)
 P: Go ahead, then.
 I: or the song. Do you know the song? (singing) "a-b-c-d-" (in English)
 that one?
 M: uh-huh. He sings that one. He sings it.
 (Victor, Mom, Dad, & Cobb, 10/21, day 51, translated)

To address the concern that barriers of language, culture, and class might keep the parents from talking openly with me, I also tried to be as friendly and playful as possible while still attending to the questions at hand. In the following example (translated from the Spanish), we were talking about Victor losing two teeth. It came near the end of our relationship, but felt like a breakthrough because we joked and laughed together more than we had before.

I: They say that sometimes they come out in your food, when you eat an apple or something.
 M: The last one that..
 V: And the other, that I was eating a taco, and it
 M: (laughs)
 V: And it moved, and it came out. And..
 M, I, & P: (laugh)
 I: So your mom's tacos are very hard?
 M&P: (laugh)

I: They break your teeth, huh?

M, P, & I: (laugh)

(Victor and his parents, Cobb, 03/17, day 134, translated)

Participant Observation at School

Participant observation is a major strategy for data collection for naturalistic studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, classroom observations were an essential source of information for they offered a relatively objective view of what the children did and how they felt at school. The observations also allowed the researcher to notice things not brought out by the other data sources and bring them to interviews as topics for discussion. Informal conversations with the focal children were couched within classroom observations, and served primarily to augment them.

Seventeen classroom observations were conducted, as seen in Table 1. These observations lasted from 20 to 40 minutes each. Most took place in Ms. Clark's classroom. Others occurred in other classrooms where Ms. Clark's class was visiting, in the hallway, and once in the school's administrative offices, where the class visited to perform a Christmas song. As a full-time teacher, I was only able to observe at times when my own students were at "specials" (art, music, physical education, computer) or lunch. The schedules for all classes were changed after the second week of school, such that the first four observations were between 8:00 and 8:45, and then after the change were between 1:00 and 1:45. Observations were recorded as written notes¹.

While in the classroom, the interviewer's target role was that of *busy observer*. It seemed important to be able to speak to children in a non-intrusive way, and yet not to be

¹ Audio recordings were made for the first observations, but were not found to add data to the field notes and were therefore discontinued.

available for play or academic support for the focal children or others. This was mostly successful. The children sometimes initiated interactions, but were usually occupied either with their assignments or with center-time play. There was one occasion during snack time when a boy called from another table “Hey man!” and “Your name is *pollo pollo!*” (chicken chicken) (8/26, day 13)

In keeping with the ideals of groundedness and a focus on the children’s perspective, my intent during observations was to be open to new insights about the experiences of Natalie and Victor. Alongside this open stance, however, there were points of interest from my theoretical background and earlier data collection that influenced my observations. My theoretical focus at the beginning was to watch for cultural differences. Once data collection began, each observation and interview added points of interest to my observational lens, such as the children’s ability to participate, the teacher’s use of movement songs, and how the focal children watched Ms. Clark.

Informal Conversations with Focal Children

Understanding the children’s perspectives was an important element of the study. Formal interviews, however, are problematic with five-year-old participants. Interview procedures were informed by Hatch (1990) who describes four problems that threaten the quality of interviews with young children. First is the *adult-child problem*, which follows from the shared expectation that the relationship is unequal, that the adult has authority over the child. This imbalance is exacerbated where the adult is also a teacher. Hatch suggests that young children do not expect that they can enlighten the adult about anything. They expect the adult to direct them. A second, related issue is the *right*

answer problem; wherein the child perceives the goal is to guess what answer the adult wants to hear and supply it, rather than simply to answer questions directly.

Hatch (1990) also notes that problems related to *preoperational thought* complicate the interview process, as young children tend to focus on a single aspect of an issue under discussion and cling tenaciously to it. Finally, Hatch names the *self-as-social-object* problem: that young children generally cannot talk about themselves in an objective way (e.g., “Why didn’t you name yourself as one of the smartest children?” “Because I’m right here.”). Drawing from Corsaro (1985), Hatch adopts the ideal of *reactive field entry strategies*, in which the investigator is available for interactions but does not actively initiate contact with the participants.

These problems and recommendations guided the procedures used for interviews (informal conversations) with focal children in the study. An informal and non-coercive relationship was established with the students through visits to their homes and classrooms. Neither the focal children nor other children in the classes ever approached the researcher with behavior management issues or asked that he take on duties of the teacher. There was one occasion when the teacher left the room for a moment, asking the researcher to be the supervisor of record, and on another occasion she said “Mr. Cobb is watching too,” to help motivate the children to behave well. The investigator worked to focus his relationship with the students around his interest in their experiences, through overt statements of curiosity and by showing interest in the topics they raised.

The conversations with focal children were short and did not remove them from their ongoing activities, except in one case when Natalie came to my classroom for a few minutes (3/09, day 128). The topics raised were related to the student’s current activity.

They would not have been called “interviews” by most observers, as the investigator merely sat by the child and occasionally talked to the child about something he or she was doing.

These strategies were implemented to address the adult-child problem and the right answer problem (Corsaro, 1985). They also constitute an approximation of the reactive field entry strategy, in that while the investigator did instigate interactions, this was done on a very small scale and in a relatively non-directive way. Informal conversations while children are engaged in other activities are also recommended by Smith, Duncan, and Marshall (2005) as an effective way to overcome the obstacles involved in accessing young children’s perspectives. Cremin and Slatter (2004) investigated the use of similar interviewing techniques with preschoolers and concluded their expressed preferences can be taken as an accurate account of their thoughts and feelings.

The students appeared comfortable during these interactions, illustrated by the occasions when they chose not to interact, continuing with their work and ignoring the investigator’s questions.

Data from the focal children were primarily collected during family interviews at their homes, but the informal conversations offered unique insights into the way the children saw their schoolwork. Here are three samples of these interactions:

On day 29 (09/20), I sat with Victor as he had his snack. He acknowledged me, but was in a great hurry to finish his snack and pack up his book bag.

Victor finished and is drinking water from Batman cup.
"¿Quién te compró esa cosa de Batman? ¿Tu papá?"
 (Who bought you that Batman thing? Your dad?)
 Nods yes.

"¿Ahora que van a hacer?" (Now what are you all going to do?)
 Answers with bottle in mouth: "_____ mochila." (??? bookbag)
 Victor says to Clark "I'm done."
 (Field Notes, 09/20, day 29)

I sat with Natalie as she colored at her table. Twice an African-American girl named Braxton did a great imitation of speaking Spanish, perhaps joking or perhaps hoping to be understood. Natalie volunteered information about Braxton as I sat at the table watching.

Braxton asks for a marker in fake Spanish, reaching for the one in Natalie's hand.
 Natalie says (happily): "*Braxton, ésta siempre está loca.*"
 (That Braxton is always crazy.)
 "Siempre se rie jajaja" (She always laughs hahaha)
 (Field Notes, 12/09, day 79)

One important function of the interviews with the focal children was as a check on the children's comprehension of the teacher's directions. Observation was enough to verify that Natalie understood the teacher during this excerpt, but it was necessary to question Victor to determine if he did.

Clark tells them: "Because you took so long in the bathroom, we don't have time for centers. Let's watch Mr. Brown on TV."
 Clark gets line straight and Jordan says, "We're going to have centers?"
 Natalie says, "No."
 I ask Victor, "¿Que van a hacer ahora?" (What will you all do now?)
 He shrugs.
 I ask, "¿No sabes?" (You don't know?)
 (Field Notes, 11/03, day 59)

Teacher Interviews

Interviews with the classroom teacher were another critical source of information about the children's experience. As the adult managing their school environment and guiding them through the transition, Ms. Clark was uniquely positioned to recount

important incidents and make generalizations about their experience. In addition to being a data source, she was a central character in the children's transition experience.

Ms. Clark was interviewed four times with each interview lasting roughly 45 minutes. These interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. She was asked to describe the children's experience of school and their progress in her class. Insights from observations and family interviews were also shared with her, so she could react to or otherwise augment them.

Ms. Clark appeared to be genuinely interested in understanding the children's experience. As I discussed the study with her, she validated some ideas (e.g. that her social studies lessons were less accessible for non-English speakers than most of the class activities) and corrected others (e.g., she dismissed my suggestion that Natalie was shy). She answered questions about the focal children and her teaching, but we also talked at length about more abstract topics, like the students' motivations for their behaviors at school, and the ways Hispanic parents relate to their children and the school.

Recording and Managing Data

The researcher took handwritten field notes during interviews and observations in order to describe as fully as possible what was occurring. This involved describing behaviors, details, and the environment in objective terms, without analysis or inference (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). Inferences and reflections were also noted, but separately. Field note pages (see Appendix A for examples) were divided into two columns, with objective reports of events kept on the left, and reflective notes, comments, and interpretations on the right. The notes were titled and dated, and the location and participants involved was noted.

Soon after observations or interviews, field notes were typed and elaborations, both objective and reflective, were added. The distinction between objective and reflective notes was maintained in the printed copy, and notes added later were marked as such. Some field notes included drawings not easily reproduced in computer documents, and are therefore referenced in the typed versions.

A data list (figure 7) was built throughout the process to keep track of how many times each child had been observed or interviewed. This electronically based list assisted the researcher in evenly distributing the observations between the two subjects.

Audio recordings were made of all interviews and some observations. For interviews, the audio recordings were the primary means of recording the data, supplemented by field notes. Interview recordings were transcribed in their entirety, with some augmentation from field notes. For the first several classroom observations, audio recordings were also made. These were not found to add information to the field notes, so the practice was discontinued.

Field notes were kept on the researcher's home computer and printed versions were stored in a 3-ring-binder, together with the researcher's memos on procedure and analysis. All data were cataloged in a timely manner using this system.

Transcript Preparation

Transcription and Translation. Every effort was made to produce complete verbatim transcripts from interview audio recordings. This was easy for the teacher interviews, but the family-child interviews were challenging. In many cases, the quality of the recordings was low, with adult responses being overwhelmed by children playing.

Also, the families' dialects of Spanish included vocabulary, idioms, and phrasing unfamiliar to the researcher.

The standard applied throughout the process was not to include any guesses about what was said when audio recordings and field notes were not clear. In the translation of Spanish elements of Spanish transcripts, this meant that known words were not translated where their meaning could depend on words that were not clear. This standard was intended to produce highly reliable transcripts, even at the cost of lost data.

Idealization of Interview Transcripts. Linguist James Gee (1999) explains that speech is naturally produced in small spurts. His method of "idealizing" texts involves breaking them into lines that mirror these natural units, removing speech hesitations and dysfluencies, and grouping lines as "stanzas" that address a single topic. Gee offers several ways lines can be defined: 1) a line is one clause (a verb and the elements that cluster with it); 2) a line contains one new piece of information, it is an "idea unit," "one focus of the mind's eye," and 3) in speech the breaks between lines are marked by pauses and by intonation. Gee holds that lines are an inevitable feature of both oral and written texts, that reading comprehension involves breaking the text into lines.

I experimented with breaking transcripts into lines in the pilot project for this study, and found it to be useful in several ways. First, the process of parsing the texts was easy and natural. A look at any one of my transcripts seemed to confirm Gee's contention about speech coming in spurts. My subjects and I rarely seemed to utter complete sentences. Where a long, unified sentence was spoken, it was produced in spurts, and these were marked by commas or pairs of periods in the transcripts. The transcripts were also easier to read when they were broken into lines. Having (roughly)

one new concept on each line made the form of the text match its logical structure in a way that paragraphs fail to do. The line breaks served as an additional tool to structure the presentation of the text. The transcripts for this study were therefore broken into lines according to Gee's specifications.

Gee's idealization involves two more processes: eliminating dysfluencies and forming stanzas. Eliminating dysfluencies is appealing in some ways, but also threatens to cause problems. If "ummm"s and "you know"s are deleted, the transcript is likely to flow more fluently than did the original speech, and the ideas communicated are then cleaned up for the reader. Dysfluencies like these, however, often communicate something. There were times when Natalie snapped her answer back at me instantly, and other times when she gave signs of reluctance, as when she named the boys in her class. Dysfluencies were eliminated in the data in some cases, but were maintained in the transcripts whenever it seemed the dysfluency might communicate a meaningful facet of the speech act.

I chose not to attempt to group lines into stanzas because that would require a commitment to one interpretation of the text at an early stage of analysis. Waiting to create virtual stanzas through coding enabled me to consider alternate and perhaps overlapping ways to parse the text at levels higher than the line.

Analysis

Introduction

The data were analyzed using the common qualitative practices of coding, writing, diagramming, talking, and "troubling." These methods allow the researcher to inductively build interpretations of the raw data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The process

was conducted with regard for standards of trustworthiness for qualitative studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and the ideals of groundedness and giving priority to the children's perspective.

Multiple Case Studies

A case study approach suited the aims of the researcher because of the depth of data and analysis it allows (Stake, 2000). The data on the two children were treated as separate case studies, based on the assumption that each case would suggest its own themes. During data collection, initial observations about both cases were made so they could influence later steps in the data collection process. Some general impressions were formed that related to both cases (such as the sense that songs with movement allowed the participation of non-English speaking children in striking ways). Interviews relating to the two cases were also transcribed and translated during the same time, such that again there were opportunities for impressions formed in one case to affect the consideration of the other. After the transcripts were prepared and entered into a database project (using N6, a widely-used program for qualitative analysis), I turned my attention entirely to Victor's case until the coding of data and preliminary analyses (most of his case as presented in Chapter IV) were complete. I then set Victor's case aside, and worked exclusively on Natalie's case until coding and preliminary analysis were done. Throughout the processes of data analysis, transcription and translation, and preliminary analysis the separation of the two cases was considered important to the quality of the study.

After the cases were analyzed individually, cross-case comparisons were made. These are presented after the findings for each case in Chapter IV. At that point, the

salient findings from the two cases were further considered, leading to the inclusion of a new theoretical perspective, a holistic, systems-oriented, interactionist view of development. Data from the two cases are used to support a view of the transition to kindergarten based on this perspective in Chapter V.

The Constant Comparative Method

The constant comparative method offered an open approach to data analysis, a way to allow insights to emerge from the data, rather than answer questions based on specific theories. These methods are also respected and commonly used in the qualitative research community, and therefore lend themselves well to being understood and evaluated by that audience (Schensul et al., 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Data collected early in the study were subjected to preliminary analysis, and these analyses informed later data collection. For each case, analysis of the data occurred at each stage of the project. Throughout the process, the approach was to return to the original research questions, consider what insights had been gained, and formulate additional questions, the answers to which were sought both in further analysis of the extant data. Ideally, each stage of data analysis could lead to targeted data collection. In this case, the formal analysis was conducted after data collection had ended, so that only preliminary and informal areas of interest shaped data collection.

Coding

Idealized transcripts and field notes were imported into projects of the qualitative research program N6 (QSR, version 6.0, 1991-2002). A separate project (database) was created for each case, with transcripts or notes that applied to both cases being imported to each.

I coded the data on Victor first. The initial codes grew out of my familiarity with the data, as recommended within Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded approach. I had become familiar with the data in several stages: through the personal experience of collecting it, transcribing it, and idealizing the transcripts. In the case of the family interviews, I also translated them from Spanish to English. Transcription, translation, and idealization all call for careful attention to each word, phrase, and sentence in the data. These procedures were carried out in the light of my initial experience collecting the data, and offered multiple opportunities to make judgements about ambiguous phrases and erroneous impressions.

This time spent processing and thinking about the data made a general coding scheme clear to me. That initial list of codes included a top-level division between home and school. Under home, the sub-categories were relations, activities, and history. Under school, I created the nodes activities, behavior, skills, relations, and the class. I further divided these nodes in anticipation of elements in Victor's case that would be sorted there.

I then read through the transcripts and notes related to Victor's case in chronological order, associating every line of text with at least one node (code²). When a segment of text did not fit any existing nodes, a new node was created. New nodes were also created as new aspects of the data emerged as meaningful. Each time a new node was created, I returned to earlier texts to look for lines or passages that might be

² Within the N6 program, codes are referred to as "nodes." The two words are used interchangeably here.

associated with it. Each node was defined. As an example, the names and definitions of a group of nodes used to categorize findings about Ms. Clark include:

/Victor/School/The Class/Clark/Teaching: Descriptions of Ms. Clark's teaching methods including her own descriptions of her teaching. Could also include others' comments on or evaluations of her teaching.

/Victor/School/The Class/Clark/Management: Descriptions of behavior management techniques used by Ms. Clark or other teachers, as well as other incidents or comments related to control of student behavior in school, school rules, contrasting behavior management at school with that at home, as well as student misbehavior and general relationship to rules at school.

/Victor/School/The Class/Clark/Philosophy: Ms. Clark's descriptions of her beliefs about education, reasons for her actions as a teacher, and opinions about school policies.

/Victor/School/The Class/Peers: Descriptions of classmates and other students, both as individuals and as a group. Distinguished from node including Victor's relations with peers, but some overlap is inevitable.

/Victor/School/The Class/Changes: Descriptions of changes in the makeup of the class, especially students withdrawing and enrolling, also the effects of these changes.

A list of definitions for each node is often known as a *codebook* (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). In this study, the codebook for each case resided in the definitions of nodes within its N6 project.

I coded the data for Natalie's case after Victor's case was complete. I was satisfied with the coding process I had used for Victor's case, but as I prepared to code Natalie's case, a somewhat more grounded method occurred to me, and I employed it for coding Natalie's data. For Victor, I created a fairly elaborate hierarchy of codes before I began coding, based on my familiarity with the data. For Natalie, I began with a much smaller number of more general codes and coded all the data within this system first. I then returned to each general node and read the data that had been assigned to it before creating sub-nodes. This procedure shifted many of the decisions about categorizations of the data to later in the process, and may have made those decisions less subject to overall impressions about the case.

I did not detect any difference in the results based on this change. In the end, Natalie's coding scheme had more nodes (114 to Victor's 91), but I cannot otherwise characterize differences between them. Theoretically, waiting to create the sub-nodes gave another opportunity for a fresh consideration of the coding scheme. For an open-ended study such as this, I recommend it as a more grounded practice.

These nodes are *descriptive*, as opposed to *interpretive* or *pattern* codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For this study, the nodes served to classify and locate data in terms of its basic object (e.g., topic of a conversation; name of an activity). I experimented with creating more conceptual nodes and re-coding the data based on these nodes, but found that memos and diagrams served these higher-level organizational goals better, and continued to use N6 only to locate data with the descriptive nodes. The final lists of nodes for Victor and Natalie are reproduced in Appendix B.

N6, the qualitative research software program employed, and the two databases built with it were central to the analysis process. As new interpretations of the data occurred to me, N6 made it easy to locate all the passages related to a given topic, to find remembered comments or incidents in the data, or to search for particular words throughout the database.

Writing

Memo writing is an analysis strategy recommended by a number of qualitative research theorists (Charmaz, 2000) At all stages of the project, I wrote memos to clarify and record my thinking about the meaning of the data and the process of conducting the study. In order to discuss their function in specific terms, five are reproduced in Appendix C as examples.

The first, dated 8/13/05, is a procedural memo that recorded the difficulties I encountered in selecting the focal children for the study. It describes what obstacles presented themselves, the actions I took to resolve them, and three possible ways to proceed. It concludes with a decision to seek to recruit one of three girls in Ms. Clark's class as the second focal child. This memo served several purposes. It created a record of the factors that led to a change in plan (the prospectus called for two boys as the focal children for the study) and the reasoning that went into the eventual decision. Writing the memo also helped me think about the options and make that decision.

The second memo included in Appendix C, dated 8/19/05, was written in preparation for an interview to be conducted a short while later. It begins as an attempt to define a focus for the interview and produce specific questions, but then turns to musings about the meaning of songs in the class, making connections with ideas about adult

rituals in church. This memo offers another illustration of how the act of writing helped me discover new associations and give them a place in my growing understanding of the cases. It also illustrates how insights gained early in data collection informed the direction of later interviews and observations.

Sample memo three, dated 9/15/05, has a similar flow from one topic to another. It begins with a comparison of the tone of the class in the morning to its tone in the afternoon, and then shifts to a consideration of the inaccessibility for non-English speakers of two conceptual lessons observed in the afternoon. This leads to an idea for describing the content of a kindergarten day in terms of this accessibility. The memo deals with Natalie's case, and illustrates that even when dealing with general concepts about the class and the nature of kindergarten, the two cases were treated separately. The value of writing in the analysis process is again evident. The writing of this memo provided a medium through which my observations of the class were given form; through which interesting aspects of the data emerged; through which connections were made to theoretical notions; and through which new insights were developed into more practical applications.

The fourth sample memo, dated 7/18/06, after the end of data collection, was an effort to capture an insight that seemed valuable. Victor had complained about an incident in which he was put on the wrong bus and had to return to school, and I had been satisfied with my understanding of his complaint. In thinking about the incident, however, I realized that his complaints were probably motivated by a more general dissatisfaction with his experience of the first day of school, and, as I title the memo "not about the bus." My eagerness to capture my sense of the mistake I had made and my new

conception of this data is evident, as I began the memo with the new interpretation I had reached: “Victor compressed his first day fears into a story blaming his mom.” Once this was safely preserved in the memo, I could go on to elaborate and substantiate the claim, which would later become an important point in my interpretation of the data.

The fifth and final memo sample, from the late stages of analysis, is dated 4/26/07. It suggests ways I might use the theory of cultural reproduction (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Bowles, Gintis, & Meyer, 1999) in understanding the data. I had considered using cultural reproduction as a theoretical basis for the study, and at the time of this memo was drawn back to it as a way to think about the role of schools within a functionalist and Marxist view of society. This sample illustrates how memo writing offered a means to try out theoretical structures on the data. Within this memo, cultural reproduction showed some promise as a way to think about the acculturation of Mexican immigrants, but it is not included in the final version of analysis. This particular issue also illustrates an important feature of data analysis: that any number of possible interpretations might be valuable, none of which can claim to be *the* meaning of the data.

Diagrams

Throughout the analysis process, the creation of diagrams helped give form to my ideas about the data. Diagrams served as a means to move from the hint of a new organizational scheme toward a fuller attempt to create one, and then as a means to judge the coherence and usefulness of the new model. Examples of diagrams that were important to the study are found in chapters I, IV, and V. In particular, the diagram in Chapter IV that suggests relationships among Victor’s distress, pleasure, and attentiveness communicates the basic narrative structure of his case, and various versions

of this diagram developed in a recursive relationship with my writing and thinking about his findings.

I also created charts (which could also be called tables or matrices) to work with the data on several occasions. Still trying to define attentiveness, I made three charts that took different approaches to organizing the behaviors I wanted to classify. The use of diagrams, charts, and other visual representations is a strategy recommended by several theorists of qualitative research (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Talking

Throughout the analysis process, I had regular conversations about the work with my mentor, Dr. Mona Matthews. I explained to her both the processes I was using and the interpretations and conclusions these produced. My thinking was often clarified through the process of explaining myself and answering her questions. She often advised me to pursue an idea in greater depth, and to refine my ideas through further work with the data or writing. On one occasion, she questioned what I meant by “attentiveness,” and advised me to both work on a precise definition and return to the data to seek instances that fit this definition.

My conversations with Ms. Clark, the classroom teacher, also helped me make sense of the data at several stages. I shared ideas and preliminary findings with her, as described previously, and considered her insights especially pertinent since she knew the children I was studying better than I did.

Troubling

A number of heuristics served to move the process of interpretation and analysis forward, and to avoid premature conclusions. Two strategies named in Strauss and Corbin (1990) were employed. *Questioning* is a systematic way to examine and re-examine a finding, pattern, or phenomena. The researcher names the phenomenon, then formulates questions using who, what, where, when, why, and how. In this study, it was important to question what I meant when I described Victor as an introvert. To question this idea, I asked, “What is introversion? What does Victor do that makes this label apply to him? What counter-examples suggest this is not the case? At what times and under what conditions does he exhibit symptoms of introversion?” In qualitative research, the heuristic of questioning an idea thus provides a check on the premature acceptance of initial impressions, and suggests connections to other findings, patterns, or phenomena (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Strauss and Corbin (1990) also recommend the *analysis of a word, phrase, or sentence*. As described previously, my mentor suggested I apply this technique to my use of “attentiveness.” This practice is closely related to questioning, but focuses on a word or phrase, rather than a construct. In my work with Natalie’s case, the phrase “ritual without a story” occurred to me as a label for a number of phenomena. This phrase then became an object worthy of study. Why did I find it appealing? How was it supported in the data? What meanings had “ritual” and “story” been given in the literature? This analysis led me to restrict the use of the phrase to a particular role in Chapter IV, and to discover the phrase “going through the motions,” which served many of the purposes of “ritual without a story” without the complications associated with that phrase.

Standards of Trustworthiness

Throughout the design and execution of this study, a number of standards for qualitative research were present to ensure trustworthiness, credibility, and dependability. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility in qualitative studies is demonstrated through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, and member checks. All of these qualities are found in this research prospectus.

Prolonged Engagement. This study was focused on the beginning of the school year, but included observations through the fifth month of school, family-child interviews to the seventh month, and a follow-up interview with the classroom teacher in the following year. This enabled later circumstances to correct or contribute to the impressions formed by the data gathered during the children's initial transition.

Persistent Observation. The collection of data was both intense and recursive, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). It was intense in that data collection occurred frequently, in varied contexts, and from several perspectives over the beginning of the school year. The collection of data was recursive in that data collected across these perspectives and contexts directed the investigator's attention through further collection efforts.

Triangulation. This study involved the collection of data at school and in the home, and in both cases, multiple data sources provided triangulation. At school, the observations of the researcher were supported or called into question by the teacher interviews and journal, and by the child's version of events as given through interviews at school and at home. At home, parents and children gave their perspectives on the issues

discussed, and in addition to their testimony, the researcher was able to observe their interactions.

Peer Debriefing. The peer debriefing process is intended to bring out possible aspects or interpretations of the data that the investigator has not considered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Mona Matthews, my mentor and a professor of Early Childhood Education, served as a research reviewer and debriefer. We had regular meetings to discuss the research process and emerging theories, and during which she asked questions and offered guidance.

Negative Case Analysis. Negative cases serve to challenge initial interpretations, and to confirm or disconfirm initial conclusions. Efforts were made to find and account for negative cases (those which contradicted tentative findings) in order to maintain a critical stance toward the data. A central finding regarding Victor was that he was very attentive to Ms. Clark. Examples in the data of times when he did not attend to her were sought out and considered as objections to this interpretation.

Referential Adequacy. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend a strategy of setting aside some part of the data through several stages of analysis, and then checking to see if that data supports interpretations reached based on the rest. This occurred unintentionally, since the March interview with Ms. Clark had not been transcribed when I began the coding process at the end of the school year. At the time, it seemed more important to begin the analysis, and therefore the data from that interview were not introduced for some time. When I transcribed and coded the interview, it contained new information about the children's academic and social progress throughout the year, and confirmed interpretations about the students' experiences at the beginning of the year.

Member Checks. Sharing findings and conclusions with participants in the study can support or trouble those theories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The follow-up interview with Ms. Clark served as a formal, summative member checking exercise. I summarized both the findings (Chapter IV) and the analysis (Chapter V) and we discussed them. She offered some minor corrections on the findings, but otherwise agreed, and found the analysis of the cases to be valid and interesting (5/21/07).

Parents of the focal children were asked about early aspects of the findings, as in my discussion with Victor's parents about the possibility that interacting all day at school made him want to be left alone when he arrived at home. The higher-level conclusions that organize the presentation of findings in Chapter IV and the analysis in Chapter V, however, were not shared with the children or their parents.

Researcher Role and Bias

I was a kindergarten teacher at the school where the study occurred. I taught first grade for eleven years and have now taught kindergarten for four years. Before coming to work at the school of the study, I worked with a mostly African-American population in an economically disadvantaged area. There I came to hold ideals of public schooling as a way to work against the injustices of the class system, and wanted to play some small role in that struggle. In my graduate studies, I was drawn to cultural mismatch theories as both an explanation of the problems facing minority groups in U.S. schools and a guide toward how to correct some of those problems. I began to engage with the question of how to make our public schools better suit the strengths and needs of the diverse populations we serve.

Upon moving to a school with a fast-growing population of Latin American immigrants, I was able to combine my interest in serving students with cultural differences with my ability to speak Spanish. I served as an informal liaison between the school and Spanish-speaking parents of students. I organized a large Latin Festival and encouraged Spanish-speaking parents to join the PTA board.

This study followed from several personal interests and ways of understanding. One of the most striking was a sense that, after several years of schooling, students of Mexican origin seemed to cope well enough in school, but they often stopped speaking Spanish at home and would report they had never attempted to read or write Spanish. I began to wonder if the adjustments necessary to be successful in school required or encouraged abandoning one's identification with one's home culture, which also meant abandoning one's parents and extended family. As a kindergarten teacher, I began to look at my Mexican students in terms of the way they became English-speakers and Americans, and whether this interfered with being Spanish-speakers and Mexicans.

My prominent role as the school's interpreter and organizer among the Latin American segment of the community helped prepare me for this study. This role provided experience interacting with Mexican immigrant parents, learning ways of being that would help me interact easily with other Mexican parents. As I approached parents about participating in the study, I believe they saw me not as a graduate student, whose motives might be difficult to understand, but as a teacher, a position of respect within Mexican culture that carries the connotation of an educated person motivated by a concern for children's welfare. To the extent that the new parents were aware of my

mediating role in the school, they could have known me not only as “*un maestro*,” but as “*el maestro*,” a title I was always proud to carry.

Gold (1957) warns that the field worker must maintain some distance from the participants in a study, be in some ways still a stranger. In this study, I worked to become as familiar as possible with the participants, knowing the barriers of cultural and language difference created natural obstacles to excessive familiarity. The home-based interviews were friendly and informal. With the families of both focal children, I felt I became familiar enough that the participants felt free to talk about the issues of the study, yet maintained the status of an outsider, an interested, well-intentioned observer.

This role was potentially threatened on a couple of occasions when Victor’s mother suggested I attempt to influence Victor’s behavior. She described an incident when Victor screamed at her (a novel and upsetting behavior), and said she had threatened to tell me what he had done, implying I would reprimand him. To do so would have placed me in a different position in relation to him, so I remained curious and sympathetic.

Researcher bias is possible in several aspects of this study. My strong views about the issues involved could have made it difficult to achieve an objective stance, affecting my questions, the aspects of the data that stood out, and the framework within which I interpreted and analyzed the data. Also, my non-native standing within the home culture of the focal children complicated the challenge of achieving an emic perspective.

These threats were addressed in several ways in the design of the study. The open-ended nature of the interviews, triangulation achieved through a variety of data collection approaches, and prolonged engagement all offered opportunities for negative

cases to present themselves. Throughout the process, the ideal of letting the data determine the focus, findings, and conclusions of the study was an important standard in decision-making. Peer debriefing and member checks also provide some resistance to the effects of bias.

None of these safeguards or ideals negate the fact that I hold strong beliefs related to the study. I believe that schools are too often treated as factories producing test scores and school reforms are aimed at making children more efficient producers of academic achievement. I believe that in setting educational policies we should put more emphasis on the children's quality of life as whole persons, both as a student and in their future. I believe that Mexican-Americans are often treated as second-class citizens in the United States, and I would like to see their status rise within American culture. I am afraid that I am part of an educational system that unintentionally prepares Mexican immigrant children and others outside the cultural and linguistic mainstream to join the economic underclass. It is my hope that this study will support efforts to make schools more accommodating of cultural differences, and offer teachers suggestions about how to support Mexican immigrants and all children in their transition to kindergarten.

I am not a disinterested or dispassionate investigator, but I believe I have conducted this investigation according to established standards, and here offer sufficient evidence of that fact.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of two children from Mexican immigrant families as they entered kindergarten in the United States. Interviews with the children, their parents, and their teacher, and observations of the children during school hours were conducted. The data collected through these means were catalogued and categorized in an all-inclusive way, so that the direction of the work could be determined by the data itself rather than the interests or preconceptions of the researcher. This chapter is intended both to give an inclusive overview of those findings, and to focus on areas of interest that stood out among the data.

Excerpts from the raw data are provided, both to give evidence supporting the summaries given, and often as the most efficient and precise way to illustrate the points made. Where interviews were translated, the original Spanish is also quoted. Some excerpts include blanks where bits of the audio recordings were unintelligible. All transcripts were broken into lines as described in Chapter III, and in some cases, repetitions and pauses were deleted. This structure is maintained in some of the excerpts, while others were reconstructed as unbroken prose, based on which seemed easier to read in each case. Indented excerpts are identified by reference to the participants (all names except *Cobb* are pseudonyms) and the date of the interview or observation. The day of the school year on which the data was collected (or the last school day before a weekend

interview) is also given. The entire school year was 180 days. For interview transcripts, speakers are identified by a single letter, as follows:

I: Interviewer (Cobb) M: Mamá (mother of Victor or Natalie)

C: Ms. Clark P: Papá (father of Victor or Natalie)

V: Victor Y: Yosenia, Victor's sister

N: Natalie A: Alison, Natalie's sister

Ms. Clark and her Class

This chapter begins with a description of Ms. Clark and her classroom.

Explanations about the placements of children in her class demonstrate the influence of macro- and exo-system forces on this kindergarten class. A description of the activities of her class serves to illustrate the curriculum and Ms. Clark's interactions with the children, and sets the stage upon which the stories of Victor and Natalie are told. The two cases are presented separately, followed by cross-case comparisons and conclusions. In chapter V, issues raised by the two cases are analyzed in greater depth.

Philosophy of Kindergarten

Ms. Clark was in her third year of teaching during the study, and demonstrated confidence and a sense of direction in her profession. She was determined to prepare her students for first grade and for life, and she saw kindergarten as a critical time when children establish their relationships with school:

I remember my kindergarten teacher, and I remember how much fun we had and how much she made me love school, and made me love being there and so that's what I want to provide for my kids too. 'Cause I think

that in kindergarten this is like the essential time for them to start to grasp what school is all about, what you're gonna' be doing in school, enjoy coming to school and enjoy being here, because if I were a miserable teacher and hated my job and everything they probably wouldn't enjoy school. ... So when I have my kids coming in my goal for them is to get them ready for the next year and to give them as much knowledge as I can give them from day one until the last day of school to get them prepared for that. And to get them ready for life, I mean there's a lot of life lessons that we learn in kindergarten. (Clark, 03/01, day 124)

Ms. Clark often explained her actions in ways that demonstrated her sense of responsibility to support students' good feelings about themselves and about school.

He couldn't really write his name at the beginning of the year, and now he's writing his name and his date. And he'll even say "I'm gonna try" and "I'll try to do it," and um.. I think his.. confidence within himself because he's had so much um.. positive experience with his academics and with always making a right choice and stuff like that, his confidence is building within himself and his self-esteem." (Clark, 03/01, day 124)

An Early Intervention Program Classroom

Georgia's Early Intervention Program (EIP) "serves students at risk for not reaching or maintaining academic grade level" (Georgia Dept. of Education, www.glc.k12.ga.us). In the year before the study was conducted, according to administrators at the school, a change in EIP regulations made it important to create "EIP classes" in which all students were identified as being academically below grade level. Ms. Clark was assigned to teach such a class. Kindergarteners were tested before school started, and assigned to classes based on their EIP status, as well as, presumably, an effort to balance students by race and sex. Students not tested before school started were assessed during the first week. On the 9th day of school, three of Ms. Clark's students who had not qualified for the EIP class were moved to other classes. Two boys who did qualify were added to her roll, and another girl came later.

The state's Early Intervention Program (EIP) funded extra teachers based on the number of students who qualify as being below grade level in academic ability. The amount of funding a school receives through this program depends on how the students are served. In response, at the school where the study was set, "EIP classes" in which all the students were judged to be performing below grade level, were formed to maximize the school's state funding. In kindergarten, the EIP classes were made up of 14 qualifying students, served by one certified teacher.

Ms. Clark believed the policy of creating "EIP classes" was flawed, as it left no "higher level" students (both in terms of behavior and academic skill) to serve as models for the others, and because it disrupted the children who were moved. After school started, as illustrated in the excerpt below, Ms. Clark also considered her class during the year of the study to be a difficult one based on the ratio of boys to girls and the presence of a number of "strong personalities."

C: Being an EIP class, you're not supposed to really have the higher kids. They're supposed to be in regular Ed.

I: How do you feel about that?

C: I don't really agree with it. I think that um.. I don't think that they should have EIP classes. I think they should have all regular Ed. classes, because I think that you need those role models in the class. You need those kids that know what's going on to be able to show what they're doing with their work.. celebrate their work so the other kids can see that. I mean, you celebrate everybody's work, but when you have the kids that are writing their name and date on their paper without needing any help; drawing pictures and labeling them without needing any help, you can use that as an example of what these other students are supposed to be doing. When you have those students that are always constantly making good choices.. cause, practically my whole class, aside from my, most of the girls..

I: (chuckles)

C: the boys are constantly getting into trouble. For, you know, little things.

Too much talking, playing with each other, running around in the classroom, bouncing up and down in the hallways. I have a very energetic

class this year, and I think if I had some of the students who are a little bit on the higher level, they would be able to model those good behaviors. (Clark & Cobb, 03/01, day 124)

ESOL Services

Ms. Clark had 14 students for most of the year of the study: nine boys and five girls. Five boys and three girls were Hispanic, and one girl and one boy each had one English-speaking and one Spanish-speaking parent. One boy came from a Brazilian, Portuguese-speaking family. Two boys and one girl were African-American. (Clark 09/09, day 22) Nine of Ms. Clark's students qualified for the ESOL program and were pulled out of class for 45 minutes a day to work with the ESOL teacher.

The ESOL teacher was an English-dominant bilingual Panamanian woman. She was a graduate student and was employing for the first time a native language (Spanish) literacy program called *Estrellitas* (www.estrellita.com). Her rationale for this program was that insights into the alphabetic principle and acquisition of skills such as blending letter sounds are more easily acquired in the child's native language, and that once learned these insights are transferred easily to the second language. The children learned beginning reading and writing in Spanish with the help of chants and syllable reading, all based on an alphabet with a Spanish noun for each letter. Because Spanish has a relatively shallow orthography³, the provision of two words for C and G is sufficient to convert the alphabet to a phonetically representative system. In the *Estrellitas* program, children first memorize the vowel sounds, and then add consonants, pairing each new consonant with each vowel. The consonant-vowel (CV) syllable is the basic unit for

³ The spelling of words reflects their pronunciation with a simple set of rules and very few exceptions.

acquiring blending skills in the program, reflecting the greater salience of this unit in Spanish, as compared to the onset-rime structure of English.

Ms. Clark, unlike some teachers at the school, did not express frustration with the number of non-native speakers of English she served. While Ms. Clark had no objections to the native language instruction her children received during the year of the study, she said at the end of the next year that she preferred having them stay in class, and thought they acquired English more quickly that way (Clark, 05/21/07).

The Family

One class from each grade at the school, kindergarten through fifth, joined to form a “family.” There were two family groupings at the school, with four to six “non-family” classes at each grade level. When Ms. Clark first applied for a job at the school, she was interviewed both by the principal and by four of the teachers who would be in her family. These teachers enthusiastically asked her to join their group.

The teachers of the family group to which Ms. Clark belonged were housed in adjacent classrooms. They ate lunch and went to recess together. They met every Wednesday afternoon as a large group for shared songs and celebrations and on Friday afternoons for Learning Clubs, in which children rotated to stations in the five classrooms. Ms. Clark’s class often joined Ms. Ford’s first grade class for a variety of activities, and occasionally teamed up with other family classes as well.

Class Activities

A list of the types of activities that occurred in Ms. Clark’s class will be important for later discussions of the experiences of Victor and Natalie, and serve to illuminate Ms. Clark’s curriculum and teaching methods. The data, however, suggest two different

schemes for naming the activities of the classroom: the way the teacher and other adults see them, and the way the students see them. Ms. Clark categorized many activities by academic subject while the children (especially at the beginning of the year) seemed to parse activity types according to their location and the materials used. The following list of activities represents an effort to compromise between these two ways of parsing class activities. The categorization scheme and detail with which activities are described also necessarily reflect the data collected. Activity types that appeared more than others in the observation data (especially morning skills block and afternoon centers) will be more prominent than those not observed. It must be assumed that other class activities occurred that were neither observed nor reported in interviews. The named activities include:

1. On the Rug: skills block, movement songs, stories, other whole group lessons
2. Animated Literacy: stories, songs, coloring, drawing
3. Centers
4. Writer's Workshop
5. Math
6. In the Hall (in line, bathroom, water fountain)
7. Recess
8. Nap

On the rug: Skills block, movement songs, stories, other whole group lessons.

The classroom observations conducted during the first two weeks of school occurred mostly during morning "skills block," with the children seated on the carpet as Ms. Clark

reviewed a variety of skills. She moved very quickly from one review (e.g. singing the alphabet) to another, interjecting songs with movements to keep the children from getting tired of sitting still. In one early session, I was impressed that she never paused to decide what to do next or to prepare materials. While she charged through this series of activities, however, children who raised their hands to make comments (often *non sequiturs*) were not rushed or cut off. I commented on this to her and she responded:

C: Well, it's funny because that's one thing. There's one little boy I have who's very long-winded. So he wants to tell you every little detail, and there is a point during.. in the morning when I try to let them do that and get it out of them,

I: (laughs)

C: so that they can sort of be done with it and get it out, but I also know that, for example that one little boy today, I was trying to find a good spot to sort-of cut him off because he just kept going and going, ...

I'm like, "OK. We need to move on," but then with the class that I have..

In the morning seems to be the part that's the most frustrating for me.

That period from probably like 8:00 to 10:30, our lunch is at 10:30.

I: uh-huh

C: But I need to keep them constantly going. Something.. that's why I was trying to do like 18 things in a matter of like a half an hour.

...

C: But I need to keep them constantly going, because, otherwise I'll lose 'em. And, they're the type of class that needs.. Once I start to see like that itch, kinda, where they're.. They all start sort of talking, I'm like, "OK. Everybody up. Let's do Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" or "let's do.." a song or something, to kind of get some of their energy out, and then sit them back down and once I start to see that again I'm like, "OK, everybody up, let's do it again."

I: So it comes as a response to seeing some wiggles?

C: Yeah, lots of times it's more of a response to their wiggles, or I am at a break at something..

...And those things will constantly change, but I try and.. the first few weeks of school, maybe the first two weeks, I'll try and do the same songs over and over so they'll learn them, and get to know them, and then we'll move on to something else. But um.. it's a good transition for me, and it's also a good way for them to get some of their wiggles out when I notice them starting to talk too much, or.. tapping their neighbor and trying..

(chuckles)

(Clark & Cobb, 08/15, day 4)

The songs were clearly fun for the children. During the day 4 observation, Mario requested they sing the “Polly Panda” song again, and a few minutes later another boy asked Ms. Clark to repeat her alphabet song. In both cases she agreed, suggesting she was amenable to student input.

Other activities on the rug included reading picture books, explaining concepts and asking questions about math and social studies, and receiving instructions for activities, like pairing up to work around the room. The rug activities had several elements in common. They were all in the same location. They all required children to sit “criss-cross” (sitting up with their legs crossed) and pay attention to the teacher; and not to play, leave the area, or otherwise engage in activities other than what the teacher prescribed. Occasionally, the children were allowed to call out answers, but for the most part, they had to raise their hands for permission to deviate from the sitting and listening role.

The movement songs called for a different set of behaviors. Children were still expected to stay attentive and follow the prescribed actions of the songs, but they were often on their feet, moving, and loud. These songs are included in the category of *on the rug* activities because they were used as described previously within a large variety of rug activities, and as such can be seen as one more aspect of this category that makes the several activities a coherent type. Whether seated for listening to a story or for a social studies lesson, the children could expect that Ms. Clark would soon allow them to wiggle.

Animated Literacy: stories, songs, coloring, drawing. Ms. Clark used the Animated Literacy program to teach letters and sounds. The program has several elements, but centers on a set of characters representing the phonemes. Each week Ms.

Clark taught the children a new character, beginning with Polly Panda for /p/. I observed on the day she introduced the second character, Uncle Upton. She read the students the story about how Uncle Upton made a baseball field but had to hang upside down to fit behind the plate, and taught them the song that goes with it:

(to the tune of *Camptown Races*)
 Uncle Upton's upside down (point up then down)
 Uh-huh, uh-huh (nod twice)
 Up in his umbrella tree (make branches over head with arms)
 Hanging upside down (point up then down)
 "U" is for uncle (make U with hand/s)
 Hanging upside down (point up then down)
 He umpires games while upside down (make "safe" sign with arms, point up then down)
 Up in the umbrella tree. (make branches over head with arms)
 (Jim Stone Creations, PO Box 2346 La Mesa CA 91943)

Ms. Clark demonstrated how to form the letter U and had them practice pointing up (the signal for the sound) while making the short u sound. She then sent the students to their desks with a page where they were to color the drawing of Uncle Upton (hanging over home plate) and practice writing the letter U. The children would review these songs and learn new ones throughout the year.

The elements of story, song, letter formation instruction, and coloring are done together and all focus on the same character and letter sound. The story and song, however, are rug activities, while the coloring required students to go to their desks. While the distinction between being on the rug and doing seatwork may be a salient one for children, this continuity of Animated Alphabet lessons between the two suggests that from the start children would be likely to make connections based on the topic rather than the nature of the work.

Observed math and social studies lessons similarly began with a whole group segment, with the children seated on the carpet watching and listening to Ms. Clark. She would read books, introduce concepts, and quiz individuals there. Then children would often be sent to their seats to practice the skill with paper, crayons, pencils, scissors and glue, or manipulatives.

For the purposes of discussing these cases, therefore, some categorical overlap seems necessary. The children experienced Animated Literacy lessons and might distinguish these from math lessons, while at the same time they might distinguish being on the rug from seatwork in either.

The Animated Literacy program also includes a guide for step-by-step drawing lessons, in which the teacher draws and the children copy each step. Only at the end of the process do they discover what they have drawn. The stated purpose of this exercise is to develop descriptive language and attention to graphic forms. After the drawing, the teacher works with the class to sound out the name of the thing drawn, and add this name to the drawing. Ms. Clark was observed once conducting one of these drawing lessons, and said she did them on a regular basis. These lessons were not closely tied to the other Animated Literacy activities used in the classroom, but Ms. Clark did employ the signals (like pointing up for /short u/) from the other lessons in the spelling segment of the drawing activity, and the words spelled would have used only those letter sounds introduced previously.

Writer's Workshop. Ms. Clark employed Writer's Workshop lessons as defined by the America's Choice school reform program (www.ncee.org). Lessons began with a whole group mini-lesson focusing on a particular skill and generating a chart. This was

followed by a 20-40 minute (increasing through the year) workshop time, in which the children wrote and drew at their tables. During this time, Ms. Clark coached children in their writing and held one-on-one conferences with them. Children then shared their work.

The school's focus on the implementation of Writer's Workshop during that school year meant its implementation was a relatively high priority for Ms. Clark. Though special events could disrupt the classroom schedule and cause some activities to be skipped, the children would have writing time every day. The workshop component of these lessons was the prototypical seatwork activity. Each child had a pencil, a cup of crayons, and a folder with blank paper and work from previous days. They were expected to keep working on their papers at their desks for the full assigned time. They were allowed to talk to each other about their work. Ms. Clark accepted all attempts at writing as valid and productive work (at least early in the year), but drew their attention to ways they could improve their writing.

Centers. The children were allowed to play in centers for 20 to 30 minutes most afternoons. Centers in the room included housekeeping (a.k.a. kitchen), blocks, writing, reading, puzzles, calendar, and math. Ms. Clark allowed the children to choose where they wanted to play during this time as much as possible.

Toward the end of the year (03/01, day 124), she noted that several of the girls always chose writing. Ms. Clark said that much of their interest in the writing center was that they could use markers, which were not available during Writer's Workshop. She said that for some time the boys brought toy cars from home and played with them at block center, but they argued a lot and she had to stop letting them bring the cars. They

continued to play in the block center, making buildings and racetracks, and racing imaginary cars.

Math. Ms. Clark used *Every Day Counts Calendar Math* (edconline.net) each morning and variety of other activities to teach mathematics. Most of Ms. Clark's references to teaching math and to evaluating the students on math skills were to whole group lessons where she demonstrated concepts (patterns, graphing, fractions) with objects or pictorial representations, and called on volunteers to answer questions or solve problems. After whole group demonstrations and explanations, she often had children practice with objects or worksheets, most often working at tables where each had an individual task, but could confer with peers. On one occasion, the children were observed completing a worksheet that required them to write a numeral and draw a given number of a given shape. Ms. Clark walked around the room, giving directions and helping individual children.

In the hall: line, bathroom, drink. Like the other teachers in the school, Ms. Clark required that her students move through the halls in a quiet, single-file line. She often praised students who were doing a good job of walking in line. Several times during the day, she took her class to the restrooms, where boys would line up by one door and girls by the other. They would often get a chance to go to the water fountain as they finished in the bathroom.

Recess. Ms. Clark gave the children a daily recess time of 20 minutes in accordance with school policy. The school had two playgrounds as well as open grassy areas where the children could play. Ms. Clark allowed her students to bring toys to play with during recess.

Nap. At the beginning of the year, the children also took naps, lying on towels they brought from home for 20 minutes or less. Ms. Clark said that several students would get “weepy” at naptime, missing their parents. She discontinued naptime in late October or early November.

Conclusions

The data related to Ms. Clark point out the influence of several macro- and exo-system forces on the classroom and the children. A national and perhaps international history of ideas about education, and recent interest in “closing the achievement gap” played out in research communities, political discussions, and in legislation, led to the creation and form of the Early Intervention Program in Georgia. Values and political forces in the state determined the changes in the provisions of this program that encouraged the formation of classes where all the children had academic skills below grade level. Ms. Clark considered this an important factor in the nature of her class and the progress of her students.

National debates and policies would have also contributed to the school and school system policies on the provision of ESOL services. At some level, it was determined that kindergarten would be served, and that the students would be pulled out and instructed in a small-group setting. The ESOL teacher’s choice of native language instruction occurred with the permission of the administrators at the school and with some support from members of the system’s central ESOL office, but was a pilot program generated largely by that teacher’s interest and efforts.

Most of all, whatever experiences shaped Ms. Clark’s personality and her way of working with children had a great impact on what happened in the classroom. She named

her own kindergarten teacher as an influence, but likely many other teachers, family members, and experiences came together to make her the teacher she was. Whatever the influences, Ms. Clark was consistently kind to the children, concerned for their well-being, and generous in her judgments of them.

Victor

Victor was a heavy-set boy, five years and nine months old at school entry. He had light brown skin and short, dark hair with sideburns. He wore jeans or shorts to school, with a t-shirt or jersey. His facial expressions often shifted between cautious and excited.

Victor's Story: A Preview

Victor lived with his parents and little sister in a spacious but unfurnished apartment near the school. He was generally free to eat, sleep, and play as his urges dictated. On his first day of school, he collapsed in tears, apparently because he was in a strange place without his mother's support. He liked the songs, however, and the teacher was kind to him. Victor could not understand the teacher's words, but by watching her attentively, he could determine what he was supposed to do. Though he seemed to have had little experience with routines and rules, he quickly became an exemplary student. He enjoyed many school activities, and acquired many skills, including switching to English as his primary language. Even when he seemed secure in the classroom, however, he maintained what seemed an excessive attentiveness. He kept his eyes on the teacher all the time, and made sure he always did the right thing.

This story embodies the salient points in Victor's case, and serves to organize the presentation of these findings. His family history and home life are described, both as

background on who he was and to establish the contrast between that environment and the classroom. His story begins with his distress upon starting school, and other accounts of distress from the study. Then the things in which Victor took pleasure—class activities and pleasing Ms. Clark—are described. Victor’s attentiveness and efforts to please Ms. Clark are then treated as his solution to this array of fears and desires, based on the resources available to him. Finally, an assessment of his academic progress during the year is given.

Home Life

The data collected about Victor’s family and their history are incomplete and in a couple of cases contradictory. His mother, Alma Castillo, was born somewhere in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. She later moved to Michoacán. She met Victor’s father, Tomás Rodríguez, in Guerrero, where they were married. Mr. Rodríguez first came to the United States to work with a cousin in Baker (pseudonym for the small Georgia city where the study took place). He later moved to at least one other town in Georgia to work. Mr. Rodríguez’s mother had a home in Donaldson, in rural north Georgia.

When Victor was a baby, people said there was something wrong with him. He was very serious, very calm. He never laughed. Whenever the parents took him out, people would tell them he was sick, sick “of the memory” perhaps. But when he was 15 months, they brought him to live in Baker and he seemed better. He stayed for some time with his grandmother in Donaldson, and they saw very little of him. He grew and was healthy. He loved to dance and became a boisterous, happy boy. “¡Oy! *No para mucho.*” (Wow! He doesn’t stop much), his mother said (08/19, day 8).

When he was four, his mother completed an application for him to attend public preschool, but she never heard from the school. A short time before the 2005-2006 school year, the family moved into the apartment where I met them. His mother brought him to school on the first day of the school year to register him for kindergarten.

When I first visited their apartment, it had very little furniture. The front room contained only a small television. Ms. Castillo brought me a duffle bag to sit on. Throughout my visit, she tended to Victor's sister Yosenia (a toddler) while Victor and a friend played and ran from one end of the apartment to the other. His mother described Victor this way:

<i>Un niño inquieto</i>	A restless boy.
<i>Un poquito inquieto él..</i>	He's a little bit restless
<i>Le gusta más este..</i>	He likes it better...
<i>Hace jugando, gritando,</i> <i>viendo caricaturas.</i>	He spends his time playing, yelling, watching cartoons.
<i>Y este..</i>	And..
<i>Le gusta mucho pintar.</i> (Alma Castillo, 8/10, day 1)	he really likes to color

Victor's parents did not have any rules for him to follow or program for disciplining him:

<i>I: ¿Qué reglas tiene él</i> <i>aquí en la casa?</i>	I: What rules does he have here in the house?
<i>P: Pues, no..</i>	P: Well, no..
<i>I: Ninguno. (se rie)</i>	I: None. (laughs)
<i>P: Ni una.</i> (Mr. Rodríguez & Cobb, 10/21, day 51)	P: Not one

Victor could choose when to go to bed. He could eat what he wanted, whenever he wanted. His parents said they sometimes asked him to clean up his toys, but this made him mad. Still his mother could sometimes get him to clean up by making a sad face.

Overall, they did not have much faith that they could get him to do something he did not want to, but this was not considered a serious problem.

During one interview, Victor's little sister begged him for a cup of yogurt, chasing him around the apartment and crying. His mother pleaded with him: "*Déjeselo, Papi. Déjaselo.*" (Let her have it, Baby. Let her have it.) (08/10, day 1) He did not share the yogurt, and Ms. Castillo comforted the little girl. On other occasions, Victor was observed playing very gently and generously with his sister, and his parents expressed their trust that he would not hurt her.

A number of differences between Victor's life at home and his life at school are apparent. At home, Victor's life was unstructured. He was generally free to do as he pleased and his parents' occasional attempts to control his behavior seemed ineffectual. The classroom would not be like this. While at school, Victor was expected to conform to specific behavior norms, and Ms. Clark had a system in place to motivate and enforce cooperation. Victor would also be expected to keep progressing in relation to the curriculum. He would need to be a productive learner to be successful. Very little in Victor's home life would seem to have prepared him to operate within such a system or to fulfill the expectations Ms. Clark would have for him when he came to school

Distress: Disorientation and Abandonment

Victor had not been registered for kindergarten until the morning of the first day of school. This meant he missed "sneak-a-peek," an opportunity to meet his teacher and see the classroom, and that his first experience of school was in the rather crowded and chaotic school lobby. When he arrived at Ms. Clark's class, he cried:

Well the first day I had Victor, he pretty much cried all day.
He was really sad when he first got here and didn't really look..

He almost just looked scared, like he didn't know what was going on, what we were doing. (Clark, 08/15, day 4)

Ms. Clark left him to play with puzzles as she started class. Still crying, he began watching what the group was doing. She brought him to sit closer, still crying.

And then at one point he decided to do a song: "Five Little Monkeys Swinging from the Tree". and, just then.. his face just sort-of lit up. He got really excited and, was trying to do the motions with us, trying to sing along with us. And it seemed like that was.. I don't know if it was necessarily like a connection for him, but I think maybe just hearing the music and seeing that we were having fun..made it more exciting for him. (Clark, 08/15, day 4)

For a time he stopped crying, but throughout that first day he got upset and cried a little during transitions from one activity to the next. He would come to feel secure and be able to function in one activity, but then when it ended, and it was not clear what would happen next, he would cry again.

And then in the afternoon before we were going to leave he started crying, because he was.. didn't know where he was supposed to be going, was a little bit scared. But I walked him out to his bus, and I think he was psyched he was going home. (laughs) (Clark, 08/15, day 4)

Then somehow Victor was sent on the wrong bus. The bus driver brought him back to school and to the office. It was there I first met him, crying as hard as he could. His mother came to pick him up, and I tried to help her and the office staff figure out what had gone wrong. As the situation was settled and Victor's mother prepared to leave, I arranged to visit them at home that night for our first interview. His mother reported that he cried more and then fell asleep when they got home.

Through the day, Victor had apparently suffered a great deal from fear, frustration, and disorientation, but he did not report any of those experiences that night. He seemed to concentrate all those unpleasant feelings in the story of the bus incident.

When asked what happened on the bus, he said to his mother, “*pero no venías,*” (but you didn’t come) (08/10, day 1). Two weeks later his mother said he still blamed her:

<i>V: Ya no quiero ir.</i>	V: I don't want to go anymore.
<i>P: Habla bien.</i>	P: Speak up.
<i>I: ¿Cómo?</i>	I: What?
<i>V: Ya no quiero ir.</i>	V: I don't want to go anymore.
<i>I: ¿a la escuela?</i>	I: to school?
<i>V: Porque mi mamá me dejó</i>	V: Because my mom left me.
<i>M: No se le olvida.</i>	M: He doesn't forget about it.
<i>I: ¿Estas bravo? ¿Sí?</i>	I: Are you mad? Yeah?

(Victor, Mom & Dad, Cobb, 08/26, day 13)

Victor still cried intermittently on the second day, but not on the third. He occasionally got upset after that. One such case was on the fourth day of school. Ms. Clark was leading the children to the buses and Victor began crying. Ms. Clark understood he wanted to go back to the room, though she did not understand why. Despite the fact that she was under some pressure to accompany all the bus riders outside and get them there on time, she followed him back to the classroom. It turned out Victor had left behind the Superman towel he brought for nap:

So I'm like, "Ohhh, you wanna' take your blanket home," and the poor thing was just.. just a wreck, you know, tears comin' down and.. So I'm glad that he figured out.. that I figured out that he wanted to come back in here to get something. Once he got his blanket, he was fine.
(Clark, 08/15, day 4)

The same scenario occurred several times, but later Ms. Clark was quick to guess what he needed.

Another symptom of distress manifested itself at home, however. In the second week of school, Ms. Castillo reported that when Victor came home from school she would ask him about his day, and he would yell at her.

<i>P: Mi señora dice que llega medio enojado.</i>	P: My wife says he arrives kind of mad
---	--

*M: bien enojado, me grita
 Me grita y él: "NO!"
 Me grita así.
 No me gritaba.
 Yo siento que llega como..
 como con sueño o así.
 Yo pienso que.. porque.. este..
 no lo despertaba temprano,
 y ahora sí. Como enfadado..
 (Mom & Dad, 08/19, day 8)*

M: Very mad. He yells at me.
 He yells at me and he's "NO!"
 He yells at me like that.
 He didn't yell at me before.
 I believe it comes like..
 like he's sleepy or something
 I think that.. because.. it's..
 I didn't used to get him up early,
 and now yes. Like angry.

Her explanation of this behavior was that Victor was tired, due to having to get up early in the morning. In a way, she put the blame on herself when she said, "I didn't used to get him up early, and now I do." It may be that she preferred taking responsibility herself, rather than on him, and that this aspect of their relationship contributed to his tendency to place blame on her.

In discussing his outbursts with her, I was reminded of a definition of introversion: that while introverts may enjoy social activities, they find them tiring, and need time along to "recharge their batteries." I have found this to be true for me, and it seemed Victor might be suffering the same sort of fatigue. I suggested to her that perhaps he was tired from having to talk and interact all day, and arrived home eager to have some quiet time, or be left alone. We agreed she could try leaving him alone for 20 or 30 minutes when he got home, and when she did, the yelling stopped.

A similar view of Victor's school day as tiring was offered by Ms. Clark in explaining his frequent trips to the bathroom:

*And that's another thing that I notice, that he asks to go to the bathroom probably more than some of the other kids, and I wonder if it's kind of like an escape for him. I guess maybe, you know, he wants to kind of leave the situation 'cause he's a little nervous. He just wants to get out, but.. I try not to let them do that too much, because they need to get used to it...
 (8/15, day 4)*

Victor's signs of distress, then, appear to reflect three problems. First, he was disoriented. That much of his distress on the first day was due to disorientation is indicated by Ms. Clark's report that after calming down it was transitions that upset him again. He had good reason to be disoriented. Many of the ways of being that worked for him at home did not apply at school, and acquiring the appropriate means was difficult because he could not understand Ms. Clark's words. Everything about the class was new, from being in a large group of children and a big building to finding himself within a system of behavioral control.

Second, there are signs Victor felt abandoned by his mother. While it appeared that Victor felt disoriented on the first day of school, his only complaint was that his mother left him. This complaint became connected to the bus incident, but does not bear much resemblance to that event. It seems to express a sense of abandonment. The data show that he had spent time apart from her before, when he lived with his grandmother. It may be that his grandmother supported him in ways similar to his mother, so that upon entering school he was independent in an unprecedented way. It is not clear whether he felt alone or because he missed the companionship and support of his mother in particular, but Victor resented that she left him, and this resentment apparently became a vehicle for him to understand or express other frustrations.

Through this story of his mother leaving him (on the bus), Victor blamed his mother, rather than the school system, Ms. Clark, or some lack of preparedness on his part, for the difficulty of starting school. It may be that his need to attach himself to Ms. Clark and the world of school made it undesirable for him to turn his anger in that

direction, that his mother was a safe person against whom he could express his anger, or that it was his separation from his mother's support that was most salient.

Finally, there is some evidence that Victor was tired at school. His sleep schedule changed, and at home he had been accustomed to much more "down time" during the day than what he experienced at school (Victor, Mom, & Cobb, 8/19, day 8). It also appears that Victor was to some degree an introvert, and that interacting with others all day at school was tiring for him in that he needed some time to himself.

These three unpleasant aspects of starting school are here understood to be motivators for Victor, especially in the case of disorientation. His initial sense of feeling lost and unable to act is assumed to have set the stage for a long-term effort to understand what was expected of him and to learn to comply with those expectations.

Pleasure: Fun Activities and Pleasing Ms. Clark

From the first day, Victor also found things he liked about school. The "Five Little Monkeys" song seemed to be the first thing that made him glad to be there, and through the course of the year, Victor discovered many others. He enjoyed writing, playing outside and at centers, eating snack and lunch, and pleasing Ms. Clark. All these desirable activities made Victor want to come to school, participate, and cooperate.

Songs. As noted, a song first drew Victor to participate with the group, and he continued to take great pleasure in them throughout the study. At the beginning of the year, he did not understand the words, but he imitated Ms. Clark's motions. As time went on, he mouthed the words, and then tried to sing along. His mother said he also sang songs to her at home.

They sang Animated Literacy letter songs, a new version of the alphabet song, and songs with the days and months. Ms. Clark used songs like “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes” and “Five Little Monkeys” to allow the children a break from sitting still, and used a song called “Shake ‘em, Shake ‘em, Shake ‘em” to get the children to place their hands in their laps.

These activities stood out as opportunities for Victor to participate. He found them appealing (his father had said as soon as he could walk he had begun dancing), and they did not require him to understand spoken instructions. While it would appear that the story told by the words of these songs explained the motions and gave the activity’s meaning, Victor seemed to find them satisfying without that explanation. Here are excerpts from field notes on day 2 and day 4:

Next song: Tooty Ta
 Most copy motions and several sing.
 V moves and learns motions quickly.
 C praises V, then another child.
 V bounces with rhythm easily
 V follows motions by teacher.
 (field notes, 8/11, day 2)
 Head, shoulder, knees, and toes song
 V does motions, smiling big
 (field notes, 8/15, day 4)

Singing and dancing are natural and inherently pleasurable under many circumstances, but singing and moving together may also create a feeling of unity within the group, as when adults sing together in church or move together in T’ai Chi. As such, they might give Victor and other entering kindergarten children a feeling of belonging.

Ms. Clark, however, hoped the songs would help Victor acquire academic skills. Repetition in song did not seem to help him learn the letters of the alphabet:

When we do um.. like Five Little Monkeys Swinging from a Tree, and some of the things you've seen in the past.. He does it and stuff, and he'll do the motions with me, but his words are just kind of jumbled, and I think it's.. I think it has a lot to do with the language barrier for the songs, but then it worries me a little bit with the ABCs, 'cause we practice our ABCs every day. We do Animated Literacy every day. Um, we review letters that we've learned from the beginning of the year up until this point every day. So.. I don't know if.. he's just.. not retatining it..
(Clark, 10/20, day 50)

Writing. At the end of the first day of school, what Victor recounted first was making “*letras y bolitas*” (letters and little balls). He said he enjoyed it. Ms. Clark talked about his writing on the fourth day⁴.

C: He's a good worker. I mean when we sat down today for Writers' Workshop he does.. He just does a bunch of circles, but he does probably about 50 or 60 of 'em, on his paper.

I: (laughs)

C: And so that keeps him occupied and he does it. Then when he's done, he always lets me know that he's done.. He'll either come up and show it to me, or he'll say, you know, “*maestra*” [teacher] or whatever and hold it up. And if I tell him to go back and do some more, you know, if they haven't been writing for long enough or if he needs to do a few more minutes of work, then he will. He'll go back and do some more circles.
(Clark & Cobb, 08/15, day 4)

Victor was proud of his writing. According to him, the other students only colored with crayons, while he wrote with a pencil:

*I: ¿Hay otros niños
que hacen esas bolitas
en la clase,
o solo tú?*

V: (indique que no)

I: ¿Que hacen ellos?

V: Pintan colores

*I: ¿Y no traten de
escribir con lapiz?*

I: Are there other kids
that make those circles
in the class,
or only you?

V: (shakes his head no)

I: What do the others do?

V: Color.

I: And they don't try to
write with a pencil?

⁴ One of the challenging aspects of Writer's Workshop as it was applied in kindergarten at the school was the requirement that children continue to write for all the allotted time.

V: no.
(Victor & Cobb, 08/26, day 13)

V: no.

Near the end of October, Ms. Clark said his writing had improved greatly, as he now made a variety of drawings with his letters and circles. He was excited about Halloween and liked to draw monsters, Power Rangers, and robots. He could write his first name. Victor said he was still making the “little balls” and that Ms. Clark liked them.

Participating in the songs was presumably pleasurable in itself, but in the case of writing, there appears to be a combination of simple enjoyment, as he apparently took in drawing monsters and robots, and some less direct rewards. By writing, Victor could establish himself as a capable, productive student, in Ms. Clark’s eyes and in his own. He may have also taken pride in his ability to learn and perform songs, but this is more evident in his descriptions of writing.

Recess. Victor repeatedly said he liked playing outside. I did not observe him at recess, but he and Ms. Clark both described his play outside in terms of running around with the other boys. Ms. Clark said he greatly enjoyed it, and his mother said he talked about it when he got home. He also brought little toys (“*monitos*”) to school and Ms. Clark let him play with them outside. Recess appeared to be the time of day when he most interacted with the other children.

Centers. At the beginning of the year, Victor’s favorite center was “kitchen.” On day 13, I observed him through the most elaborate meal scenario I have ever seen a child perform in first grade or kindergarten. He got food from the refrigerator, put some in the microwave, set up four pans with food on the stove, and put plates on the table. He put food on each plate, and then brought the pans to the table to serve more food. He set a

serving bowl on the table and served some food in the bowl and some on the plates.

Then he sat and began to eat. Forty-five seconds later he started to clear the table, putting the pans in the sink. He sat back in front of his plate, but then brought the phone, dialed, and pretended to listen. Finally, he washed the dishes and put them and the food away.

During this time, fellow student David joined him at the table, eating and saying “*Soy tu papá.*” (I’m your father). Victor ignored this, and Natalie, who cooked alongside him, and another girl, who leaned in from a neighboring center to say “*Ustedes vendían*” (You guys sell.) and “*¡Señora!*” (Lady!), getting Natalie to sell her some cake.

A couple of months into the year, Victor preferred playing at blocks. He also seemed to identify blocks with boys and the kitchen with girls. On day 37, I observed Victor playing with Legos at the block center. He played alongside Juan, but did not speak until Roberto came through and grabbed his building.

Victor: "No!"

Roberto messes with Juan's structure and he too objects.

Victor reconstructs small part that Roberto broke, then keeps playing with his structure.

Victor holds up block of 6-8 blocks, points at 2 greens and says "green-green".

He keeps building and adding pieces to structure.

I ask him what it is. "A house."

Clark calls for clean up, starts song and kids continue.

Victor and Juan take blocks apart and put in bucket.

Juan gets top and puts it on.

Victor finds 2 more, makes noise ("Eee") at Juan as he walks away.

(Field Notes, 09/30, day 37)

On day 51, he told me the block area was now his favorite center, and that Juan and Jordan liked to play with him there. I asked him if any girls came to blocks and he said no, that girls play in the kitchen. Having heard from Ms. Clark that some girls preferred the writing center, I asked him if girls went there too. He seemed to say he

sometimes went to writing, but did not answer when I asked him if he still liked to go to the kitchen. I did see him go back to the kitchen in January (day 96). He left blocks for a few minutes when other boys were cooking and offered him a plate.

Eating. In my experience, getting used to the food can be a struggle for many Mexican children starting kindergarten in the U.S. Victor, however, liked the cafeteria food. What he had eaten for lunch always had a prominent place in his reports to his mother upon arriving home. The class had a snack time in the afternoon and Victor reliably brought a snack from home. On the occasions I observed him eating his snack, he tended to gobble it up greedily.

Praise and Pride. Throughout the study, Ms. Clark said that Victor enjoyed pleasing her, and earning the praise, stickers, and treats she gave him. As suggested previously, however, it is not easy to separate when Victor enjoyed being praised for his behaviors, being proud of himself, and when he takes pleasure in the behavior or participation itself. It is clear that all three were meaningful for him.

He's very quick to like.. show off his work, and come up to me and show me during Writer's Workshop the things that he's done. He loves share time when he gets to share and things like that, so.. He gets excited and he gets proud of certain things that he does.
(Clark, 10/20, day 50)

Peers. Victor reported that he enjoyed playing with his friends. From my observations, however, he had very low levels of interaction with them throughout the year. During observations, he stayed focused on Ms. Clark or his work, and paid very little attention to the other children around him. He continued to play parallel to other children while most of the other children began to play more cooperatively. During my observations, I watched Victor play in housekeeping, blocks, and calendar, and

participate in large group lessons and seatwork. In my notes from these observations, there is never an occasion when Victor played cooperatively or exchanged more than a word or two with another student.

Ms. Clark and Victor both said he played with other children when the class went outside for recess. During this time, he ran around and played with toys he brought in his backpack. Ms. Clark's overall assessment late in the year, however, suggested that Victor's interactions with other children were still a very small part of his school experience. Most of all, they were dwarfed by his relationship with her.

I: ... You didn't specifically mention socially, a sense of how he's changed from when he came to now?

C: Um, socially he's still about the same as before, I mean he'll play with the other kids but, for example in the morning all the time.. I have some very strong personalities in here with my boys.

I: (chuckles)

C: And he is.. his personality is.. he's very sweet, and he likes to do the right thing and everything, but he's.. he doesn't have a strong, overpowering personality. I have kids who come in and they bring in their toys and they, you know, start fighting.. because they're not sharing with each other and Victor just kind of sits back and watches. He doesn't get involved in that. He and another student, Juan, tend to play together a lot. Juan is also a lot like Victor, just kind of low-key, chilled-out. They're not gonna' get upset about things like that. Um.. And Victor will play with the boys and the girls, you know he has no problem going between the two of them, but.. I think that.. from what I have observed it seems like he tends to try and to stay out of those stronger personalities and those kids that are, you know, always fighting about this and that and stuff like that. Um..

I: Once when I was observing it seemed like another boy was being kind of pushy and kind of taking stuff away and like left Victor to clean everything up and it seemed like he was really quiet about it. He just went ahead and cleaned it up.

C: Yeah, he does. He'll do that all the time, and I.. I'll ask anybody to, you know, I'll say, "boys you need to go back and clean up that..that block center" and the first person that's back there to do it is Victor, and it's not because he's the one that left the mess. Well, they all left the mess but I think it's because he wants to please me, you know, and he wants to do the right thing and make sure.. Where, most times I'll just, you know if he does do it I'm like, "Thank you so much Victor. Everybody needs to say thank you to him for helping clean up and stuff," and I think he enjoys

doing it, he's not like "aw, man-I gotta go back there and clean up." That's how my other boys are. They're the ones who don't wanna' have to go back and clean up. And there are more times than not that I'll send them back and say, "You were the ones playing back there. You need to go clean it up." But, um.. I think it's the.. the stronger personalities versus him where.. He has a calm personality, you know. He's just, in my opinion, like "go with the flow" and just do it and.. I ask them to go back to their seats and work quietly and not talk, he will not talk, the entire time. You know, and he does it I think, well, first of all because he's.. wants to follow directions, but also I think it's because he wants to please me. (Clark & Cobb, 03/01, day 124)

Victor did name three boys in his class during home interviews. He said Brandon played the monster when they were outside, and that he played at blocks with Juan and Jordan. Jordan and Brandon also appear in the data as boys about whom Victor complained. In our follow-up interview, Ms. Clark said she believed his lack of interaction with the other children was a matter of his own preference, rather than a result of being rejected by his peers.

Though Victor was not very social, compared to other children in the class or adult expectations, he said he enjoyed playing with the other children. Since his peers played a relatively small role in his school life, there was more opportunity and need for Ms. Clark to play a central role. Perhaps this was one more factor contributing to his commitment to keeping his eyes on her.

Summary. The pleasure Victor found in class activities predominated his experience of school. His father had said he loved to dance, and given the chance to sing and move, Victor was clearly in his element. He found right away that writing was something he could do, and experienced academic success and productivity. Recess and centers were more fun than playing at home, and the food was satisfactory. Victor enjoyed being a good student and being recognized by Ms. Clark. Even though he did

not appear to be much interested in the other children, he said he enjoyed them, so perhaps the relationships he had were all he wanted.

Victor's Strategy: Attentiveness

Apart from his distress on the first day of school, what I found most striking about Victor was his attentiveness in class. I had the sense that he almost never took his eyes off Ms. Clark. Over time, I came to see this as Victor's major strategy for success in kindergarten. If he kept his eyes on Ms. Clark, he could escape disorientation, enjoy participation in class activities, and win Ms. Clark's approval as an exemplary student.

Attentiveness in Kindergarten. Student attentiveness in kindergarten encompasses a range of behaviors and serves a number of purposes, and which children are asked to enact frequently in school. Attentiveness is here described as a specific set of teacher expectations about student behavior that vary for different types of activities. The expectations related to student attentiveness and the ways in which Victor fulfilled those expectations are here described for three activity types: circle time on the rug, seatwork at tables, and walking in line.

Circle Time. During "circle" or "rug" activities, when the whole class is seated on the floor in front of the teacher, ideal attentiveness involves: keeping one's eyes on the teacher (or a peer who is speaking); being seated correctly (crossed legs, with the group, hands in lap or otherwise disengaged); and giving evidence from time to time that one is mentally attending (answering questions, offering appropriate comments, following directions).

This level of attentiveness places heavy demands on five-year-olds. Children at this age are driven by desires to move and talk and touch, and generally to follow up on

internal or external stimuli that attract their attention. To stay focused on the teacher means to see interesting objects and not investigate them, to want to speak to or touch a peer but not make any contact with her, to want to stretch out and yet remain immobile. Ms. Clark addressed the difficulty of sitting still and attending by frequently having students jump up and join in a song or chant with movements in order to “get their wiggles out” (8/15, day 4).

While on the rug, Victor reliably maintained his visual focus on Ms. Clark, kept his body still, and eagerly responded more than would seem feasible for someone who did not understand English. My field notes repeatedly say that he sat still, watching Ms. Clark:

Day 2:

“V is seated on side in front, watching attentively”

“V still attentive in front.”

“V begins to look around at other students as C introduces title and author, then back on task.”

Day 4:

“V is attentive, sitting in back”

“V attentive, watches C, nods when she asks for assent, tries to repeat ‘Reader's Workshop’ when C asks.”

Day 6:

“Victor is seated in back, attentive though sitting sideways”

“Victor is watching.”

(Field Notes)

Victor quickly showed he could sit still and watch the teacher. He also gave evidence of attending mentally. Much of Victor’s early participation in class involved imitation. Ms. Clark gave directions; the class did what she asked; and Victor observed them and complied a moment later.

He's a quiet kid, so.. he follows.. he does a lot of follow-the-leader when um.. the other kids are.. I'll say to them "let's practice raising our hands." You know, he's.. He's a few seconds late, but he'll see everybody else do it so he'll do it. Or when I say, "let's walk back to our seats," he's usually

one of the last ones to get up and go alone. And that could just be.. I think it's the.. language barrier. You know, that he doesn't really understand what we're doing, but he does a great job of following everybody else. So that works well.
(Clark, 08/15, day 4)

From early in the school year, Victor raised his hand to contribute to class discussions. Ms. Clark expressed an interest in “giving him a chance to speak.” She recounted an incident I observed (8/15, day 4) in which he spoke to her in Spanish, pointing to his teeth. She managed to understand he was saying something about two teeth, and both seemed satisfied with the communication.

In several cases, Victor’s high levels of attentiveness seemed necessary so he could participate in the activity. On the second day of school, for example, I observed Victor learning to do the Tooty Ta dance (Dr. Jean, www.drjean.org). This dance involves a progressively complicated set of movements and he, along with the rest of the class, watched carefully in order to perform it. For an English-speaking child, the words of the song describing the movements would have provided support for this performance, and made it less necessary to maintain visual contact.

Seatwork. When the children worked at their tables, a different kind of attentiveness was expected. Though there were times the children were expected to watch Ms. Clark from their seats, they were usually expected to attend to their work. While seated and working, Victor often worked for some time without looking at Ms. Clark. As noted earlier, she cited his performance during Writer’s Workshop as evidence of his good work habits. He diligently stayed focused on writing his letters, and then brought his work to her to be evaluated. During one observation (8/19, day 8), the students were at their desks as Ms. Clark led them through a step-by-step drawing. They

were to watch her draw something and listen to her describe what she was doing, add the same piece to their own drawing, and then hold up their crayons to show they were ready for the next part. My notes reflect both that Victor's hand went right up as soon as he finished, and that he would hold this "ready and waiting" position for a long time.

Walking in Line. Walking in line is one of the most controlled activities in an elementary school. Students are directed to stay in the line (in the case of this school, to walk on the second row of tiles from the wall), face the front, keep their hands at their sides, be quiet, and to keep up with the person in front of them. This is not "being attentive" in the same way that listening to directions or a story is, but it shares several of the same elements. One must attend to the line ahead, in order to know when to move and when to stop. Students must put aside any urges to talk, play, or rest, doing only what is necessary to move down the hall in an orderly way.

When Victor walked in line, he seemed to be working to be recognized. He did not merely walk without talking or getting out of line. I repeatedly saw him standing very straight, in a self-conscious way, with regular glances toward Ms. Clark. In addition to complying with directions, he was communicating that he was complying.

In contrast to this stiff walking performance, when I saw Victor in line on the way to perform a Christmas song for administrators, his excitement showed. He stayed in line, appropriately quiet and still, but did "a little hopity walk" (field notes, 12/15, day 83) coming down the hall, then leaned from side to side, and lightly bounced as they waited. Victor kept himself within the limits of line behavior given by the teacher, but within that range, he expressed his excitement and did not seem to focus his attention on following the rule or pleasing the teacher. After the performance, Ms. Clark praised

some students at the front of the line for their good behavior in the hall, and Victor employed his stiff, teacher-watching walk again, even though he was at the end of the line and around the corner, where she could not see him.

Inattentiveness. There were other exceptions to Victor's perfect compliance. Ms. Clark said he liked to use his hands to make a Batman mask, and sometimes did this while she was talking (9/09, day 22). On three occasions, I observed Victor doing something else while he kept his eyes on Ms. Clark. On one occasion, he had a nametag hanging from a piece of yarn around his neck, and he played with it with both hands as he watched her. In another case, his fingers played with a crayon while his eyes stayed on task. In both cases his manipulation of these objects was more "nervous fiddling" than play. In the third case, however, Victor had brought a little stuffed cow to school and it was sitting on his desk during the lesson. Ms. Clark was talking to the group about a letter sound. Victor made the hand-sign for the letter when asked, but then played a little with the cow. He did not, however, lower his gaze. These moments of distraction are notable for their rarity and for the way they failed to interfere with Victor's determination to keep watching Ms. Clark. Overall, based on both my observations and Ms. Clark's assessment, Victor stood out among his peers for keeping his attention on her during such events.

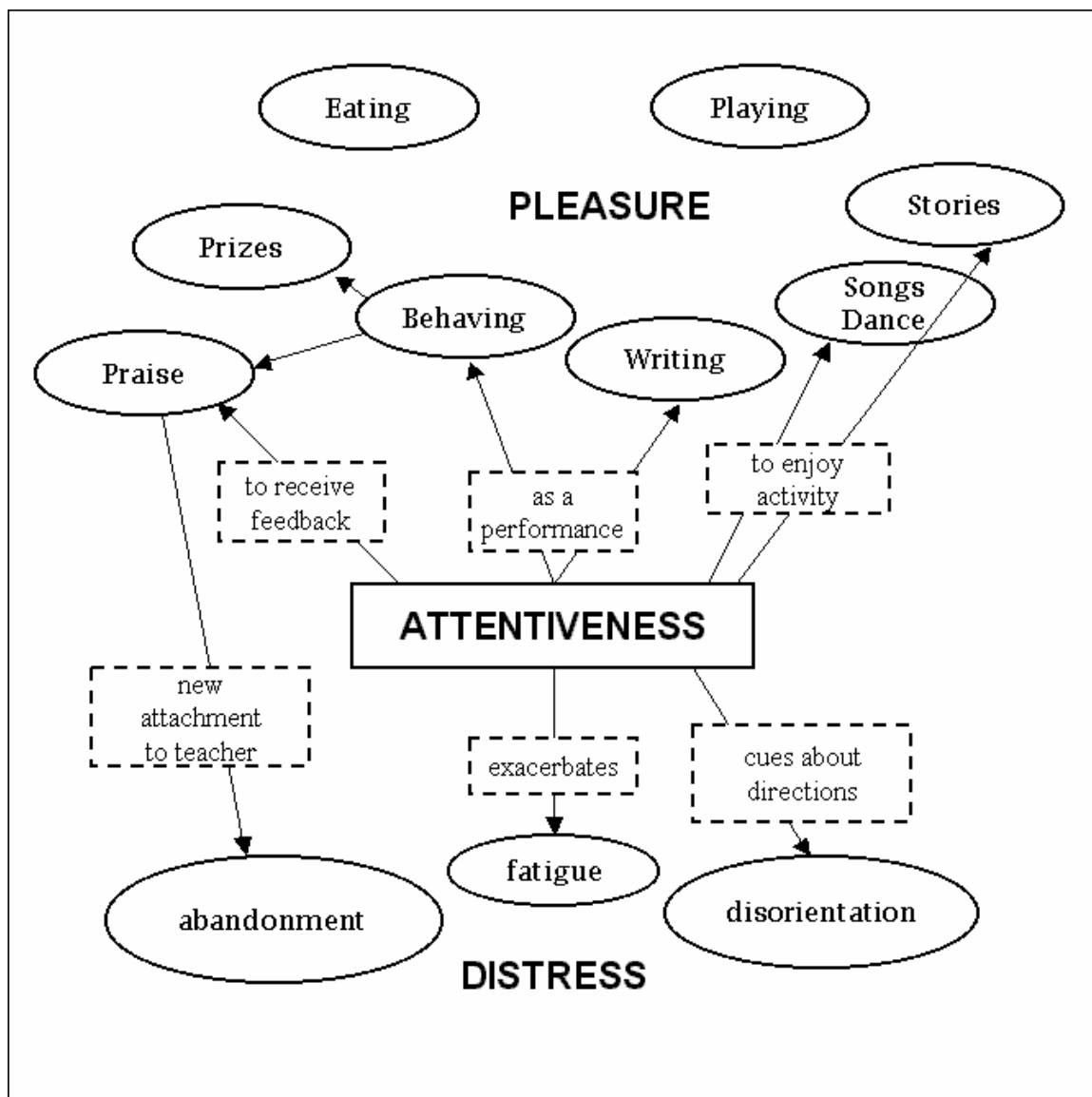


Figure 8. Attentiveness Managing Pleasure and Distress for Victor.

Functions of Attentiveness. Victor’s attentiveness helped him take advantage of activities he enjoyed, and avoid the threat of disorientation. It served him both as a means to interact with his environment and as a performance of “good behavior.”

Figure 8 shows that attentiveness allowed Victor to participate in activities he enjoyed, the songs that were a staple of class practice, and the stories he said he enjoyed (Victor, Mom, & Cobb, 8/19, day 8). Attentiveness also served Victor as a kind of

performance. When he stayed focused on his writing, he earned praise from Ms. Clark and presumably pride in his own accomplishment. Victor could also earn praise and prizes by always being attentive to Ms. Clark, as it constituted good behavior. This productivity and praise likely helped Victor see himself as an exemplary student, which in turn offered a sense of security and position in the classroom.

At the beginning of kindergarten, Victor found himself threatened by disorientation and abandonment. Since he did not understand English, watching Ms. Clark closely was the best way to orient himself and find out how he could act in this new environment. Being attentive all day, however, may have contributed to the fatigue that made Victor unwilling to speak to his mother when he got home. It is also possible that his new relationship with Ms. Clark eased his sense of abandonment.

Eating and playing were pleasurable activities that did not require Victor to be particularly attentive. Apart from these, all the pleasures he referred to depended in some measure on attentiveness. Since attentiveness could also serve to alleviate his disorientation, it appears to have been a critical strategy in his adaptation to kindergarten.

Academic Progress

One measure of the success of Victor's transition to kindergarten was his academic progress. Ms. Clark was satisfied with his progress overall, given the resources with which he started the year.

Ms. Clark administered the Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program (GKAP, www.gadoe.org) to all her students during August. The test consists of 14 literacy tasks and 14 math tasks, scored as "not evident," "in progress," or "accomplished." Only the first five and four (respectively) are administered at the beginning of the year. Children

are tested again on these and on more advanced items in January and April. Victor's test results are reproduced in appendix D. A summary of those scores and other indicators of his academic progress follow.

In August, Victor could not write his name or hold a book in the correct position. He did not know any letters, nor could he blend the onset and rime of English words spoken to him separately. He could draw a picture. In January, he could write his first name, with all letters correct and beginning with a capital. In April, Victor scored "accomplished" on 10 of the 14 literacy tasks. He named the upper and lower case letters, wrote them clearly, and identified the consonant sounds. He answered questions about a story read to him in English. He sounded-out three out of five simple words on the test and read at least 10 sight words.

In math, Victor could count to seven when he began school. He did not recognize numerals, name shapes, or demonstrate any understanding of English position words. When tested in April, he scored "accomplished" on 8 of the 14 mathematics tasks. He counted past 10 and recognized the numerals to 10. He created patterns with colored blocks, understood all 15 position words, named shapes, and answered questions about length. He did not learn the ordinal numbers, nor could he name the coins. He struggled with constructing a graph, and was unable to illustrate dictated stories (e.g., "now three more bears come") with little bears on a picture mat.

Ms. Clark's highest praise, and surprise, for Victor's progress related to his rapid acquisition of spoken English. He was tested by the ESOL teacher at the beginning of the year and showed only the slightest familiarity with the language (1% on the Language Assessment Battery). I asked him to count in English and he could only get to four. On

the eighth day of school, I asked him about Ms. Clark's frequently used phrase "press pause," which she used with two fingers held up to call for silence and attention. He did not recognize it.

On the fourth day of school, however, Clark noted he said "I'm gonna.. throw away.." and indicated an object. On the 22nd day, she remembered hearing him say: "Ms. Clark, look," "scare me," "Jordan hit," "bathroom," "snack," and "water." On the 96th day of school, I watched him playing alone at centers, speaking to himself in English.

In this excerpt from the day 50 interview, Ms. Clark described Victor's progress in English, but conflates his language ability with other forms of expression:

C: I know we talked a little bit about this last time,
but their.. both of their English,
especially Victor,
has just..
they just surprise me so many times
when they tell me these things
and it's all in English
and you can understand what they're saying,
and just remembering Victor
from the beginning of the year,
and how he is now..
I mean, just his personality has come out.
He'll come in in the morning..
He used to come in in the morning crying.
Now he'll come in in the morning
and fight with his jacket to get his jacket off,
and he's making all these grunting noises..
I: (laughs)
C: ..and stuff like that.
So just that.. seeing that little personality,
and just seeing..
(interrupted ...)
C: So.. just his personality has come out very much
and he seems to be able
to express himself now a lot easier.
It's still sometimes difficult for me
to understand what he was saying.
For example today he was trying to tell me something,

and.. I just couldn't make out what he was saying.

As Victor became more fluent in English, he also became more open and expressive in other ways. In this excerpt, Ms. Clark treated these as one issue, which may suggest that acquiring English made Victor more able to “let his personality out.”

At this point, however, Ms. Clark had begun to worry about his lack of progress in literacy. She noted that he could not name the letters or their sounds, or name the shapes or colors. As seen in a previous excerpt, Ms. Clark was frustrated that after so much exposure to the letters in daily review, he could not name them. In March, however, she was generally satisfied that he had learned enough to be able to progress to first grade:

My goal for him was to get him ready for first grade, get him prepared with his ABCs, sight words, the concepts of reading... And Victor, I think, has gotten to a point where he will be prepared for first grade. He may not be reading by the end of this school year, but he's reading a lot by copying what we're saying in our guided reading groups, which is a good strategy too, you know, for him to learn. (Clark, 03/01, day 124)

Conclusion

Victor found himself in a strange environment with novel dangers and rewards, and produced a novel set of behaviors to make his way among them. His rapid adaptation to the classroom, in spite of the contrast between unstructured home and the highly structured life of a student, is an impressive feat. Somehow he configured his resources to meet his needs, and in the process fulfilled many of the teacher's goals as well.

The functions of attentiveness described in figure 8 show how attentiveness helped Victor make the most of his situation, but there were costs associated with this strategy. Surely Victor continued to have urges to run, climb, yell, play, lie down, eat,

drink, or demand attention after he came to school. Some of these were satisfied by opportunities Ms. Clark offered to play, sing, and eat, but all on her terms, and on her schedule. Victor came from a life in which he followed his whims into one where his freedom was often limited to sneaking in “a little hopity step” as he stayed within the lines as he walked down the hall.

Certainly not all children make the commitment Victor did to keep their eyes on the teacher and always behave as asked. Many of Ms. Clark’s “strong personalities” had a similar lack of English and similar lack of experience with school when they arrived, and yet they chose other paths. Many of them resisted Ms. Clark’s beneficent dictatorship, playing with the soap in the bathroom, pushing other children, or running in the hall. Did Victor want to do these things? I asked him on a couple of occasions, but he showed no sign that he ever considered behaving badly, or that he weighed the dangers of being punished or the rewards of praise:

*I: OK. Todavía me pregunto
porque te portas tan bueno.*

V: porque sí

M: (se rie)

I: Porque sí.

V: Hago la tarea,

y luego mis letras,

yyy.. y colorea, y.. hagala..

(Victor, Mom, & Cobb, 03/17, day 134)

I: I'm still wondering
why you behave so well.

V: Because I do.

M: (laughs)

I: Because you do.

V: I do the work,
and then my letters, and...

And color, and.. do it..

The data offer several possible reasons why doing his work and being good seemed like the only possible path for Victor. In addition to his lack of English and his distress at being disoriented, Victor was introverted. Where other children adapted to kindergarten through their connections with peers, this possibility did not suit Victor’s disposition. Perhaps his need for the teacher’s approval was greater than others, either

because he was less self-assured than others or arrived more dependent on his mother. The data do not provide the answer. What is clear is that Victor created a way of being in kindergarten that avoided distress, maximized his pleasure, and established a respectable place within the classroom community. He acquired mediational means within the classroom, but did not simply learn to do things the teacher's way. His attentiveness was an elegant solution to a complex problem.

Natalie

Natalie was five years and two months old at school entry. She was a petite girl with light brown skin and brown eyes. Her straight black hair fell to the middle of her back, sometimes in twin ponytails. She had a sweet, shy smile that would erupt into visible excitement. Natalie wore jeans with embroidered decorations, dresses, and shorts, often wearing the same outfits as her sister. She wore earrings and necklaces on a regular basis, including small gold medallions with "Diosito" (baby Jesus) and *Santo Toribio* (a saint), and a bracelet with her name engraved on it. Searching for a way to describe her manner, I told Ms. Clark she seemed "shiny." She immediately agreed.

Natalie's Story: A Preview

Overall, Natalie's transition to kindergarten appeared easy and pleasant. There were almost no signs of distress or discomfort noted in any of the data sources. She was quiet for a little while, but happily she came to school, got to know her teacher, made friends, and kept coming back to work and play in a safe and supportive environment. Likely reasons for this smooth transition include her sense of security or confidence, having an older sister who had already been to school, and her social nature. Natalie

seemed to know she would do fine and be well received. As the year went on, she became a star student, both socially and academically.

The strongest narrative that emerged from the data was how Natalie experienced a short silent period, and then engaged in class activities more fully as she began to make friends. Throughout the year, Natalie's relationships with peers and Ms. Clark appeared important to her. This section begins with a presentation of the findings related to Natalie's history and home life, and then addresses her silent period. The school activities Natalie recounted at home will be described, as will her relationships with peers and Ms. Clark, and her academic progress.

Home Life

Natalie's parents, Rodolfo and Esmeralda Diaz, came from Mexico to the United States nine years before the study. Their three children, Allison (6), Natalie (5), and David (4) were all born in Georgia. Neither of the parents spoke English. Allison, the older sister, had been in school for a year, and all of the children all had some exposure to English-speaking peers and television programs.

The apartment complex where they lived was the nicer of the two large complexes served by the school. It had security fences with a keypad entry and a swimming pool, and seemed to be well maintained. On two occasions, other adults were present in the home, and Natalie's aunt may have lived there.

The mood in the home during my visits was always easy and pleasant. Both parents would sit with me in the well-furnished living room, and as children came in, they would join us on one of the couches and sit politely, participating in the discussion or playing quietly. In the middle of the first interview, the little brother, a man, and a

woman walked through on their way back from the pool. These three as well as those involved in the interview all shared a chuckle over the apparent awkwardness of the situation. Natalie and her father described little David as easy-going, always happy.

Mexico. Mr. and Ms. Diaz had not returned to Mexico and had no expectations about maintaining ties with family there. Mr. Diaz said “*No va uno porque ya uno vive aquí ya.*” (One doesn’t go because now one lives here already.) They believed the schools and job opportunities were better in the United States and therefore wanted their children to complete their education here, and probably stay as adults as well. They did express a hope that the children would maintain their Spanish.

*Pero, bueno no sé ahorita
 _____ también allá,
 pero allá no les daban _____
 para que escribieran
 tanto como aquí.
 Allá no le...
 sí le daban pero no..
 no para hicieron las letras.
 El nombre no lo pueden hacer
 cuando estaba en el kinder
 allá, todavía.
 Allá no aprendan hacer todavía
 su nombre.
 Hasta ya van a la escuela allá
 de primer grado.
 (10/07, day 42)*

Well, I don’t really know now
 _____ there too
 But there they don't give them _____
 So they can write
 as much as here.
 There they don't...
 they do give them but not...
 not to make the letters.
 They can't do their name
 when they're in kindergarten
 there, still.
 There they don't learn
 to make their name yet.
 Until they go to the school of..
 of first grade.

Mexico seemed a very foreign place to the children, despite living in what would appear to be a Mexican family.

*N: No quiero ir a México.,
 nunca.
 A: ¿No te gustan frijoles?
 Allá tienen muchos.
 I&M: (se rien)
 A: Allá no bañan adentro..
 N: Yo ya sé.*

N: I don’t want to go to Mexico,
 ever.
 A: Don’t you like beans?
 There they have a lot.
 I&M: (laugh)
 A: There they don’t bathe inside..
 N: I already know.

<i>A: Se limpian con piedras.</i>	A: They clean themselves with rocks.
<i>I: ¿Con piedras?</i>	I: With rocks?
<i>M: (se rie)</i>	M: (laughs)
<i>A: Rocks (a N) _____</i>	A: Rocks (to N) _____
<i>I: ¿Se bañan afuera?</i>	I: They bathe outside?
<i>M: No te creas mi hija.</i>	M: Don't you believe it, baby.
<i>Sí hay baños.</i>	There are bathrooms.
<i>Todo eso. (se rie)</i>	All that. (laughs)
(Natalie, Allison, Ms. Diaz, & Cobb, 10/07, day 42)	

In this excerpt, Allison positioned herself as the expert on Mexico. Natalie accepted her account, but was unwilling to admit she was receiving information from her older sister (“I already know”). Their mother was not defensive about Mexico at first, chuckling at the comment about beans, but she intervened, still laughing, at the end. Mr. Diaz was also present, but said nothing.

Natalie’s parents’ attitude toward their home country was surprising. On the one hand, they implied their reason for coming to the U.S. was so the children could get a better education, but they gave no sense of having sacrificed something valuable, suggesting a more general dissatisfaction with Mexico and desire to live in the United States. These attitudes would seem to prepare the children for a move toward a primarily or wholly American identity.

Quite Wild. Natalie’s mother described her as being “*bien traviesa*” (quite wild) at home. She said Natalie runs up and down the stairs, never stopping, and that she fights with her sister in the bathroom. She said they tried turning on the cartoons for her, but after just a few minutes, Natalie started running around again. She also said they had worried that Natalie would behave badly when she went to school. Allison referred to Natalie getting in trouble with their father, and seemed to say Natalie was spanked recently.

I struggled to accept this image of a “wild” Natalie, as she always appeared quiet, gentle, happy, and well mannered when I saw her. Ms. Clark shared this impression and my surprise at these descriptions of wild behavior. Her mother’s testimony that Natalie was wild and could not sit still at home must be taken seriously, but was not verified through any other source.

If we consider Natalie as a situated being, however, the contradiction nearly disappears. Natalie-at-home could not be coaxed to sit still, but for Natalie-at-school it came naturally to follow the teacher’s directions. When Natalie first arrived at school, she stayed quiet because she was still Natalie-at-home trying to figure out how to be Natalie-at-school. As that new Natalie came into being through friendships with peers and Ms. Clark’s warm support, running around and acting wild were simply not part of her repertoire. Natalie-at-school employed very different ways of being than Natalie-at-home, which supports the idea that the characteristics of the child emerge within particular settings, and that five-year-olds are able to maintain separate ways of being.

Napping. Before school started, Natalie’s daily routine included a nap. She had a rest time at school, but continued to take naps at home as well.

*M: Llega,
y se come unos CornFlake,
y sigue un rato por allá..*

I: Mm-jm

*M: _____ que _____ su tarea.
Se pone a dibujar
en un libro que ella tiene,
y ya de rato
como a las cuatro o cinco
se queda dormida.*

I: ¿A las cuatro o cinco?

*M: Mm-jm,
se queda _____*

I: Entonces ahora

*M: She comes in,
And she eats some cereal,
And she stays there a while..*

I: Mm-hm

*M: _____ her homework.
She puts herself to color
In a book she has
And a little while later
Like at four or five
She falls asleep.*

I: At four or five?

*M: Mm-hm,
she falls/stays _____*

I: So now

tiene dos siestas.
M: Pero en la mañana dice,
"Sabes que me gusta dormida,
pero me despertaron." (se rie)
 (08/19, day 8)

she has two naps.
 M: But in the morning she says,
 "You know I'm happy asleep,
 but you got me up." (laughs)

Asked about her sleeping habits some weeks later, Natalie's mother stated Natalie still took an after-school nap, but a quick one, and that she did not believe school made Natalie unusually tired.

Llega de la escuela
y se duerme un ratito
pero rápido anda a jugar.
No le cansa la escuela
 — —
I: mm-jm
M: Quiere ir.
 (10/07, day 42)

She gets home from school
 and sleeps a bit
 but quickly she's off to play
 School doesn't make her tired
 — —
 I: Mm-hm.
 M: She wants to go

In general, her mother said Natalie did not change after starting school. While she was sometimes given credit for being a little calmer, life at home and her relationships with her parents and siblings remained the same. It appears that Natalie developed new ways of being for school and maintained her familiar ways of being at home. There is no suggestion in the data that Natalie struggled with the maintenance of two separate ways of being, or that she ever inappropriately attempted to apply a tool suited to one setting in the other.

A Short Silent Period

The only sign of difficulty in Natalie's adaptation to kindergarten was that she stayed quiet for a short time when the year started. Ms. Clark and Natalie's mother both described a bit of uncertainty at first. When I first observed her, on the sixth day of school, she spoke to the boy who sat next to her only once as she worked. Later, when older children from another class came to work with the kindergartners, Natalie had two

girls for partners, one African-American and one Hispanic. They were very helpful and gentle with her, yet she spoke and made eye contact with them as little as possible. She was also reluctant to speak to me, even though we had met at her home.

I: When I've seen her in class, it did seem like she didn't talk to the people that she was playing next to. The one time I saw her in centers, and a couple of times I've seen her at her desk, she didn't seem to talk to her neighbors.

(Cobb & Clark, 9/09, day 22)

On day 8, Natalie's mother said Natalie had been bored, but now things were better because she had made a friend.

I: ¿Hay algo que le gustó mucho o ha tenido algún problema en la escuela?

M: _____

que le gusta..

que esto de, aa..

que tu no has _____

que no estabas abirrida

en la escuela

I: ¿Aburrida?

M: Sí. " _____,

estoy bien aburrida.

Me quería venir." (se rie)

M: Y ya otro día llegó

muy contenta

que porque tiene su amiguita

y fue a jugar al parque.

I: Aaa, sí.

M: Una amiguita

que se llama Nora.

(Ms. Diaz & Cobb, 08/19, day 8)

Was there something she liked a lot or she's had some problem at school?

M: _____

that she likes it

that of.. uhh..

that you haven't _____

that you weren't bored

in school

I: Bored?

Yes. " _____,

I'm so bored

I wanted to come home" (laughs)

M: And then the other day

she arrived very happy

that because she had her friend

and she went to play outside.

I: Ahhh, yes.

M: A little friend

named Nora.

The day after that interview, Nora was moved out of the class because she did not qualify for the Early Intervention Program. Luckily, Natalie had also made a connection with another classmate named Lupe. Ms. Clark saw this friendship as the catalyst for Natalie's initial adjustment:

I: Can you just describe Natalie for me?

C: When she first came, she was very shy. I noticed she didn't really talk much with the kids the first few days of school, but shortly thereafter, she seemed to ah.. lighten up pretty quickly, and maybe not 'lighten up', but just became a little bit more comfortable, with her surroundings, and she made friends fairly quickly. She and Lupe sort of hit it off right away, because Lupe is also Spanish-speaking, but she's also En.. like she's primarily English-speaking but she knows some Spanish.

I: mm-hm

C: So I think that was a bit of a comfort, for Natalie to have that extra Spanish-speaker in the class with her. And Nora too, but Nora's no longer in the class. The three of them were like three peas in a pod, after a while. (Clark & Cobb, 09/09, day 22)

Through the rest of the data, Natalie is polite and sometimes reserved, but does not appear shy. At home and at school she speaks directly to adults and children in a variety of situations. She appeared perfectly comfortable at school:

Roberto keeps calling Clark from time out in a whiney voice.

Clark says "You're in time out now."

He complains.

Natalie and Lupe look at each other and smile.

All stand.

Natalie offers hand to boy to help him stand.

As Clark prepares music, Natalie and Lupe whisper.

Both smile as 5 Monkeys song starts.

(Field Notes, 08/23, day 10)

Natalie began the year by watching and waiting. From the beginning, she participated in classroom activities, but personally and socially, she kept her distance. Her reports about these early days were not that she was afraid or confused, only that she was bored. Clark's term "very shy" suggests something more defensive, as did my day 6 observation that she avoided eye contact with the older girls who were helping her.

This silent period makes sense when viewed through a sociocultural lens. Full participation in the new environment required that Natalie acquire the appropriate mediational means. She participated on the periphery, as described by Lave and Wenger

(1991), and this participation allowed her to observe the means used by more knowledgeable others in the new environment. She needed to learn how the system worked before committing to further action or a specific role within the group. Her silence can therefore be seen as a symptom that she was unable to participate fully, but watching and waiting is also a valid strategy to understand the new setting (Caspi, Elder, & Bern, 1988).

When I shared these findings with Ms. Clark in our follow-up interview, she confirmed that Natalie was very shy at first, but did not agree that she opened up after only a few days and once she acquired the first friend. She said it took Natalie more than a month to “come out.” She stated that in the second half of the year Natalie became a real leader in the class, and stood out as academically strong. Ms. Clark relied on Natalie to help others understand classroom work.

The teacher’s report contradicts the suggestion that after her initial adjustment Natalie attained her permanent status within the classroom community. Rather than “a short silent period,” the teacher’s comment suggests a gradual move up the scale of confidence and position in the classroom. Natalie was guarded at first, presumably learning about the new setting before committing to any action within it. She began to open up and enjoy school when she made her first friends, and then steadily became more competent and outgoing throughout the year. The accounts, then, are not contradictory. Her breakthrough in the first month simply looked different after the end of the year.

School Activities

Natalie’s own reports are a unique indicator of how she saw school. She reported that she liked coloring, playing (at recess and at centers), eating, sleeping, and singing

songs. She also spoke about playing with friends at school, and about her teacher. These categories from her reports structure the following description of Natalie's school life.

Scribbling / Coloring. The first interview with Natalie and her parents took place after the eighth day of school. At that point, she was presumably familiar with many of the routines of school and could speak authoritatively about them. Her first answer to the question, "What do you do there?" was "Nothing." When pressed, she answered that they colored or drew, but the way she said this was somewhat confusing:

N: <i>Puedo rayar.</i>	N: I can <i>rayar</i> .
I: <i>¿Rayar?</i>	I: <i>Rayar?</i>
<i>¿Es como escribir o dibujar?</i>	Is that like writing or drawing?
<i>No entiendo.</i>	I don't understand.
<i>¿Qué es rayar?</i>	What is " <i>rayar</i> "?
N: _____	N: _____
I: <i>Aa-ja.</i>	I: Uh-huh.
<i>¿Y que tipo de cosas dibujes tú?</i>	And what kind of things do you draw?
N: _____	N: _____
M: <i>Habla más..</i>	M: Talk more..
I: <i>¿Cómo?</i>	I: How's that?
N: <i>Da la maestra un papel</i>	N: The teacher gives a paper
<i>y agarramos colores</i>	and we get crayons
<i>y agarramos lapiz.</i>	and we get pencil.
(Natalie, Mr. & Mrs. Diaz, Cobb, 08/19, day 8)	

First, she answered the question "what do you do" not by saying what she did, but by saying what she *can* do. Perhaps she only meant she *was allowed to* color, but I suspect that this is an indication that upon starting school the issue of what she *could* do in the sense of being capable was more salient for her than merely reporting what happened there.

Natalie's use of "*rayar*" raises other questions about its meaning in her dialect of Spanish or in her family. "*Rayar*" comes from the word for "line" and suggests marking up a paper or scribbling in a book (or other place where one is not supposed to scribble).

Several words in Spanish are more suggestive of drawing (*dibujar*) or coloring (*colorear*). In my experience with other children at the school, the most commonly used word for coloring, or more general term for creating a picture (as opposed to writing) is “*pintar*,” translated literally as “to paint.”

As I continued to question Natalie, she explained that they are given a paper and they get crayons and pencils. Here she answered with a very specific description of the activity, in the concrete terms of the materials involved. Two activities going on in the class at this time were coloring the photocopied drawings of the Animated Literacy characters, and receiving a blank paper for Writer’s Workshop, on which to draw and perhaps write. Both required crayons and pencils, and papers distributed by the teacher. Thus, Natalie’s description need not be understood to apply to one or the other, but could presumably refer to any activity in which they were asked to work on paper with crayons and pencils. While an Animated Literacy lesson, Writer’s Workshop lesson, and a social studies lesson about school rules may seem like three diverse types of activity to the teacher, for the child they may be parsed together as simply “scribbling.” (And, suggested by the previous excerpt, the important thing about “scribbling,” for Natalie, was that she could do it.)

In the second interview, on day 13, Natalie’s mother named only two things Natalie had talked about doing at school: coloring (she uses “*colora*,” apparently an unconventional simplification of “*colorea*” from “*colorear*.”) and watching the movie “Willie Wonka.” Through almost three weeks of school, then, Natalie speaks of school as a place where she colors, which apparently confirms that she used this as a general term for several types of seatwork.

Playing (at recess). Natalie said her favorite things about school were playing, eating, and sleeping (08/19, day 8). She described the stairs and slides on the outdoor playscape, and sliding down a pole. She repeatedly mentioned going outside to the playscape (*parque*), and her mother reported she talked about playing with her new friend outside. In March, Ms. Clark gave a quick description of Natalie and her friends on the playground:

I: (laughs) And what does she do outside, it sounds like the girls were together outside?

C: She'll pick flowers for me, and Ms. Davis, give us the little dandelions. But yeah the three of 'em go run all over the place. They'll..

I: Uh with Lupe and..

C: Lupe and Precious. They run all over the place. They don't usually play on the playscape. They'll run around the playscape. They'll run up here on the hill. Um.. they'll go and hang out with the fifth graders sometimes.

I: Oh, you go out with the family, so a lot of different-aged kids are out.

C: uh-huh. They must know some of the kids from the bus or something like that, but they'll go run around and play with the fifth graders and, um.. They'll come up to me and.. lots.. lots of times say, "Lupe doesn't want to play with me," or "Natalie doesn't want to be my friend," you know.

I: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

C: But they get over it instantly. I mean the thing is it's.. it's. I think it's almost..

I: What do you say?

C: I say to them, "Well, everybody in Ms. Clark's class are what?" and they'll say, "friends," and I'll say, "You guys need to play together and make sure that you're being nice to each other.." "OK!" and they'll all go running off together and go play.

(Clark & Cobb, 03/01, day 124)

On two occasions, Natalie complained that the class did not play. The first occurred on day 42, when she said it rained so they did something with another class. On the other occasion, on day 128, she seemed to refer to inside play (presumably centers) they missed when Ms. Clark was absent and there was a substitute:

I: *¿A veces tienes*

I: Sometimes do you have

<i>otra maestra?</i>	another teacher?
<i>N: Sí, ahora tengo otra maestra.</i>	N: Yes, now I have another teacher.
<i>Pero allá..</i>	But there..
<i>I: Oo. Yo no sabía.</i>	I: Oh, I didn't know.
<i>¿Que tienes otra, hoy?</i>	You mean you have another, today?
<i>N: Mala.</i>	N: A bad one.
<i>I: (se rie) ¡Una mala!</i>	I: (laughs) A bad one!
<i>Ji, ji, ji..</i>	Hee hee hee.
<i>¿Que hace? (riendo)</i>	What does she do? (laughing)
<i>N: ___ da mucha tarea.</i>	N: ___ gives a lot of work.
<i>I: Aaa, da mucha tarea.</i>	I: Oh, she gives a lot of work.
<i>¿Y Ms. Clark no?</i>	And Ms. Clark doesn't?
<i>N: Ella poquita da, pero no.</i>	N: She gives a little, but no.
<i>Pero ella,</i>	But she,
<i>ahora no nos dejó jugar,</i>	now she didn't let us play,
<i>cuando llegamos de la escuela.</i>	when we arrive from school..
<i>Cuando llegamos..</i>	When we arrived..
<i>I: ¿Cómo?</i>	I: How's that?
<i>¿No.. no les dejaron jugar?</i>	They didn't let you play?
<i>N: No.</i>	N: No.
<i>Porque cuando llegamos</i>	Because when we arrived
<i>___ la escuela</i>	___ the school
<i>siempre jugabamos,</i>	we always played,
<i>pero.. ya no.</i>	but.. not now

(Natalie & Cobb, 03/09, day 128)

Natalie knew the routine of school and seemed to feel she had a right to play at the appropriate times. These two complaints stand out because Natalie rarely complained about school. (The other two cases of negative comments are when she told her mother she was bored during the first days of the year, and a complaint early in the year that there were too many boys in the class, and at her table, and that she wanted to be with all girls.)

Playing (at centers). Natalie said she preferred playing inside to playing outside. Ms. Clark had both a “center” time and a “reading center” time, and both were likely regarded as play by Natalie. It is possible that Natalie also referred to other classroom activities as play.

During our first interview, the only inside play she described was with plastic food. Since dramatic play and especially dramatic play at “housekeeping” or “kitchen” centers is often associated with trying out adult roles, I asked her if she played at being the mom there, but she did not relate to this notion at all:

I: ¿Y tú, cuando juegas allá, cómo lo haces? I: And you, when you play there, how do you do it?
N: mmm.. N: mmm...
I: ¿Como tú eres la mamá? I: Like you're the mom?
¿No? No?
N: Ella es mi mami. N: She's my mom.
I: Pero cuando estás jugando, ¿tú no te portas como ella? I: But when you're playing, you don't act like her?
N: Noooo. N: Noooo.
 (Natalie & Cobb, 08/19, day 8)

Ms. Clark allowed the children to choose their activities at center time and several girls, including Natalie, liked to go to the writing center. There they made pictures with markers, or drew pictures and cut them out. Natalie's favorite activity, and one which she enjoyed throughout the school year, was to walk around and ask people things, making notes or asking them to write on her pad. The excerpts below illustrate that Natalie discovered this activity within the first month of school, and it was still a regular part of her school life on day 50.

C: Oh, recently we got a new student, Angela.
 And she and Angela have really hit it off.
 They're like little buddies now.
 I: mm-hm
 C: They play with each other's hair,
 and they always want to play at the same center,
 and.. but she's also very social with the other kids.
 During centers, she'll walk around with a pad
 and she'll say "what's your name?"
 I: (laughs)
 C: She'll hand you the pad and the paper..
 I: How cute.
 C: ..to write your name, yeah.

She'll say "what's your name?"
 and she'll show me her little baby doll
 and I'll say "what's the baby dolls name?"
 and she'll say, um.. "Ms. Clark" or "Natalie" or "Guillermo",
 other kids in the class, and..
 So she's getting to know their names too,
 which is pretty cool.
 (Clark & Cobb, 09/09, day 22)

C: She's always coming up to me giving me hugs,
 and then during centers she'll come up to me and she'll say
 (quickly, running words together) "what's your name?"
 I: (laughs)
 C: "Ms. Clark, What's your name?"
 and she'll say "Natalie."
 And she'll say, um "Write it for me."
 so you know I'll..
 I: You told me before she was going around with lists.
 C: Yeah
 I: .. and asking people stuff.
 That's still a.. a thing she does, huh?
 C: She does that, yeah.
 So I'll take the paper and I'll write it
 and she'll go "Thank you,"
 and she'll just walk off and..
 So, she's very assertive in that way.
 (Clark & Cobb, 10/20, day 50)

On day 50, Ms. Clark reported that Natalie always chose to go to the writing center, but she did more there than carry around the pad.

I: What kind of stuff does she do at writing? There's walk around with the list. Anything else?
 C: Well we have a.. um.. those alphabet cards.. not really alphabet, but those picture cards over there, she'll always take a card and she'll draw the picture from the card, and then she'll write the word.
 So I'm glad to see that she's writing. I don't know if she knows.. necessarily knows the letters that she's writing, but at least she's doing that. She's really good about putting her name and her date.
 And then, today, she drew a picture of a little girl, and then cut it out.. used scissors to cut out the shape. And then she drew a picture of the sun and cut that out.
 So I liked to see that because that was something that she did on her own, it wasn't something that I said, "hey, you guys can draw pictures and cut

them out." She just did that on her own and got the scissors on her own and things like that.

But yeah she likes to write her.. go around and write people's names, still. ...And then you have a lot of the boys who like to just build with blocks, and I let them do that too, but, you know, with Natalie, and Lupe is another one who likes to do writing, Braxton, they're all, well aside from Natalie, Lupe and Braxton are.. not very focused during Writer's Workshop itself, so when they choose that for centers, I'm like, "Yeah! Totally. You can do it." and then they love it, and they draw all sorts of pictures.

Braxton was drawing pictures for one of our kids whose birthday it was today and.. so. It's kinda nice, but, to see them choosing academic..

I: That's what they choose to do, but when you make 'em do it they're not that into it.. How funny.

C: No pressure, maybe, or, no.. uh.. They can do whatever.. and I let them do whatever they want during Writer's Workshop, too. But I wonder too if it has a lot to do with markers. 'Cause we use markers during reading center.. or uh.. centers.

I: During centers they have access to markers, OK.

C: But during writer's workshop, they usually use the crayons.
(Clark & Cobb, 10/20, day 50)

Natalie's sense of work with pencils, paper, and crayons, then, developed in several directions beyond "*rayar*." She used writing on the pad as a way to interact with Ms. Clark and the students, she drew pictures together with her friends, and often gave them to Ms. Clark. She also drew and wrote to create unique products.

Natalie considered much of this activity "play," while for Ms. Clark it was "writing." Ms. Clark said the girls liked to write more at centers than during writers' workshop because they could use markers there. Perhaps the addition of markers transformed "*rayar*" into "*jugar*," writing into play.

Eating. Natalie listed eating among the things she liked to do at school.

Throughout the year, Ms. Clark's class had a snack in addition to lunch. Children brought their own snacks, a snack to share, or ate a snack provided by Ms. Clark. During

my observations, Natalie did not bring her own snack, and happily accepted what Ms. Clark gave her.

Natalie also liked the cafeteria food and noted she was able to pick what she wanted to eat. (Students at the school could choose among two main dishes and a salad, and had some choice of side dishes and drinks as well.)

<i>I: ¿Que comiste hoy?</i>	I: What did you eat today?
<i>N: Un hot dog⁵.</i>	N: A hot dog.
<i>I: Un hot dog. ¿Fue bueno?</i>	I: A hot dog. Was it good?
<i>¿Rico?</i>	Delicious?
<i>N: Sí.</i>	N: Yes.
<i>I: ¿Pusiste ketchup?</i>	I: Did you put ketchup on it?
<i>N: Sí, pero no me comí todo</i>	N: Yes, but I didn't eat it all
<i>(se rie)</i>	(laughs)
<i>I: ¿No? ¿Por que?</i>	I: No? Why not?
<i>N: Porque no. Y una papa..</i>	N: Cause I didn't. And a potato..
...	...
<i>I: Y las papas como..</i>	I: And the potatoes..
<i>¿como están?</i>	how were they?
<i>N: Como la de "Happy Meal"</i>	N: Like the ones from a Happy Meal.
<i>(Natalie & Cobb, 10/07, day 42)</i>	

Mexican immigrant children entering kindergarten often have difficulty adjusting to the cafeteria's food. One explanation is that American children come to school with good feelings about hamburgers, hot dogs, and pizza, and are therefore well disposed to the school versions of these foods. For the child who does not arrive with these preconceptions of fast food staples, the school hamburgers and pizza may be judged on their own merits. Natalie's description of the french fries suggests she was already acculturated to at least some part of American culinary culture.

⁵ Among the Mexican immigrant families in the area, the borrowed English "hot dog" was used more often than the literal translation "*perro caliente*" which is used in some Latin American countries. It is therefore treated as a Spanish phrase here rather than a case of code-switching.

Sleeping. On day 8, Natalie said she had a blanket and a pillow at school for sleeping, and that she liked nap a lot. On day 13 she said again that she liked sleeping. This contradicts a report from Ms. Clark that the only time Natalie was sad was at naptime:

She doesn't really seem to, like, nap very much. She gets a little bit weepy during that time, and talks about wanting her mom and dad. But I see that that's kind of a significant thing in a lot of the kindergarteners. In my class anyway, a lot of 'em when we're about to take a nap it's like all of a sudden they remember their parents. And they want to go home (laughs). So she never has said that she wants to go home, but she does say, you know, she gets a little bit weepy and says, "my mom and dad" So, I've been trying to rotate around some teddy bears, for those kids that start to feel a little sad and she's always asking for the teddy bear, and, she takes turns with it though. She's good about that.
(Clark, 09/09, day 22)

Songs. Natalie did not mention singing in her lists of things she did at school, but when I observed her in class she seemed to greatly enjoy them, and she sang two songs to me in interviews. In this first case, I was surprised to find she could sing almost all the words of the song clearly, and yet could not explain what they meant.

Tienen muchas canciones	You have a lot of songs
en tu clase, ¿no?	in your class, right?
Yo vi a Ms. Clark	I saw Ms. Clark
haciendo algo de,	Doing something like
Shake-em, shake-em, shake-em.	Shake-em, shake-em, shake-em
¿Cómo va esa?	How does that go?
N: Shake-em, shake-em, shake-em	N: Shake-em, shake-em, shake-em
Give a ____ clap.	Give a ____ clap.
Shake-em, shake-em, shake-em.	Shake-em, shake-em, shake-em.
Put them in your lap.	Put them in your lap.
I: ¡Aa-jaa! Pero..	Uh-huh! But..
Yo estaba preocupado	I was worried
que vi en la clase,	that I saw in the class
y yo estaba pensando,	and I was thinking
yo no sé	I don't know
si ella entiende las palabras	if she understands the words
de esa canción.	of that song.
Pero ahora que me lo cantes,	But now that you sing it to me

dices las palabras muy claro.	You say the words very clearly
Me parece que sí entiendes.	I think you do understand.
Como "lap".	Like "lap".
¿Qué es "lap"?	What is "lap"?
N: aaaaaaa... padre	N: ahhhhhh... father
I: ¿jm?	I: Hm?
N: Padre.	N: Father.
I: Cuando dice,	I: When it says,
"put them in your lap",	"put them in your lap",
¿qué es eso?	What is that?
N: Cantan con canciones.	N: They sing with songs.
I: ¿Cómo?	I: What?
N: Canta con canciones.	N: Sing with songs.
I: ¿Canta con canciones?	I: Sing with songs?
M: ____ ____	M: ____ ____
I: ¿Y que es "clap"?	I: And what is "clap"?
¿Que es un "clap"?	What is a "clap"?
N: No sé.	N: I don't know.

(Natalie, Mom, & Cobb, 8/19, day 8)

In my last interview with Natalie, she volunteered to sing "Five Little Monkeys." Again, though her English had greatly improved and she had sung this song many times at that point, I could not elicit evidence from her that she understood it. In the song, five monkeys tease an alligator, who catches one of them in each verse, until they are all gone. At the end of the song (Dr. Jean's version), there is a rhyme that suggests the last monkey got away: "Missed me! Missed me! Now you gotta' kiss me!". This makes an exciting finale when the students perform the song, as they run in place as fast as they can during this part.

N: Listen to this:
(singing in English) Five little monkeys sitting in the tree,
teasin' Mr. Alligator "can't catch me",
along came Mr. Alligator "can't catch me"
and snapped that monkey outta the tree
...(*other verses*)...
I know more..
N: Oh! Oh!
I: Yes?
N: Miss me, miss me, [in English]

cacha-cata [mispronounced English “now you gotta”]
 I: Oh he doesn't catch the last one?
 The aligator doesn't catch the last.. "monkey"? [in English]
 N: to the..
 miss me miss me.. [in English]
 I: Now you gotta' [in English]
 N: kiss me. [in English]
 (Natalie & Cobb, 3/09, day 128)

From the beginning of the study, I was struck by how these movement songs allowed the participation of children who did not understand English. While the “Five Monkeys” song appears to be a fantasy game about misbehaving monkeys who get their comeuppance, with a surprise escape at the end, understanding the narrative was not necessary for these children to enjoy the song. The movements, music, and tone of the performance comprise an experience and a ritual that is very enjoyable on its own.

I expected, however, that with repeated exposure and a greater acquaintance with English, Natalie and the other children would have reassessed the meaning of the song. “Oh, so that’s what an ‘alligator’ is!” Perhaps they heard the “Missed me!” rhyme in other contexts as well, and discovered that “kiss me” is an exciting and forbidden expression among American kindergarteners. Perhaps Natalie understood all these things, even if she could not explain, “now you gotta,” or answer questions about the fate of the last monkey.

Friends. Peer relationships were an important part of Natalie’s transition to kindergarten. By all accounts, friendships with girls in the class provided a reason to come to school and then sustained her growth throughout the year. Most of the things she said she liked were done with friends. At first, she colored with only minimal interaction, but eventually coloring became a favorite activity to do with her friends. Both playing outside and playing at centers focused on social interactions. Overall,

having friends seems to have been Natalie's primary strategy for being in kindergarten. She co-created ways of playing and working with other girls, and these made school fun.

Natalie with Ms. Clark

Natalie's relationship with Ms. Clark was very warm and mutually rewarding.

They smiled at each other, hugged each other, and there was no report of any difficulty between them:

C: I think that she.. I think she really enjoys school. I think she likes me, or.. She walks in every morning and she's always got a big smile, "Good morning, Ms. Clark" ..

I: I remember seeing her more than once that she finishes something, she shows it to you, she wants a hug..

C: Yeah.

I: So is she.. She's absolutely into pleasing you.

C: Oh absolutely, she always..

I: ..and you being impressed with her work.

C: Mm-hm

...

I: Anything that she doesn't like at school? (pause)

Other kids ever bother her, or..? (pause)

Can't think of anything?

C: Not really, no.

I: (laughs)

C: Occasionally, jokingly, she'll go like this.. you know, give me a frown face, but she knows it's gonna' crack me up and I start laughin' and she starts laughin'.

I: (laughs)

C: But yeah I mean the one time I've ever seen her cry I think is if she's hurt.

I: uh-huh

C: Occasionally she'll say she doesn't feel well, very rare occasions, but she's fine like ten minutes later, you know, so it's probably just looking for attention, you know, like "oh, I don't feel well," and so. I'll give her a hug or I'll say "OK go to the bathroom and get some water," and she'll come back and she's like.. perky little miss showy..

I: (laughs)

C: .. little miss sun, yeah

(Clark & Cobb, 03/01, day 124)

What I found striking about the relationship was not the warmth, but that Natalie's sense of happiness and security with Ms. Clark seemed to allow her small lapses in obedience. While Natalie was a well-behaved child, there were five occasions during observations when she did something she wanted to do before following Ms. Clark's directions. In three of these cases, she continued or finished her work in spite of being asked to stop. Here is one example:

Clark is asking kids to clean up.
 Natalie and Angela keep drawing.
 Cobb asks Natalie why she's still drawing.
 Clark thanks others for cleaning up,
 and then tells Natalie and Angela that she's asked them 2 times
 and they'll have to move their clips down.
 Natalie says, "OK. I'll stop."
 Natalie comes to get "lean hug" from Clark
 and gives her the paper.
 (Field Notes, 12/09, day 79)

In the fourth case (day 8), Natalie tried to show her paper to Ms. Clark and was told to sit down, but she stayed until Ms. Clark looked at it and told her, "Good job, sweetheart." This example suggests that Ms. Clark helped construct a relationship whereby Natalie could take her time to following some directions:

Natalie called to pass out napkins
 Gets them and starts passing out,
 finishes,
 stands looking around,
 goes to Ms. C
 and leans against her- cheek touching belly.
 C pats her on back.
 (Field Notes, 12/19, day 85)

I experienced both Natalie's warm and welcoming personality, and her ability to ignore directions with a smile. I asked her in March how she felt about going to a new

class the next year: She explained her teacher would be Ms. Ford (the first grade family teacher who often worked with them).

<i>¿Te gusta ir ahora con Ms. Ford?</i>	Would you like to go now with Ms. Ford?
<i>N: (plaintive) ¡Yo no voy a estar allí con Ms. Ford!</i>	N: (plaintive) I'm not going to go there with Ms. Ford!
<i>I: Mm-jm. ¿Porque?</i>	I: Mm-hm. Why?
<i>Tú das abrazos a ella también?</i>	Don't you hug her too?
<i>N: Le doy flowers.</i>	N: I give her "flowers"
<i>I: Flowers?</i>	I: Flowers?
<i>N: ____ ____ ___. a Ms. Davis, también la quiero.</i>	N: ____ ____ ___. To Ms. Davis I love her too.
<i>I: Ahh-ja, Ms. Davis.</i>	I: Uh-huh, Ms. Davis.
<i>Son buenas los dos</i>	They're both good people.
<i>N: Si, y tú también</i>	N: Yes, and you too.
<i>I: ¡Ja ja! Gracias.</i>	I: Ha ha! Thank you.
<i>N: Ya.</i>	N: OK.

(Natalie & Cobb, 03/09, day 128)

I copy her drawing (a dog) step-by-step.
I add tail at end
N says: "*Va a ser todo cafe*" [It's going to all be brown.]
and gives me a brown crayon.
(field notes, 12/09, day 79)

They're watching the Magic School Bus.
Natalie is sharing a chair with an older girl.
The girl has long black hair and brown skin.
I invite Natalie to come and talk to me,
but she smiles and turns back to the TV.
(field notes, 10/04, day 39)

Academic Progress

During our first interview, I asked Natalie about words in the "Shake-em" song and she did not appear to understand them. I also asked if she knew how to say in English that she had to go to the bathroom and get a drink and she said no.

Her test results from the Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program (GKAP) test (see Appendix D) from the beginning of the year show she could count to six in English

but could not name any letters or shapes, or understand position words (e.g., top, inside). Natalie scored only 3% on the Language Assessment Battery (LAB, New York Department of Education) administered by her English as a Second Language (ESOL) teacher.

During an observation at the end of September (day 29), Natalie raised her hand to suggest a rule for the class. I could only understand the words “play” and “talk” and Ms. Clark, after some effort to make sense of her contribution, wrote “play on the playground” on the chart.

A month later, on day 50, Ms. Clark said Natalie knew all the Animated Literacy letters and sounds they had practiced. During my last observation of Natalie, on day 85, Natalie competently answered questions during a large group math lesson as the children sat on the carpet in front of Ms. Clark:

Clark is drawing divided sandwich to talk about fair shares.
 Natalie sits right up front, cross-legged.
 Natalie was answering a question as I came in.
 Jordan comes to show his catch-up work and Ms. Clark asks others to
 "press pause"
 Natalie waits still and quiet.
 Natalie watches attentively as Clark draws watermelon.
 Natalie raises hand and explains why division is not fair:
 "'Cause that one ____ a lot and that one ____ a little bit"
 Natalie waves at me, smiles.
 (Field Notes, 12/19, day 85)

In January, her GKAP results showed Natalie could distinguish between letters, words, and sentences, recognize numerals to 10, and correctly name five shapes. The position word test now included 15 items, of which she answered 7 correctly. Tested again in April, Natalie had mastered most of the skills on the test. She could print her name correctly, name all the letters, associate sounds with letters, answer questions about

a story read to her, read at least 10 sight words, name shapes, understand the position words, compare lengths and number, name coins, and use ordinal numbers to fifth.

In our March interview, Ms. Clark was confident that Natalie was ready for first grade:

C: So for Natalie, at this point, she's really come, come a long way. I mean she can do those little math packets all by herself, those math packets that you get for, um.. each chapter.

I: Uh-huh, uh-huh, yeah.

C: She could do those things by herself with her eyes closed if she wanted to.

I: (laughs)

C: Like, at the beginning of the year I was like, "Oh, man I don't know, this.. she seems like she's gonna have a really tough time this year, gonna' struggle." She knows all of her sight words, pretty much. She knows.. she's starting to read..

I: Wait a minute, how was she struggling? Tell me a little about that.

C: Just, you know, and I think it was a lack of.. the English language, you know, just.. she didn't wanna'.. she didn't wanna' like give the wrong answer and she wanted to make sure she was always kind of giving the right answer and making sure that she was pleasing me. Um.. She didn't know any of her ABCs coming in, so academically she was lacking. She didn't have any preschool experience I don't believe, so this was her first school.. schooling experience. She could barely write any of the letters. Her writing was just typical beginning of kindergarten writing, and now she's one of my stronger kids, I mean she has.. She's like a sponge. She is like.. your typical sponge..

I: (laughs)

C: ..just soaking everything up and taking it in. She has a very strong sense of the English language now and, like we were saying, she's still speaking a lot of Spanish with the other girls.

(Clark & Cobb, 3/09, day 128)

Conclusions

For most of the year, Natalie gave the impression that she knew she would be appreciated at school by Ms. Clark and others, regardless of what she did. She was generally well behaved, but never seemed to work at it. When she disobeyed Ms. Clark, she was not sneaky, as if she hoped to get away with something. In the case where Ms.

Clark threatened Natalie with moving her name down, Natalie showed no sign her happy mood was interrupted. She went right to Ms. Clark to get her hug. These behaviors suggest that at school Natalie had a strong sense of security. She expected to be accepted and loved.

The challenge of developing new ways of being for use at school is illustrated in her month of silence at the beginning of school. Presumably, Natalie needed time to survey the new setting and participate in small ways before she “let her personality out.” After this period of watching and waiting, Natalie relied on her friendships and her confident, happy temperament to make a place for herself in the classroom. Through the rest of the year, she reportedly earned the friendship and admiration of the class and the teacher, taking on the role of a bright and helpful child.

There is no sign in the data that Natalie struggled to integrate her home and school personalities, only a story of gradually taking on (or becoming) a particular kind of person at school. Sociocultural theory (Wertsch, 1991) and Piagetian constructivism (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) suggested a likely tension between a commitment to home and a new commitment to school, and between the culture of Mexico and that of the United States. These tensions were not evident in the data.

Cross-Case Comparisons

Victor and Natalie had very different experiences upon coming to kindergarten. Where she waited and watched, he fell on the floor and cried. Where he attached himself to Ms. Clark, she connected with friends. Where she felt confident she would be accepted, he worked hard to earn his position. Both children found ways of being that

allowed them to feel safe and happy, and to learn what they needed to prepare them for first grade.

The kindergarten experience of both children was centered on their teacher:

I: So it just struck me
that one of the good things about coming to kindergarten
is you focus in on this one person
who's your world in kindergarten.

C: mm-hm

I: Both Victor and Natalie..
kindergarten's all about you, huh?

C: I think so, I really honestly do.

I mean it seems like that's what it is for them because they wanna' make
sure that they're doin' the right thing, that they're havin' a good time..

I: Oh, we're done! That's the answer.

(Clark & Cobb, 03/01, day 124)

Ms. Clark was the source and enforcer of the rules of their new environment, and at the same time she was their most important and reliable source of support there.

Victor needed to stay tied to her in order to keep himself oriented and to maintain his role as exemplary student. On occasions when Ms. Clark tried to hug him, he was unreceptive (Clark, 5/21/07). He did not appear to want a personal, affectionate relationship with her as much as he needed her guidance and approval as the authority in the classroom.

Natalie also depended upon Ms. Clark for guidance, but Ms. Clark's role in Natalie's case was as a source of affection and praise. Natalie did not appear to seek strokes out of insecurity. Rather, she lived in a world where one gives and gets hugs and is happy. Both Natalie's experiences before she entered school and Ms. Clark's way with her students likely contributed to this relationship.

For both children, the shock of entering a new environment created the right conditions for developing a new way of being. Victor gave the impression of being lost

at sea and needing something to keep him afloat. Natalie seemed to be waiting and watching at the beginning of the school year. She followed the teacher's directions but did not "open up" socially.

From my experience as a kindergarten and first grade teacher, there are children who walk into the classroom on the first day and start introducing themselves, or taking toys away from the other children, but a time of watching and waiting is normal. The theories reviewed in Chapter I and studies reviewed in Chapter II give several suggestions about what might prepare children to participate when they arrive at kindergarten, such as: familiarity with similar environments, advanced social skills, or having previously met the teacher. Understanding the language of the teacher would also be a critical resource.

Natalie had several advantages over Victor in this regard. Though neither understood English, Natalie's social nature meant she came prepared to attach herself to the teacher and to her peers. She had seen that her sister went to school and enjoyed it, which gave her reason to believe she would enjoy it as well. She had presumably heard her sister talk about school for a year, so some of its elements and practices would at least sound familiar. The data do not reflect whether she attended "sneak-a-peek," but it is likely that she did, which gave her a chance to make initial connections to Ms. Clark and the physical space of the classroom. Though her mother said she was wild at home, the atmosphere of her home seemed more regular and orderly than that of Victor's, suggesting she had more experience of rules and routines than Victor did.

Victor lacked several of the resources that prepare children for kindergarten, such as: knowledge of English, familiarity with this school or other schools, experience

functioning within a system of behavior management, and experience following procedures and routines defined by an authority figure. He was not, however, entirely without resources. Some children arrive at kindergarten unable to hold a pencil or count. Victor liked to draw or color, and could count to 7. He also had a gentle disposition when interacting with other children, whereas many entering kindergarteners (especially boys) have aggressive tendencies that cause problems (Jordan & Cowan, 1995; Schmidt, Demulder, & Denham, 2002; Sheldon, 1990). While I have suggested that his home life was without structure, this is not entirely true. His elaborate play at the kitchen center showed that he was familiar with at least this routine, and that in general he was capable of mastering relatively long and complicated scripts.

Not knowing English must have delayed both children, in comparison to their English-speaking peers, in learning the routines of the classroom. While activities like movement songs and coloring permitted them satisfying participation from the beginning, understanding the teacher's directions and explanations could have greatly supported their acquisition of the mediational means used in the classroom.

Tools for Starting Kindergarten

The stories of Natalie and Victor suggest a number of skills or understandings that were (or would have been) valuable for them at the beginning of kindergarten. A sample of this knowledge is here presented through two examples. The first relates to a dream I had while working on the data. I imagined myself in Victor's place, confused about an upcoming transition, but still aware of things I knew from being a teacher:

The teacher said we were to line up at the door and I didn't know where we were going. I asked her where we were going (I don't recall if I raised my hand and/or got permission to speak) and she said she didn't know. I said to myself that it was a good thing I'd been a teacher, because

I could understand that this meant we were going to “specials,”⁶ but that she wasn’t sure which one, since this is the only time she’d prepare us to leave without knowing where we were going. Still, it seemed rather thoughtless of her to give such a vague answer.

I got out my bookbag and set it on a desk. I had a change of clothes inside for going to P.E. But I didn’t know if we were going to P.E. or not, so I couldn’t decide whether to get them out. Just the shirt, maybe? I looked at the clothes I was wearing and wondered about getting them dirty.

I recall having the sense, at this point, that I had a real problem and could not ask the teacher for help, mostly because she was busy. She was steering the whole class to the line and most of them were there already. I needed to get in line and there wasn’t time to talk about it.
(Cobb, 6/30/06, during analysis)

This dream illustrates much of my sense of the disorientation Victor experienced at the beginning of kindergarten. Within the dream, I had the advantage of knowing the reasons one might leave the class and the places one might go. This familiarity with the system, with the apparently finite set of things that happen in school, is a valuable resource in understanding the teacher’s directions and desires, and more generally in understanding where one is and what is about to happen. Even with this knowledge, I was confused.

Here are some of the specific facts related to my situation in the dream, and which Victor would not have known on the first day of school:

- In kindergarten one spends most of the day in one’s homeroom class, but leaves it for:
 - Breakfast (to which one walks alone or with friends before coming to class)

⁶ Classes with other teachers: art, music, physical education, computer lab, etc.

- English Class (to which one is led by the ESOL teacher together with a small group of classmates, in a less-formal line, occurs at the same time every day)
- Bathroom/Water Breaks (with one’s teacher and the whole class, in a disciplined line, and where getting a drink and using the bathroom are both optional, occurs several times a day, sometimes on the way to another destination)
- Lunch (with one’s teacher and the whole class, the one case in which the line must be in alphabetical order, and the one case in which one is likely to have to bring something, like money or a lunch from home, occurs only once a day, always at the same time)
- “Specials” (with one’s teacher and the whole class, in a disciplined line, with or without a visit to the bathroom and water fountain, to one of several possible classes—PE, art, music, computer—where the class is left with another teacher for 45 minutes, occurs at the same time every day)
- Family Events (with one’s teacher and the whole class to another classroom for either family meeting or Fun Friday activities)
- Fire Drill (with one’s teacher in a line which is both less disciplined in terms of the line leader and other conventions, but more strictly required to be quiet and fast, with lights flashing and an alarm sounding, outside to stand with all the students in lines, occurs several times per year)
- The Clinic (with a peer and a note, after the teacher has determined one is sick, to be treated and sent back or sent home)

- Teachers are sometimes confused about which of the “specials” classes the class will attend. They sometimes have to search for a copy of the schedule or ask another teacher, and sometimes take the class to the wrong place.
- Boots and flip-flops are not allowed in P.E. class, but otherwise children are not required by the school to change shoes for the class. They may be required to do so by their parents, and the school respects the parents’ wishes. These requests, however, are rare, so that neither the homeroom teachers nor the P.E. teacher will ask for or expect students to change from one pair of athletic shoes to another.⁷

This is an overview of the destinations among which kindergarteners at the school moved on a regular basis, and the ways they moved from one to the other. Each one could be expanded with a great many procedures, such as how to pick up one’s lunch and where to sit, how long one is allowed to drink at the water fountain, and how far to lower one’s pants while using the urinal. His first few ventures into the hall or cafeteria would not provide clear information about these standards, as repeated experiences are needed to separate regular procedures from chance occurrences.

Natalie would have been somewhat more aware of the items in the list above, because she likely heard her sister talk about going to most of those destinations. She might have even arrived at the class with some excitement about one or another of the places she expected to be taken at some point. She would have heard talk about being in a “line” and going to “specials.”

⁷ Students only rarely change clothes for P.E., on occasions like awards day or picture day. Here my dream of kindergarten seems to have gotten mixed up with memories of junior high school.

In the case of learning the word “specials,” many of the native speakers of English would not know what it meant in the school context when they arrived. Ms. Clark would likely have given explanations beyond that word, however, that helped them orient themselves before experiencing the trip to other classes and back. She may have reassured them that they would come back with her after the class, which might not have been obvious on the first day of school. She may have described the other classes as “upstairs” (where the computer lab was) or “across the hall” (the gym), so that children leaving the class had a sense of the scope of their journey. She may have talked about the need to be quiet in the hall so as not to disturb other classes, which would have given some reason for the demanding standards of hall behavior. She may have told the children that they would or would not stop by the bathroom or water fountain. All of these instructions would have allowed the English speakers to know more about what they were doing and what was going to happen than Victor and Natalie would have known.

For a second example, figure 9 summarizes a series of events from my day 6 observation of Natalie. Ms. Clark had just taught the children the Uncle Upton (short u) song from Animated Literacy. She demonstrated good coloring, contrasting this with scribbling, then sent them to their seats. Ms. Clark’s actions are shown on the left, and Natalie’s on the right.

CLARK	NATALIE
Demonstrates Uncle Upton song	Does motions and tries to sing.
Warns against scribbling and sends students to desks.	First to arrive at desk.
Calls for students to come when called to get their folders	Goes to get folder when called
Introduced activity (earlier) with contrast between careful coloring and scribbling	Colors carefully.
Says "press pause" and then tells class what to do when finished.	Keeps coloring, doesn't look up.
Announces she's setting timer	Watches Clark setting timer.
	Finishes coloring, gets up to show Clark.
Sends two boys who brought their papers back to write more (to copy letter u repeatedly)	Sees what happens with boys and goes back to seat. Colors in around already colored areas.
(Timer rings) Clark announces it's time to turn in papers	Carries open folder (with colored Uncle Upton page) to show Clark
Says "that looks great, sweetheart", closes folder and adds to stack.	Returns to seat.

Figure 9. Actions of Clark and Natalie, field notes, 08/17, day 6.

In this example, Natalie shows she can comply with teacher instructions and classroom policies. She tries to learn the song, gets right to her seat, gets up to get her folder when called, and colors carefully. Her most impressive insight, however, was to

see that the boys were turned away when they took their work to the teacher, and turn around herself.

Once familiar with this routine, a student would know:

- The teacher sometimes sends you to your desk. When this occurs, you should go directly to your regular seat, sit down, and wait for instructions.
- There are folders with the work of the children and one is mine.
- The teacher holds the stack of folders and calls out students' names to come and pick them up.
- You may not mark on or damage your folder.
- Coloring activities involve being given a copied picture to color and a cup of crayons.
- Each student gets a cup of crayons. You cannot change cups with another student or take crayons from their cup, and you have the right to expect them not to bother yours.
- You may not break crayons. You are allowed to peel the paper back from the tip.
- When you are assigned to work on something (like coloring) at your desk, you must stay there and work on it until the timer rings.
- You should write your name on your paper if you can, but if you cannot then you are not required to do so.
- You should color carefully, using several different colors and staying inside the lines.
- While working, you may talk quietly to children at your table.

- If you need something when you are working, you should raise your hand. Sometimes you can walk over to the teacher and ask her.
- When the timer rings, you must stop work and put the product in your folder, then take the folder to the teacher.
- If you show your work to the teacher and it is good, she will praise you.

These examples suggest the complexity of regulations in a kindergarten classroom. They have been presented as lists of facts, but kindergarteners need methods and resources that go beyond factual knowledge. Natalie's social skills were an important tool, and her friends were important resources. Victor's Superman towel served some important function for him, as did the script for mealtime he played out in the kitchen center.

Rituals without a Story

The way the children enjoyed the movement songs without understanding the words struck me as a case of a "ritual without a story." Their participation in the songs satisfied Ms. Clark's desire that they work off some energy, and fulfilled their goal of having fun, as well as perhaps building a sense of community with the teacher and class. But for Natalie, the narrative that ties together the emotions and actions of the "Five Little Monkeys" was missing.

Once I began looking for rituals without a story in the daily lives of these children, several possible candidates emerged. The Animated Alphabet (Jim Stone Creations) characters each have a story that explains the character's picture, song, and hand signal. Without understanding the story, the picture, song, and signal do not seem likely to link the letter's form and its sound. If the child does not know the word "up,"

then the link between pointing up (Uncle Upton's hand sign) and the short u sound is merely a matter of convention. The songs are fun to perform, though, and therefore could still serve to get the child's attention and create a positive affect, and these could aid memorization. Rituals without a story bear a close relation to rote learning.

With a song like "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes," in which children touch each body part as it is named, there is little narrative present. There is, however, a meaningful connection between the words of the song and the motions that would be lost on non-English speakers. The simplicity, however, of the words, the motions, and the link between them (almost all nouns for concrete objects which one touches) seems ideal for the rote learning of these terms.

Saying the Pledge of Allegiance together easily qualifies as a ritual and very few kindergarteners would be able to explain its meaning. Ms. Clark's class said the pledge every morning, as it was broadcast over the school intercom. When I asked Natalie about the pledge, she said, "That's when they pray" (8/26, day 13, translated). Without any more rationale than that, saying the pledge together seems to establish that the group is taking something seriously. If the children understand the flag as a symbol of the country, then they should be able to put together the bulk of the pledge's rationale: that we come together in taking our country seriously.

Less obvious examples are found in the routines of school life. A child may learn to walk in the hall according to the teacher's specifications without understanding why it is considered necessary to be quiet or to walk. Presumably, non-English speaking children would be less likely to understand the reasons for these requirements (to avoid bothering other classes and avoid being injured). A child may learn to line up for lunch

in alphabetical order without understanding why this is the rule (so the cafeteria cashier can more easily locate them on the computer screen). Victor over-generalized this rule and tried to always line up in alphabetical order (or, as he saw it, second). Knowing why might have helped him understand sooner.

Kindergarteners whose first language is the same as the teacher's also engage in activities and practices without understanding the rationale behind them. As is the case with most of the examples presented, rituals often serve valuable functions without the benefit of a narrative. Five-year-olds are less likely than adults to demand that every action must have a justification and every story a moral⁸.

Living a Double Life

A central question in the design of this study was how children manage to be one person at home and another at school. Natalie and Victor both developed new ways of being at school, and in both cases they changed little at home. Natalie was said to have become a little calmer. Victor had episodes of coming home tired and grouchy. In neither case did the parents recognize any major changes in the way the children carried themselves or related to others.

⁸ One of the practices central to the America's Choice reform program that was practiced at the school during the study is making students aware of the objectives of their activities. As they gather for Writer's Workshop, the teacher is to point out the day's "standard" before starting the lesson, and one means of evaluating the implementation of the program is for visitors to ask students, "Which standard are you working on today?" These practices presumably emanate from a belief that children learn more when they are consciously aware of the purpose of their activities.

This supports the idea that it is possible for five-year-olds to develop and maintain a set of mediational means, or ways of being, or an identity for use at school while maintaining the means, ways, and identity they employ at home. Given that these children's homes were enclaves of Mexican culture, the difference in the two sets of means was greater than it would be for many students. Why, then, is no struggle between the two sets of means evident?

Identity theory (Cooley, 1964/1902; Erikson, 1950; James, 1981/1890; Marcia, 1967) in general does not suggest that the person must have a single identity, only that they must keep all their identities in order. These children seem to have easily managed to keep the two ways of being separate and apply them in the appropriate contexts. What they needed in order to do this was an ability to separate the two environments in their minds, creating a higher level of organization in their understanding of how to get things done in the world.

I have suggested that the difference between the two settings was greater for Victor than Natalie, due to the lack of structure in his home. I would also say that Victor seemed less mature than Natalie and in several ways, described above, had fewer resources to support his transition. Even for Victor, however, keeping the two settings and their appropriate means separate did not appear to be a problem. This supports the idea that five-year-olds are ready to leave home, and that it is reasonable to expect that they can manage a life in multiple microsettings.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In working with the cases of Natalie and Victor, I have found them to be primarily stories of making the transition from home to school. That they were Mexican immigrant children made this transition harder than it would have been for American, English-speaking children, but it was not the central feature of the experience. Neither child complained about not being able to understand the language, about being an outsider, or about having to cut themselves off from the traditions of their ancestors. These things all happened, to some extent, but they do not seem to have been salient for Natalie or Victor. Much of the work they did and the pleasures they experienced in becoming kindergarteners were the same as those experienced by their Anglo peers.

A number of possible directions present themselves in the data, but one from each case emerged as striking and central. In the case of Victor, his high level of attentiveness and apparent desire to please Ms. Clark seemed to serve as a defense against the disorientation he experienced upon arrival. Natalie, in comparison, showed little distress at the beginning of the year, and appeared very relaxed in her relation to Ms. Clark and her authority. What is it that drove Victor to work for the role of exemplary student, how did he do so, and why was Natalie not similarly driven? This chapter examines the nature of disorientation, and the processes children go through as they move from disorientation to adaptation.

In Natalie's case, what stood out was how she made use of class activities without, in many cases, understanding the rationale behind them. When she sang, "Five Little Monkeys Sitting in a Tree," she fulfilled Ms. Clark's goal of physical movement and her own presumed goals of enjoyment and shared activity with the group, all without understanding the story behind the song, the narrative which supposedly made the activity meaningful. This and other examples of *rituals without a story* brought out another aspect of adaptation to kindergarten, a distinction between being able to participate in or perform the activities of the classroom and being able to understand or explain them.

As I worked on these aspects of the two cases, I found myself repeatedly drawn back to Koizumi's (2000) article on anchor points in critical transitions, and returned to the literature to learn more about this perspective. This chapter begins with an exposition of a holistic, interactionalistic, systems-oriented approach to development, as employed by Wapner and his colleagues, which forms the ground upon which Koizumi's work on anchor points is built. Next, this perspective is related to the four theoretical perspectives explained in Chapter I, and used to form the basis for a discussion of how Victor and Natalie adapted to the classroom environment.

Holistic, Systems-Oriented, and Interactionalistic Developmental Theory

Approaches to development growing out of the work of Heinz Werner and Seymour Wapner are known by several combinations of the labels holistic, systems-oriented, interactionalistic, organismic, and environmental. Werner (1957) worked to describe how organisms come to function within and adapt to their environments in a

way that would apply to all living organisms, and to phylogeny as well as ontogeny.

Seymour Wapner continued and elaborated upon Werner's work.

The approach is holistic in at least two respects. Werner did not believe language, perception, and cognition should be treated as developing along separate lines, but as being *autonomized* at some point from, "a more primordial soup of affect, perception, and the like." (Glick, 1983, p. 49) He sought to establish how this differentiation occurred, and how these separated functions remained connected to their organic base. Second, It is also holistic in rejecting the treatment of person and environment, or the various aspects of the person (e.g., cognition, affect, perception, imagination) or environment (physical, social, interpersonal) as if they existed in isolation from one another.

The approach is referred to as systems-oriented and environmental because the person is said to function and develop as a total, integrated organism, and as part of a similarly integrated person-in-environment (PE) system. As suggested by sociocultural and ecological approaches, the properties of the organism or the PE system are not inherent in any one of their elements, but are a result of the dynamic interactions among them.

Within this approach, development is described in terms of the organism's growing differentiation, hierarchical organization, and ability to adapt to its environment (Magnusson & Stattin, 2006). Wapner (2000) defined this increasing differentiation along a number of indices: interfused to subordinated, syncretic to discrete, diffuse to articulate, rigid to flexible, and labile to stable.

Optimal development entails a differentiated a hierarchically integrated person-in-environment system with flexibility, freedom, self-mastery, and the capacity to shift from one mode of person-in-environment organization

to another depending on the goals, the demands of the situation, and the instrumentalities available. (Wapner, 2000, p. 9)

The person-in-environment state is taken as the unit of analysis, with regard to three aspects of the person (physical, intrapsychological, and sociocultural), and three aspects of the environment (physical, interpersonal, and sociocultural). The model incorporates many of the insights and interests of both Piagetian constructivism (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) and Vygotskian socioculturalism (Vygotsky, 1978). There is a strong focus on the individual's effort to maintain equilibrium between a finite set of tools and understandings and a changing environment. At the same time, holistic interactionism acknowledges the sociocultural elements within the individual, and the importance of the cultural tools (including conceptual systems) that communities make available.

Figure 10 shows these factors, along with relative levels of development within each. The organism can be described along a scale from reflexive *respondent* (R) through *agency* (A) to being an acculturated *person* (P). The environment with which the organism interacts grows from *ambient* (A) through *habitat* (H) to the *world* (W). As the person-in-environment system develops, instrumentalities go from *inherited body parts* (I), through *tools* (T), to *conceptual systems* (C), while ends move from *humoral states* (H) through *episodic motives* (E), to *long term values* (L). (Wapner, 2000)

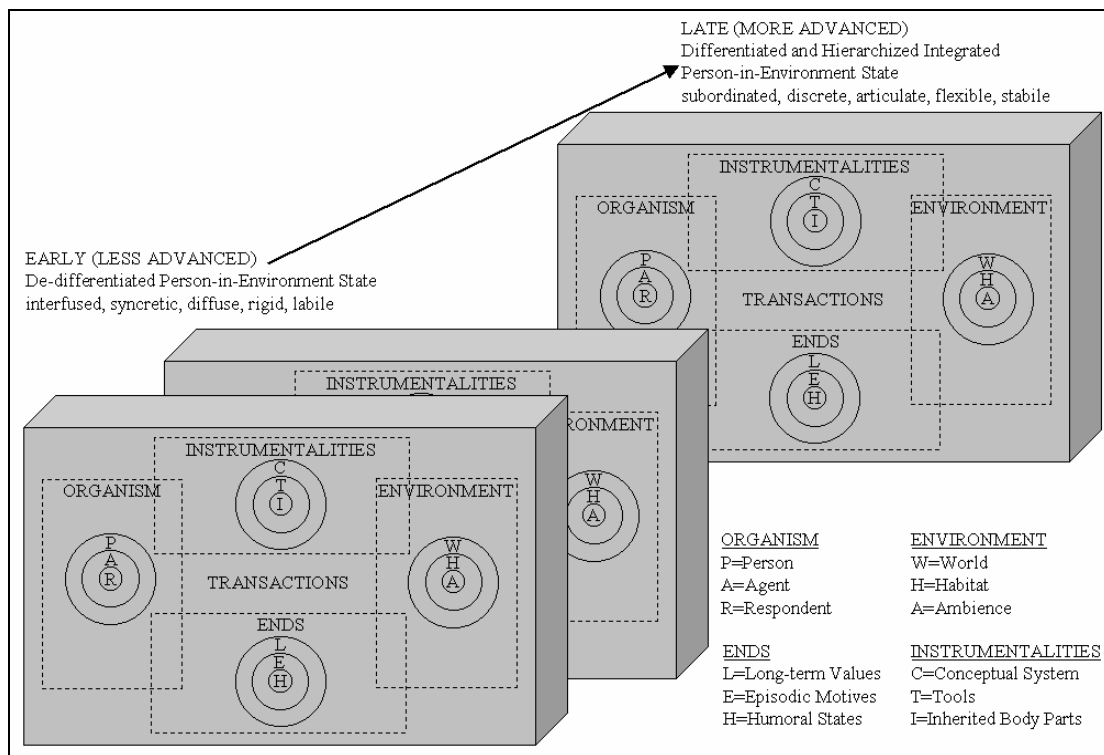


Figure 10. Wapner's depiction of the basic elements of the holistic, developmental systems approach to person-in-environment functioning. Adapted from Wapner (2000).

Transactions among elements in the person-in-environment system are also important to the model. Transactions are the experiences the organism has of its environment, be they cognitive, affective, or valuative, as well as the actions the organism takes within its environment. Personality (identity) and the desire for equilibrium (*allostasis*) give stability, while maturation and experience encourage change. The organism's transactions are most able to adapt and maintain equilibrium when the PE system is both consistent (offers clear patterns of experience) and influencable (allows for the development of efficacy and identity) (Magnusson & Stattin, 2006).

Some events are said to trigger actions to which formative developments have disposed the organism. Within the holistic, systems-oriented perspective, the organism's experience of such events is the central concern, rather than the objective existence of changes. Formative development creates a disposition, a perceived change in environment triggers the disposition, and the resulting changes in one or more elements or subsystems will have an impact on the whole system.

A distinction is made between an environmental change and a *critical transition*, wherein a "perturbation to the person-in-environment system is experienced as so potent that the on-going modes of transacting with the physical, interpersonal, and sociocultural features of the environment no longer suffice." (Wapner, 1981, p. 223). Critical transitions require new ways of seeing the world and functioning in it. Such transitions represent opportunities for system-wide restructuring, *which is the nature of development* from this perspective:

[Individual development is not] a matter of adding new elements to the existing ones in a process of accumulation or acquiring more of the same. Rather, individual development is a continuous process of restructuring, at the subsystem as well as the whole system level, within the boundaries set by psychobiological and environmental constraints." (Magnusson & Stattin, 2006, p. 433)

When a critical transition leaves the individual unable to carry out transactions (to experience and to act), *anchor points* serve to develop the perception and evaluation of the new environment. According to Koizumi, the concept is very broad: "Anchor points can be information, knowledge, skills, family, friends, physical bases for activities, institutions, organizations, etc." (2000, p. 176). Anything, then, that allows the person to get some bearing, to begin to build a cognitive map of the new situation, can be considered an anchor point.

Koizumi compares the concept of anchor points to similar ideas from a variety of disciplines: benchmarks, reference points, standards, landmarks, resources, reference points, and norms. Anchor points perform active cognitive functions, such as helping organize spatial knowledge and estimate distances and directions. Within this definition, cultural tools or mediational means could also be considered anchor points (2000).

One anchor point can also lead to another, as when one enters a group of people guided by a friend, who then introduced others. Koizumi (2000) refers to these as first-, second-, and third-order anchor points, based on the chronological order in which they are acquired. Anchor points can also be ordered by their importance, however, as the second-order friend may become more important in the new context, and would therefore be considered the *primary* anchor point.

Drawing from the holistic, transactionalistic, systems-based perspective, anchor points can be expected to orient the organism as a whole, building connections among all aspects of the individual and all aspects of the environment. While the critical transition may force a wholesale loss of the means for understanding and functioning, the new representations and ways of beings are built gradually, working from one anchor point to another:

Within the limits of inherited dispositions, affective tones become bound to specific contents and actions, and strategies develop for coping with various kinds of environments and situations in a continuously ongoing learning process.

(Magnusson & Stattin, p. 402)

Many other insights and methods have been developed as a part of holistic, systems-oriented, transactionalist developmental theory, but this partial review has presented those elements employed in the analysis of the case studies of Natalie and

Victor. The children's adaptation to kindergarten is described in terms of a critical transition, followed by progressive orientation based on anchor points and connections among experience, cognition, and affect. Attaching meaning to classroom activities is treated as the highest level of acclimation.

From Disorientation to Adaptability and Identity:

The Transition to Kindergarten

What first drew me to holistic, systems-oriented, interactionalist developmental theory was a sense that Koizumi's "anchor points" captured something important about Victor's initial disorientation. I had the feeling he was lost at sea in the confusion of the first day, and that things like the movement songs and Ms. Clark's praise for his "*letras y bolitas*" gave him something to grab a hold of. As I began to read more, I found the holistic approach as described by Wapner served to organize many other facets of the data and reflected my experience as a kindergarten teacher.

I here address the transition to kindergarten for children who experience a critical transition—children who are completely disoriented when they arrive at kindergarten and must build a cognitive map of the new setting from scratch. These are the students most in need of understanding and support, and many children whose transition is easier may nonetheless undergo similar processes in making sense of the new environment.

Victor's case fits these criteria somewhat better than Natalie's, but her silent period suggests a similar inability to act at first, even if she did not demonstrate or report distress. Both children eventually adapted to life in the classroom in ways that reflected their particular needs and resources. This journey from abject disorientation to full adaptation is the idealized object of this analysis. In reality, neither child was ever

entirely without resources or unable to act, nor were they perfectly adjusted in their final states. Through the year, they gradually became oriented and adapted themselves to the new environment. This discussion offers a description of that work of orientation from the perspective of holistic, systems-oriented, interactionist developmental theory.

Three Levels of Person-in-Environment States

Wapner's (2000) description of development in terms of person-in-environment systems, as described previously and depicted in figure 10, suggests three levels of development or states of person-in-environment adaptation. Those levels serve as the basis for this analysis. Each level is described in terms of the organism, environment, ends, and instrumentalities, as shown in figure 11.

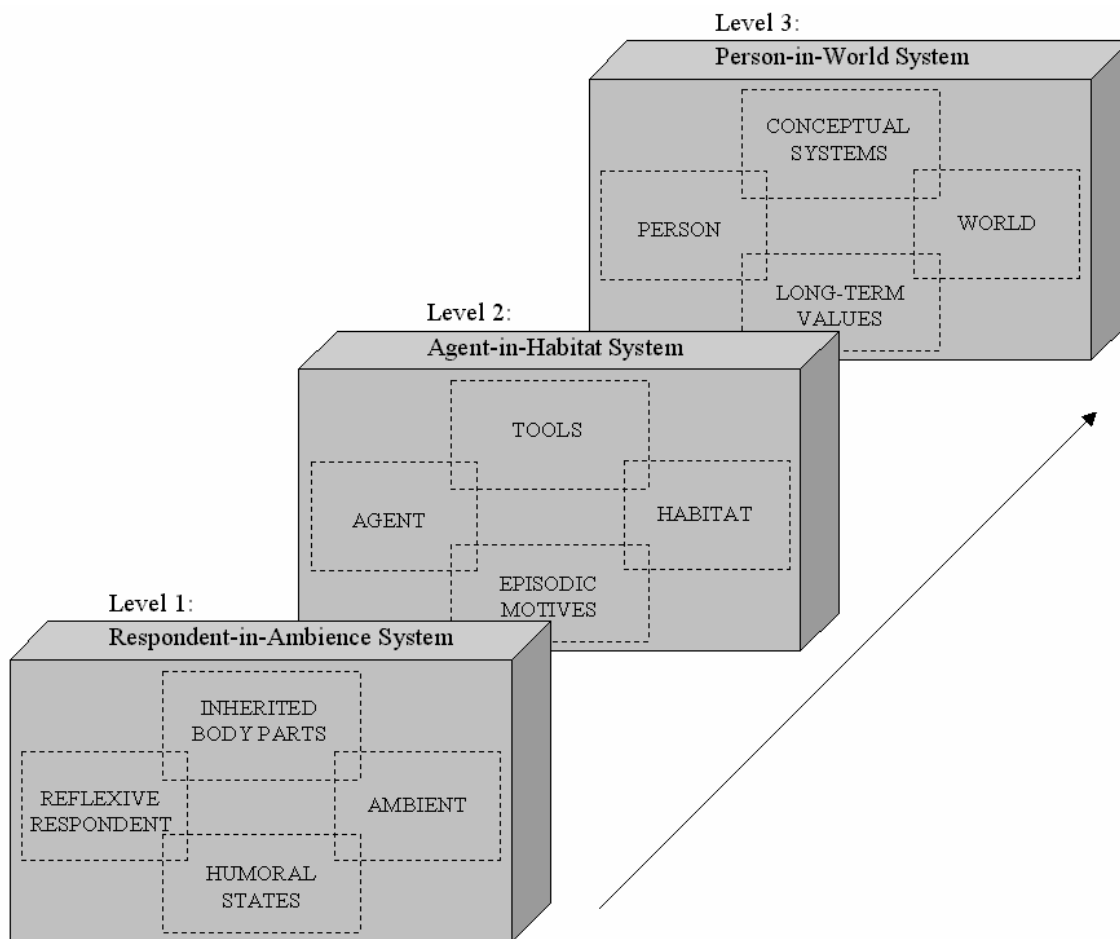


Figure 11. Levels of Person-in-Environment Functioning.

At the simplest level, the respondent-in-ambience system, the organism reacts physically to immediate stimuli driven by the simplest biological drives and dispositions. At the next level of complexity, the organism employs tools within a physical and social environment to satisfy immediate goals. At the third level of complexity, the acculturated person employs conceptual systems in the service of long-term values within an environment that includes sociocultural objects such as rules and institutions.

This scheme is general enough to describe the progression from plant to human, but can also organize our thinking about how children become oriented in kindergarten. At the first level, the respondent-in-ambience system, the student does not yet have the tools needed to act in the new environment. The lack of tools constitutes a lack of agency, and perhaps disorientation. The disoriented child's behavior is not organized by goals beyond immediate physical and emotional drives, because he or she has not yet understood what goods are available in the new setting.

At the second level, as an agent-in-habitat system, the child has learned to participate in classroom activities and successfully employ a variety of classroom means (cultural tools). These means are used in the pursuit of a variety of ends, now that the child is sufficiently oriented to seek physical, and social goods.

At the third level, the person-in-environment system, the kindergartener not only participates in classroom activities, but understands them in terms of the narratives and rationales held by the group. The ends the child seeks now include sociocultural goods, such as a satisfying role within the group, and the means employed to meet these ends also include conceptual or symbolic practices.

The kindergarten child who has experienced a critical transition is in a respondent-in-ambience state, and over time is expected to move into the second and then third level of complexity, yet *the three are not separate, sequential stages in adaptation*. The methods by which a child functions at level 1 are still employed at all levels, and human beings will employ some level 3 strategies upon arrival in the unfamiliar setting. These levels are intended to suggest a progression over time, as the person-in-environment system develops and integrates itself, but not in the strict sense of separate stages of development. They represent higher levels of organization, which one tends to reach in order over time.

Each stage of complexity implies ways of being oriented and processes by which the system becomes more organized. Basic tenets of development from holistic, systems-oriented, interactionalistic theory apply to processes found at every level. Development proceeds through differentiation of the person's mediational means, including their mental representations and ways of being, and the organization and hierarchicalization of those means. Parts of the person-in-environment system develop in relation to each other and in relation to the whole, such that the differentiation or organization of one subsystem often triggers a reorganization of others.

Level 1: The Respondent-in-Ambience

Disorientation. Victor's story in kindergarten began with distress and disorientation. He had neither visited the school nor met the teacher before the first day of school. Arriving in the classroom, he collapsed in tears. For the first morning and parts of the first several days, he panicked when the class began a new activity or prepared to leave the room. Ms. Clark was there as a supportive presence, speaking to

him gently and trying to help him cope. There were also songs, lunch, and presumably several appealing aspects of the new environment to attract him. By the fourth day of school, Ms. Clark said: “He had a great day. He was involved with everything going on...” But at first he despaired. He would get comfortable in one place, with one kind of activity, and then there would be directions and children moving, and again he was lost.

Natalie did not demonstrate or report similar distress, but did appear to spend almost a month in a very reserved state, waiting and watching. Her journey toward adaptation would be one of steady progress from this state toward a position of status among her peers and with the teacher, but at first, she was very shy.

Feeling lost and unable to act is a predictable consequence of entering a new environment in which one’s familiar ways of being are either ineffective or unavailable. It may be felt to a greater or lesser degree by all children starting kindergarten, those who cry as well as those who enjoy themselves and interact from the beginning. Disorientation is a predictable aspect of the transition to kindergarten, and therefore merits close examination.

To be oriented is to have a mental representation of one’s surroundings, and be able to identify one’s position within that system. Space and time are the most concrete dimensions in which humans orient themselves, but the new kindergartener must also represent his or her place within the sociocultural environment: the system of activities, procedures, standards, and values that constitute the culture of the classroom.

According to constructivist theory, humans create generalizations from experience known as *schemata* (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Event representations or *scripts* are considered a type of schema, “a spatially/temporally organized set of

expectations about the actions, actors, and props likely to be present during a given event” (Fivush, 1984). As the individual interacts with the environment, differences between the person’s existing representations and new experiences drive the improvement of the model.

Following a critical transition, as described in holistic, systems-oriented, interactionalistic theory, the person’s modes of transacting do not function. The existing schemata cannot accommodate new experiences. The familiar ways of being do not apply. New schemata and new scripts must be constructed to maintain equilibrium within the person-in-environment system.

Victor’s Initial State. Upon arrival, Victor knew very little about school. He presumably knew he was at school and that he would return home at the end of the day. Upon arriving, he may have quickly understood that there was a seat for him at a particular table, and a place where the group gathered on the rug. He would likely have developed a relative sense of place among several: his seat, the rug, the teacher’s desk, the hook where he left his book bag, and the door to the hallway. He may have had some sense that home was out that door, down a long hallway, and a ride in the car away. (He had not ridden the bus on the first morning.)

Regarding time, Victor may have had some sense in the morning that he had just arrived, or that the day had just started. He may have become hungry during the morning and felt the approach of snack time or lunch. As he moved into the afternoon, he may have had a sense he was nearing the end of the day based on his mental records of the day’s events, on his own fatigue (surely this was enough), or because he had taken lunch to be the mid-point of the day.

Familiarity through Experience. With every moment Victor spent in the classroom, the environment became more familiar to him. As he returned day after day, he would remember progressively more about the physical and temporal structure of his new setting. With repetition, patterns would emerge from his experience. Working at his desk, he would know the window was behind him. Eating lunch, he would know recess was next. Perhaps he would begin to associate the face of one peer with angry outbursts, and the face of another with a time when they colored together. These connections would be made without effort and would result in the gradual construction of a cognitive map of the classroom and an intuitive sense for the daily schedule.

In Natalie's case, seatwork first appears as a general category of activity: "When at school, I am often sent to a table to scribble." The class of scribbling activities is differentiated over time into coloring, drawing, and writing. This does not require that the teacher explain the differences among them nor that Natalie work to make the distinctions. Having recognized "scribbling" as a class of activities, this category likely became part of her cognitive map and helped organize her experience of school. As she saw herself being sent to scribble, participating in scribbling, praised for her scribbling, scribbling with crayons, pencil, or markers, and almost done with her scribbling, the varied types of scribbling would seem to differentiate themselves.

This familiarization with the environment proceeds effortlessly as long as one's experience there is regular and repetitive enough for patterns and categories to emerge. One might keep children from orienting themselves in this way by moving the furniture every night when they went home and never repeating the same activities or sequence, but this level of unpredictability would be difficult to maintain after a couple of days.

The classroom environment is regular and predictable, and kindergarten teachers often make an effort to introduce variation slowly, so that children can become familiar with a basic set of activities and required behaviors before being held responsible for more complex procedures and expectations.

Kindergarten teachers seeking to orient their students do not rely, however, on the intuitive creation of cognitive maps through experience. They carefully name elements of classroom practice and explain required behaviors and the daily routine. Much of this explanation, however, is lost on children who do not understand English. A moment in my day 4 observation comes to mind:

Clark is describing different kinds of activities during worktime.
Victor yawns, looking around.
(field notes, 8/15, day 4)

This suggests that non-English speaking children will rely on the level 1 method of intuitive familiarization through experience while their English-speaking peers are supported in naming aspects of the environment their features and interrelations.

Affective Connections and Anchor Points: The respondent-in-ambience process of building a mental representation of the classroom setting is not a purely intellectual one. Faced with the task of orienting oneself in an unfamiliar environment, the kindergartener cannot attend to everything at once, and both the order in which the child attends to things and their salience in the child's memory are determined by personal, affective connections. These likes and dislikes are the ends of the organism at this stage, the *humoral states* cited in figure 11. The respondent-in-ambience is a passive being, watching and becoming familiar, but also liking and disliking.

Something will stand out in the class. Something the child likes or dislikes will get his or her attention first, and the process of attending to and distinguishing other things will also follow the child's interests and aversions. It might be a physical feature, like a loft or a colorful bulletin board. It could be the teacher or one of the children. It could be an activity, like singing a song together, or an experience, like getting knocked down. Something that catches the child's attention is an *anchor point* only if it also becomes a point of reference in relation to which other aspects of the environment are apprehended.

The process of building a cognitive map of the school environment is here imagined in terms of initial anchor points and the gradual apprehension, organization, and differentiation of other aspects of the environment in relation to them. Central to this approach is interplay between becoming familiar with aspects of the environment through simple repeated exposure, and the forging of personal, affective connections with elements of the environment.

Victor's First Anchor Point. The first anchor point evident in the data on Victor is when he joined in a song on the morning of the first day:

And then at one point he decided to do a song:
 "Five Little Monkeys Swinging from the Tree"
 and, just the.. his face just sort-of lit up.
 He got really excited and,
 was trying to do the motions with us,
 trying to sing along with us.
 And it seemed like that was..
 I don't know if it was necessarily like a connection for him,
 but I think maybe just hearing the music
 and seeing that we were having fun..
 made it more exciting for him.
 (Clark, day 4)

Unable to act, and struggling to accept his situation, Victor saw something in which he wanted to take part. He joined the group⁹ and found it worthwhile.

Victor's pleasant experience with the song (and its accompanying movements) could have forged several connections. The song happened on the rug, with Ms. Clark, in the morning, at circle time, and was performed in unison with his peers. In addition, Victor's attention to and imitation of the teacher was successful in allowing him to participate.

This example suggests the role personal, affective associations play in the construction of a cognitive map of a new environment. Elements of the environment become salient by being pleasing or displeasing to the child, and the attention paid to those elements makes them memorable. After the song, Victor was no longer a boy lost at sea. He had formed ties to Ms. Clark, his peers, the classroom, and to the idea of himself as a student. The environment may still have been threatening and foreign, but now some parts of it made sense.

Victor's initial distress, his time of crying desperately on the first morning, could alternately be considered his first anchor point. The experience was certainly salient and emotionally charged. To qualify as an anchor point, however, that experience would need to have served to organized his further discovery and mapping of the environment. There is some reason to interpret his his distress as leading only to confusion and inaction. Within a couple of days, Victor was happy to be at school, so he could not have

⁹ It is interesting that Ms. Clark says "he decided" to join in the activity. Though I am here describing Victor's experience as one of moving into a very controlling system managed by Ms. Clark, she did, on that first day, allow him to sit on the sidelines until he chose to join the group.

seen it as a place for crying. On the other hand, I have suggested in figure 8 (in Chapter IV) that the avoidance of distress motivated Victor's long-term commitment to attentiveness and to his role as an exemplary student. This suggests it was a negative anchor point that maintained its influence on his adaptation to kindergarten. In Koizumi's (2000) terms, it was a first-order anchor point but not Victor's primary anchor point.

Differentiation. Victor's positive experience with the song led to a number of affective associations with Ms. Clark, activities on the rug, the nature of school, and the efficacy of participating by attending to and imitating Ms. Clark. Further experience would lead him to differentiate among different types of activities. He would find that under certain conditions it was fun to be on the rug, while under others it was not.

To illustrate, figure 12 suggests ways in which Victor's primary anchor point—his experience with the song—and the affective “charges” it gave to several aspects of the classroom environment, might have been differentiated in the following days and weeks. At the top, five aspects of the song activity (the primary anchor point) are suggested. In the following hours, days, and weeks, Victor's understanding of and affective attachment to these several aspects would be differentiated.

On the second day, I saw Victor make two small attempts to walk away from circle time. Each time, Ms. Clark called him and, after a little grunt, he returned. He must have recognized that joining the group, as opposed to sitting apart as he had on the first morning, was not optional. Joining the group and being on the rug were not always pleasurable. Victor liked the songs and stories, but some activities on the rug were

boring. In figure 12 I suggest that as a next step Victor saw rug activities in only these three ways: songs, stories, and boring stuff.

Victor's primary anchor point presumably charged "imitating Clark" as a successful strategy for participation. It would turn out to be useful for copying all sorts of movements, but when Ms. Clark was just talking, there was nothing to imitate. At some point, however, differentiated versions of imitating Ms. Clark became very important to Victor: being attentive and pleasing Ms. Clark.

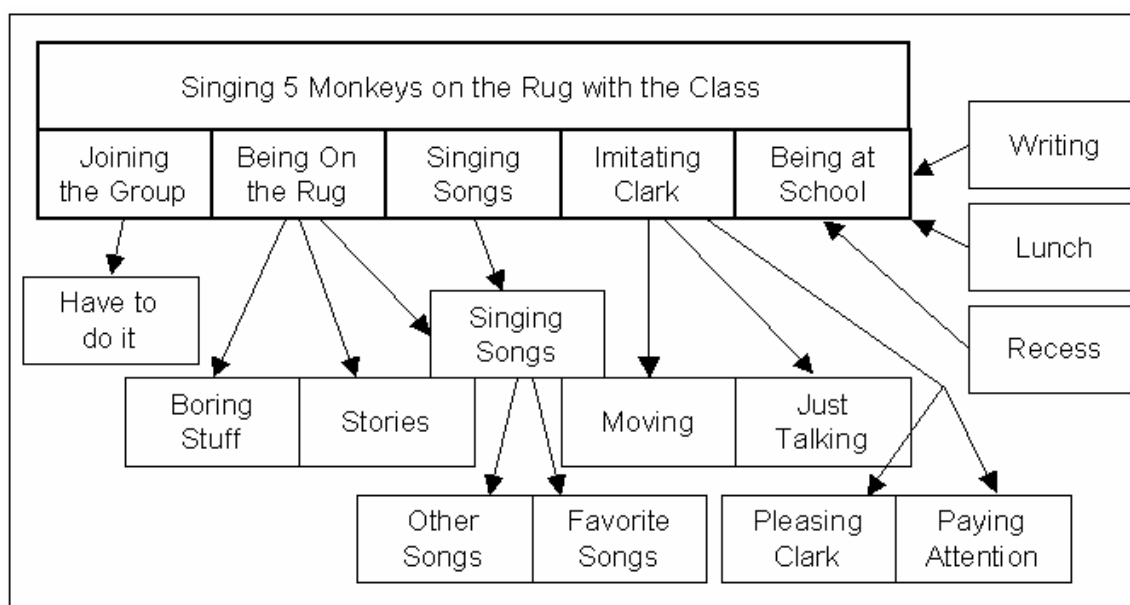


Figure 12. Example of differentiation from anchor point.

The song may have led Victor to feel good about being at school, but so many things happened to him there that in the end the song experience may have been only a small factor (along with writing, lunch, and recess) in Victor's decision that it was good to be at school.

The one element of the original five that was central to Victor's enjoyment, singing songs, would eventually be isolated as the proper object of his affective

connection. Singing songs, being of such interest to him, would soon be understood in more nuanced ways, as Victor found he liked some songs more than others.

As the year progressed, and Victor's mental model of the school environment became more elaborate and organized, it would become more objective in some ways, but it would remain a personal model. All around him, elements of the environment would carry affective charges. There would be the kitchen center, suggesting a connection to home and taking on adult roles; the block center, associated with his relationship to the boys in the class and his gender status among them; his desk, perhaps associated with his skill at writing and the praise it earned him from Ms. Clark. The door would be a pathway to the gym, the water fountain, lunch, and the quiet refuge of the bathroom.

Just as he developed affective associations with physical locations in the room, activities like playing outside or eating lunch would become the salient features in the daily routine. In late morning, he might feel himself to be at some distance past writing, nearing the long pleasure of lunch followed by recess (and therefore by the toy waiting for him in his book bag), but still far from centers and going home to rest. He would be oriented on a plane where the points were personally, emotionally charged.

As part of a respondent-in-ambience system having undergone a critical transition, the kindergartener builds a cognitive map beginning with affectively salient anchor points. This mental model of the classroom environment is built through progressive familiarity and differentiation, and gives the child the ability to name his or her position in time and space and navigate within the new setting.

Level 2: The Agent-in-Habitat System

The new kindergarteners' affective connections become desires and motives, and their growing familiarity with the environment enable them to act on those motives. At the second level of complexity in the organization of the person-in-environment system, the kindergartener becomes an agent, employing new mediational means to navigate the physical and social habitat of the classroom in pursuit of episodic motives.

In Natalie's case, school was boring and she was not motivated to make something of it until she found pleasure in playing with a new friend. This anchor point drove her to seek out friendships and activities that could be enjoyed with friends. She also appeared to develop a desire to win praise from Ms. Clark, and these two motives must have contributed to her growing familiarity with the mediational means of the classroom. In some sense her desires led her to work out how to get things done in the class, but at the same time her developing ability to get things done would likely have fueled her sense of what was possible and, therefore, what goals she should pursue.

The social environment of the classroom was not a static field upon which Natalie and the other children pursued their friendships. Rather, when Natalie played with a friend during recess, an aspect of the environment came into being. The next day other children might have joined in the game Natalie and her friend created, or taken it as a model for their own versions of playing together. Their play, in turn, might result in ways to relate to each other that Natalie later adopts, so that the organisms, their ends, their instrumentalities, and the social environment all grow together.

Similar examples can be extrapolated from Victor's case. At some point early in the year, Victor went from drawing mostly circles during writing time to drawing pictures

of monsters and robots. He may have brought these interests from home, they may have been inspired by the drawings of other children, or they may have begun as fantasy play during recess. Victor's work may have influenced other children's writing and drawing. Kindergarten writers often create similar products day after day, such as writing "I like..." sentences or always drawing a house, a family, and a heart. When one child has an idea like drawing a robot, that idea can propagate on papers throughout the room and for many days into the future. Victor's writing would have been both a product of and a contributor to this type of writing community. Again, environment, organism, instrumentalities, and ends all develop in concert.

At level 1, the kindergartener was primarily an observer. While children certainly comply with many directions and participate in many activities at first, many of these actions are classifiable as reactive. At level 2, the child does not merely passively prefer some aspects of classroom life to others, but sets out to fulfill his or her desires, making changes in the environment. At level 3, the child's understanding of the classroom environment and goal-directed behavior are organized into cohesive wholes.

Level 3: The Person-in-World System

In a person-in-world system, the acculturated person employs conceptual systems in the service of long-term values within an environment that includes sociocultural objects such as rules and institutions. In kindergarten, this means that children understand the school environment through narratives and rationales similar to those of the teacher; make commitments to aspects of their identity (e.g., troublemaker, hard worker); and act as situated elements of the classroom culture.

The contrast between Victor's unstructured life at home and the structure he encountered at school is one of the most dramatic aspects of his story. This contrast likely placed greater demands on Victor's self-control, but also made his life more purposeful. Every hour, he was getting something done. There were assignments to complete and skills to master. There was a constant flow of performances and evaluations, as he colored, as he cleaned up, as he returned to his seat, as he got in line. Victor quickly embraced this system, and worked almost constantly to produce the required behaviors.

His acquisition of the approved means of the classroom, however, was primarily a level two task, a matter of learning how to operate and meet his goals within the new environment. Victor's task at level three was to construct a view of school, its activities, himself at school, and his values that made sense, formed a coherent whole. Level 3 tasks relate to meaning, purpose, narratization, rationalization, and identity. This would be the last step in joining the community of the classroom.

This need to construct an integrated narrative relates to the finding that several activities could be classified as rituals without a story. When a child goes through the motions of an activity but does not have a sense of purpose or meaning, then he or she is not yet functioning at the third level of person-in-environment organization.

Victor quickly learned how he was expected to walk in line: hands at your side, facing the front, on the second tile, and with no talking. He learned to walk without bumping into the person in front of him, or going too slow and leaving a gap. He even learned to bounce and hop a little (when necessary) without violating the parameters for walking in the hall. Several other understandings of walking in the hall, however, either

came late or never for Victor. Here is a list of things of which I suspect Victor was not consciously aware even at the end of the year:

- Ms. Clark has you not talk to avoid disturbing children in other classes;
- Ms. Clark has you keep your hands at your sides to avoid problems created by touching other children or things displayed on the wall;
- Ms. Clark has you walk on the second tile from the wall in order to avoid students making the wall dirty by touching it or taking up too much space in the hall;
- If all classes walk on the right side of the hall, then classes going in opposite directions will not interfere with each other;
- Ms. Clark is sometimes judged by other teachers and her superiors by the degree to which her class walks in a quiet and orderly manner in the hall, and therefore has personal reasons that she wants the line to be a good one.

His knowledge of lines can be seen developing during the year, however. At the very beginning, Victor was troubled when the class lined up because he knew something was changing, but did not know what to expect. Later he understood lines as in terms of their destinations, and so he differentiated among lines that went to lunch, lines that went to recess, and lines that went to the computer lab (which he disliked). The line was then seen as having a purpose. The affective value of a particular line was determined by its destination, rather than by any inherent qualities of the line. This is a case of orientation at a higher level, of an interpretation of phenomena or stimuli based on a mental model of the larger system to which they belong.

In Natalie's case, the same ideas about differentiation can apply to her gradual differentiation of "scribbling." At first, she described the activity in terms of its physical

components: paper, pencils, and crayons. She would later distinguish those tasks where markers were also available. In some cases, however, she may have begun to differentiate seatwork activities based on conceptual categories like those Ms. Clark applied: “This coloring is for word study. That coloring is to illustrate a story.”

From the beginning, Ms. Clark had in mind the purposes of school and the changes she hoped her students would undergo through the year. As the children learned the methods and values of the classroom, they would get closer to her high-level sense of their purpose there, the purpose of school.

The data do not show how Natalie or Victor categorized school late in the year. Neither Victor nor Natalie stated that they came to school to learn, that school was a place where children do X, or that Ms. Clark dedicates her life to helping children. It is possible that neither they nor their relatively mainstream peers make such generalizations at their age, or that if they do, they rarely find reason to reflect on them.

The point at which they almost certainly brought their understandings together was in their images of themselves, their identities. At level two, the agent-in-habitat level of adaptation, one learns to play a number of roles within a large set of activities. From the beginning, these roles are meaningful in relation to the culture of the class. On the first day, when Victor found Ms. Clark approved of his writing, he already saw himself as a good student, as an obedient and capable student. While the three levels of complexity suggest three sequential stages of adaptation in some sense, elements of the highest level are present in the child’s early moves toward orientation. This observation could also apply to Victor’s first characterization of his school experience and his role there: “You left me.”

Later in the year, Victor's identity as an exemplary student in the class, always to be relied upon to follow direction, likely structured his experiences, actions, and relationships in a number of ways. This persona was something Victor was committed to, a matter of his long-term values. Thus, every opportunity to follow directions and be recognized was a chance to both enjoy and reaffirm his status. This place within the sociocultural order of the class would also have affected which children came to play with him, and with what intentions they arrived. "If you want to live on the edge, go play with Jordan, but if you want to serve Ms. Clark and be recognized, stand alongside Victor."

Natalie's long-term commitment seems to have been to her identity as a social creature. In our follow-up interview, Ms. Clark described Natalie's way of carrying herself during the following year as, "a little diva." She seemed to always be waving and smiling at someone. During the year of the study, Natalie chose activities that she could do together with other children (mostly girls). The most prominent of these was the activity she invented together with another girl, walking around with a pad and asking people questions. This role gave her reason to approach anyone in the class and start a conversation. "What do you want to eat?" she would ask, or, "What's your name?" Over and over again, she returned to this role at center time. It must have been very close to her general sense of who she was at school, and who she wanted to be.

In both cases, the conclusion from Chapter IV still holds true, that each child found a configuration of ways of being and ways of constructing their lives at school that suited their resources and desires. In both cases, the journey from disorientation to adaptation was a matter of interrelated development among organism, instrumentalities,

ends, and the environment. There was a general progression through the three levels of adaptation and from the physical through the psychological and social and finally encompassing the sociocultural. On the other hand, elements of all these stages and levels were present from the beginning. I believe holistic, systems-oriented, interactionalistic theory provides an apt lens through which to view the cases of these two children, and from which to name patterns of experience and behavior that apply to many children undergoing the transition to kindergarten.

Conclusions: Returning to the Research Questions

This study was organized by the ideals of groundedness and a focus on the perspectives of the focal children. It addressed three interrelated questions:

1. What were the most salient aspects of the transition to kindergarten for these Mexican immigrant children in an English-oriented U.S. public school?
2. How can their experience best be characterized or understood?
3. What challenges and supports had the greatest effects on their transition experience?

To answer the first question, the findings in Chapter IV were structured around the aspects of the experience that were most salient for the children. In Victor's case, I have focused attention on his initial disorientation, his strategy of attentiveness, and his role as exemplary student, but this is not meant to minimize the other aspects of kindergarten that he found important: playing, eating, stories, and songs. Similarly in Natalie's case, the findings presented in Chapter IV suggest a number of salient aspects. Many of these can be seen as part of her orientation toward friends and the teacher, but

clearly this was not the key to all her interests. She was eager to talk about eating and coloring, and must have enjoyed her status as a successful student.

There is a long list, then, of "salient aspects" of the experience, as shown in Chapter IV. In response to the second research question, Victor's attentiveness and Natalie's orientation toward friends emerged as organizing principles. They explained and organized much of the data. The idea of disorientation and anchor points led to the higher-level analysis in Chapter V, wherein the data from the two cases is described in terms of a journey from disorientation toward adaptation. This method of describing their experiences is well-suited to the data and at the same time is compatible with the both Piagetian constructivism and Vygotskian socioculturalism. Holistic, systems-oriented, interactionist theory is here employed to incorporate these understandings, to describe the child seeking equilibrium between experience and understanding by acquiring tools to operate in a new context. Given the effectiveness of this approach in describing these cases and its congruence with the other theoretical approaches employed here, this view of the transition to kindergarten as a journey of adaptation offers a promising way to consider similar cases.

The third question suggested a division of the children's experiences into positive and negative categories: challenges and supports. The challenges the children faced followed the theoretical predictions: understanding the rules and routines of classroom life and finding roles for themselves. Several aspects of Ms. Clark's practice stood out as supports. She was warm and welcoming, and concerned with their emotional well-being. She organized activities that the children found enjoyable and that allowed them to participate from the first day of school. Though Natalie and Victor shared many of the

same challenges and resources, they found very different ways to support themselves. These supports were not present in the environment, as the phrasing of the question implies. Rather, they emerged within the person-in-environment system of each child.

Chapter VI: Limitations and Implications

Limitations

The primary limitations of this study involve lost opportunities for further data collection, the fact that most analysis occurred after data collection had ended, and the difficulty of understanding Mexican culture as an outsider. There were also limitations related to the selection of the participants and setting.

Other Types of Data

Other data might have illuminated important aspects of the two cases. It may have been of great value to interview the families and children before school started, and perhaps observe them both at home and as they (at least in Natalie's case) attended "sneak-a-peek." This would have provided a better image of their home life and of the impressions and expectations parents and children held before visiting the school. These interviews were not conducted because permission to perform the study was not received from the school system until the afternoon before the first day of school. An earlier application for that permission might have prevented this problem.

Observation of the students during a wider variety of school activities would have also been beneficial. Students might have very different ways of interacting and constructing their school identities on the playground or at lunch. Observations during the participants' daily ESOL class might have revealed issues related to their use of Spanish at school and the way they understood the language shift involved in their

transition. My duties as a teacher at the school prevented me from carrying out these more extensive observations.

My duties as a teacher also meant that most of the analysis was done after the school year was over, and completed over a year later. This limited the extent to which the constant comparative method could be applied. While the content of early interviews and observations indeed informed later interviews and observations, higher levels of analysis did not. If, for example, the descriptions of the children's path toward orientation had been completed by the middle of the school year, aspects of that model could have been checked through targeted interviews and observations. As it is, the refinement of the theory will have to occur in later studies.

Cross-Cultural Issues

My knowledge of Spanish allowed me to interact with the focal children and their families, but any number of cultural differences may have diminished my understanding of them, or their understanding of me. If I had grown up in the same town as Natalie's mother, I would be able to find more meaning in her vocal inflections, her gestures, and her references to terms or discourses common there. If I had worked with Victor's father, I would have a better understanding of the role Victor's school experience played in his life. These hypothetical illustrations suggest some of the ways I was not optimally prepared to communicate with these children and their parents. I had, however, been speaking Spanish for some time and in a number of contexts. I had visited Mexico and read about Mexican culture. I had also interacted with a number of Mexican immigrant families as a teacher.

Ideally, the researcher for a similar project would be a member of both cultures: the American school and the Mexican home, as well as a trained researcher. Given that this ideal is a rare combination, other strategies could serve to bring together these qualities. A greater attempt could be made to involve the parents of the children in the collection and organization of the data. Another member of the Mexican immigrant community to which the parents belong could be an assistant to the researcher, sitting in on interviews and observations act as a sort of mediator. Such an informant might be able to offer insights into the meaning of children's behaviors in school or call attention to misunderstandings between the researcher and the parents.

As a non-native speaker of Spanish, questions also arise about the quality of transcriptions and translations of interviews conducted in Spanish. I attempted to produce complete verbatim transcripts for all interview audio recordings. This was a simple matter for the teacher interviews, but the family-child interviews were challenging. In many cases, the quality of the recordings was low, with adult responses being overwhelmed by children playing. Also, the families' dialects of Spanish included vocabulary, idioms, and phrasing unfamiliar to the researcher. As a result, there are regular gaps in those transcripts that in some cases must have obscured noteworthy comments. Throughout the processes of transcription and translation, I preferred to leave a blank than to write something of which I was not sure. This led to transcripts that I consider highly reliable, but at the cost of some loss of data.

Selection of Participants and Setting

I made the decision to study two boys who did not have older siblings or English in the home because each of these characteristics predicts a more difficult transition. The

beginning of the study was delayed, however, and I was not able to select children prior to their being placed in classes. This led to the selection of Victor, who fit all the criteria, and Natalie, who did not. Natalie was female, and had an older sister who had attended school. Her case was of interest, and may have been as informative as any built around a child matching the desired specifications.

The effort to select a boy as the second focal child also delayed Natalie's selection, so that she was not observed until the 6th day of school, and the first interview at her home was on the 8th day. Ms. Clark, Natalie, and her parents all described Natalie's experience during the first week of school, but observations during her initial experienced were sorely missed.

Ms. Clark's classroom was chosen for the study based on my impressions of her as a capable and confident teacher and her expressed willingness to participate. Her assignment to a class of all EIP (below grade level) and majority ESOL (non-English speaking) students was less than ideal for the purposes of the study, however. Victor and Natalie might have had very different transition experiences if they had been in a "regular" classroom, with more English-speakers and children who were more prepared academically and behaviorally for kindergarten. Most of all, if either child were the only Spanish speaker in the class, one of two, or one of three, their relationships with the teacher, with the class as a whole, with each other, and with societal views of English and Spanish might have all been different.

Implications

The study's findings support a number of implications for practice and research. Most of all, they offer a way to think about how kindergarteners orient themselves in the

classroom environment and how they could be better supported in these efforts. Ms. Clark's welcoming, appreciative attitude toward children is recommended, as are her inclusion of activities that are accessible to non-English speakers. Several recommendations for research and practice are made in relation to children's dispositions as introverts or extraverts. This study's implications for research on performance orientations and cultural difference are discussed, followed by issues related to the placement of children in kindergarten classes. The chapter concludes with a reminder that the transition to kindergarten is a unique process requiring unique solutions for each child.

Supporting Kindergartener's Orientation Process

Many entering kindergarteners collapse in tears, exhibiting symptoms of distress similar to those of Victor. According to the interpretations offered in Chapter IV, Victor's distress was a product of his disorientation and his separation from his mother. His disorientation might have been greatly diminished if Victor had attended the school's "sneak-a-peek" event before the first day of school. If he had met Ms. Clark and found some aspects of the classroom promising, his sense of separation might also have been more manageable.

One step schools and teachers can take is to expand their efforts to inform parents about "sneak-a-peek" and similar orientation activities and encourage them to attend. Teachers could contact parents by phone or letter and attempt to secure a commitment to attend. Schools could offer more than one opportunity for parents and children to visit the teacher and the classroom. Most efforts along these lines would require that class lists are made available at least a week before the first day of school, and would place

greater demands on teachers and administrators who have a limited time to prepare for the start of classes. These resources can only be marshaled if the child's visit to school is considered a critical aspect of the transition to kindergarten.

If children's orientation within the school context is understood through the holistic, systems-oriented, interactionalistic approach presented in Chapter V, as a matter of progressively building cognitive maps and developing agency and meaning, then ways to accommodate these processes become apparent. Teachers and schools can intentionally create potential anchor points for the child during the initial visit and when school begins. In my own practice, I made a sun to hang outside my door that stood out perpendicular to the wall. Since the children can see the sun from the time they enter the hallway where the classroom is located, it formed an easy anchor point with which to begin orienting themselves in the school and helped solve the problem of navigating from the point where they get off the buses to my classroom.

For the initial visit or "sneak-a-peek," the most important connection for children to make is to the teacher. During these events, teachers often need to make sure the parents receive a large number of informational handouts and complete several forms. They often need to find out whether the child will ride the bus, bring a lunch, or attend the after-school program, and help parents work out the details of any of these that apply. Amid these many responsibilities, the need to make a personal connection with the child can lose its primacy. Schools and teachers should seek ways to relieve teachers of some of these duties, and focus their attention on starting a relationship with the child.

Planning for the initial visit could also include the preparation of several likely anchor points. Teachers can identify the aspects of their classroom that: 1) seem the most

appealing to students, most likely to make them want to come to school; and 2) best serve to orient them within the new environment. If a teacher wants students to see themselves as readers and writers, aspects of the classroom that draw the children's attention to these aspects of classroom life should be emphasized. If the teacher wants dramatic play to be the center of the children's understanding of classroom life, then "home living," puppet, and "dress-up" centers should be prominent in their physical presentation and in any "tour" the children are given.

Based on the finding that new kindergarten children may first understand classroom activities in simple terms related to their locations and the materials involved, teachers could introduce activities in a way that reflects this gradual differentiation. One might first teach the children general procedures for all tasks that involve working at a table with paper, pencils, and other supplies, and then introduce different kinds of working at the table with paper as variations in those procedures. An examination of kindergarten classrooms at the beginning of the school year would likely show that many teachers already begin with general procedures and then introduce variations, out of the necessity of teaching the most essential procedures first. The holistic view of kindergarteners' efforts to orient themselves presented here, however, gives a different rationale for these practices, and could result in different schemes of generalization and differentiation.

Research into the efficacy of any of these suggested practices could support their use or lead to the creation of alternative transition support practices. A question raised but not answered by this study concerns the goals and evaluations of such practices.

There would appear to be some intrinsic value in avoiding moments of extreme distress at

the beginning of kindergarten, but it is not clear how harmful these temporary states are. In Victor's case, his initial distress might be considered an anchor point, and as such may have contributed to his exaggerated need to perform well for Ms. Clark. The differences between Victor's home and school environments, however, seemed to call for a critical transition. An initial shock might be inevitable under such conditions, and might even be construed as a productive part of the transition process, as "hitting bottom" is sometimes considered a beneficial experience in recovery from addiction.

For another child, an initial anchor point of distress and fear might become an organizing principle for an oppositional school identity. While neither child in this study exhibited disobedient or otherwise disruptive behaviors, many kindergarteners do, and those challenges are more salient for kindergarten teachers (though not necessarily more important) than those faced by the Victor and Natalie. It would be valuable to investigate how initial distress might contribute to long-term problems in adapting to school. Quantitative studies could establish the degree of association found between first day distress and later adaptation to school, providing guidance in determining whether greater resources should be allotted to support the initial orientation of kindergarteners. Case studies of children whose transitions were more problematic than those of Natalie and Victor would also be valuable, to identify possible obstacles or turning points in the adaptation process.

The treatment of the transition to kindergarten in terms of orientation (as seen from a holistic, systems-oriented, interactionalist perspective) could serve as a framework for future studies. In an effort to explain the maladaptation of some kindergarteners, the perspective offers a way to describe the "historical" process by which student

understandings of school and student identities are built. It suggests that early impressions of school may organize the construction of later understandings, and therefore be critical.

The holistic, systems-oriented perspective also offers a way to describe child development as a process in which child, environment, ends, and instrumentalities develop interactively. This system would allow explanations of how a change in one aspect of the person-in-environment system, such as a new tool or end being introduced into the culture of a classroom, can affect all other aspects of the system.

This perspective also accommodates the four perspectives invoked in Chapter I: ecological theory, sociocultural theory, constructivist theory, and identity theory.

Holistic, systems-oriented, interactionalistic developmental theory manages to forefront both the situated and the equilibrium-seeking aspects of the individual, and as such constitutes a serious attempt to form a grand, unified theory of child (and adult) development. I encourage other researchers to study and employ this theory.

A Welcoming, Appreciative Teacher

A number of elements of Ms. Clark's practice appeared valuable to student orientation and adaptation in both cases. Ms. Clark allowed the children some leeway in complying with her rules and directions. She allowed Victor to sit apart on the first day, letting the activity attract him. She allowed Natalie regular lapses in obedience, allowing her a few extra moments to finish her work. A more authoritarian approach would likely have resulted in somewhat greater compliance with classroom policies, but would have cost something in terms of the relationship Ms. Clark had with the students. She made the rules, but was willing to accommodate some of their desires, and was patient in

seeking compliance. This presumably gives the students a sense of being valued by the teacher, of having a voice in the creation of school life.

Ms. Clark was also welcoming in her acceptance of a wide range of student efforts. When non-English speaking students made unintelligible or disconnected contributions to group discussions, Ms. Clark recognized them as valid. When Victor wrote by filling his paper with circles, she also recognized this as good work. Ms. Clark treated her students as competent and productive, even when no objective criteria could support this judgment. She helped her students see themselves as competent and productive, which may have helped them succeed.

Accessible Activities

I was surprised at how much Victor and Natalie were able to participate in class from the beginning of the year. It seems likely that non-English speaking children would be left out of many activities, either because those activities depended upon language (such as listening to stories in English) or because the instructions and explanations were given in English. The songs with movements offered excellent anchor points for these children. The songs were fun; the children could participate the first time they were introduced. The songs appealed to a wide range of interests and dispositions, since they included singing, dancing, drama, and stories. The songs served as group-building rituals, because they had a regular form and involved moving and singing in unison.

Natalie and Victor could also participate in center time, recess, lunch, naptime, and coloring. On the second day, I saw Victor leaning over to get a better view of the picture book Ms. Clark was reading. There were only a few occasions when I thought that one or both of the children were left out of lessons, unable to participate or to

understand. The most striking examples were a pair of social studies lessons that depended on concepts delivered through language.

These findings raised the possibility of evaluating lessons or activities on their level of accessibility for non-English speakers. Once a system for rating the accessibility of activities is created, accessibility could be compared in different teacher's classrooms. This might mean being able to say that Ms. Clark's class was 85% accessible, whereas only 30% of the activities in a neighboring class might be accessible. Mapping out the day in these terms might make clear, for example, that the morning offered many opportunities for non-English speakers to participate, while the afternoon did not. Such an evaluation process could produce a scheme to differentiate among instructional methods and activity types in terms of their accessibility, so activities found to be less accessible could be adapted to enhance accessibility.

The realization that non-English speaking children were able to participate in and enjoy activities that I would have thought were inaccessible to them led me to question my beliefs about what English speaking children understand. It called my attention to a dichotomy between the teacher's sense that he or she has given directions in the form of spoken language, and the way students—American, English-speaking students—understand and react to those directions. It seems possible that like their non-English speaking peers, they rely on the teacher's tone and gestures, what the other children do, and their own expectations for what the teacher wants. Given that these resources allow a child to demonstrate participation and even understanding in many cases, their participation constitutes questionable evidence that children listen to and process the teacher's words. Attention to this question on the part of teachers and researchers could

lead to a more precise sense of what role spoken directions and explanations play in kindergarteners' efforts to understand and participate.

Introverts and Extraverts in Kindergarten

Ms. Clark's comments demonstrated one way kindergarten teachers often think about the flow of their day. She worried that sitting still put heavy demands on the children's patience and self-control, and so planned her day so that periods of sitting still were broken by opportunities to move. In this view, the need to move is seen as gradually building in children as they sit still, such that if not allowed to move, their tension builds and they are progressively inclined to "wiggle."

In Chapter IV, I characterized Victor as an introvert who was fatigued by spending his day in the very public and social atmosphere of the classroom. This suggests another way teachers might think about the flow of their daily schedule in kindergarten. Like sitting still, social interaction may be unduly tiring for some children if not interspersed with quieter activities in which the children work--or have the option to work-- alone. Naptime and independent reading stand out as quiet activities that involve little social interaction, but many other activities could be organized with social or solitary options. During writing or reading tasks, children could choose to work with others or work alone. Quiet corners or solitary desks could be a regular feature of classroom procedure, for children who wish to work alone. Ms. Clark's comment that Victor sought refuge in the bathroom is also a familiar occurrence in kindergarten, and this suggests a desire for a quiet space is common.

For Natalie, friendships seemed to form the basis for her process of adaptation. She was bored until she made her first friend, and then she liked to go to school.

Kindergarten teachers should be aware that social interactions among the children may play a major part in their development as students and their interest in participating in school activities. Students in Ms. Clark's class had many opportunities to work and play together, and this was important in Natalie's case. Ms. Clark limited the students' ability to work together, however, by assigning their seats at tables. Natalie was not happy about being at a table with all boys, and if she had been allowed to choose her tablemates, she would have chosen to be with friends. In my experience, well-behaved children often serve as "spacers" to separate children who are not as well behaved. This seems necessary to maintain order in the class, but the example of what friends meant to Natalie supports the view that some children benefit greatly from being allowed to work with friends. Perhaps this benefit should not be sacrificed as a means to keeping unruly students under control.

Natalie went through a silent period and was reluctant or unable to interact or express herself at the beginning of the year, as is common for many second language learners (Cummins, 1998). This was presumably because she had not learned what cultural tools would function in the classroom. Researchers and teachers might develop methods to support greater participation for students in this position early in the year. Skills believed to be central to more mature and fulfilling participation, such as peer-group entry tactics (Beilinson, 2003; Cohen, 1994), could be named and taught to the class as a whole or to a small group. Teachers could also help friendships come into being by seating children next to likely candidates, or suggesting that they play together. According to Erwin (1993), proximity is the key to friendship. All of these practices are found in some form in many kindergartens, but the identification of specific activities in

which children will be encouraged to participate and specific skills that would enable their participation could make such efforts more effective.

In the cases of Victor and Natalie, Victor appeared to choose a kindergarten role with little peer interaction, while Natalie chose a role in which it was central. Further research could seek insights about the conditions under which a student's preference for working alone should be respected, and times when children should be encouraged to interact more.

In future studies, data could be collected on a group of friends in kindergarten. The paths of Victor and Natalie almost never crossed in this study. A study of a group that interacted often might show ways their relationships contributed to their adaptation to kindergarten and their development of skills and identities.

Performance Orientation (Teacher Pleasing)

Performance orientation, when students are motivated by external rewards such as praise from the teacher rather than their own interests or learning goals, is considered maladaptive (Carr, 2001; Mulhern, 2002; Smiley and Dweck, 1994). It is preferred that students orient themselves toward learning or achievement, so that learning is intrinsically motivated and serves authentic purposes. Victor took found intrinsic pleasure in a number of activities at school, but his dedication to pleasing Ms. Clark seemed excessive. In his case, this is interpreted as a strategy and an identity he adopted in response to a number of conditions: the danger of disorientation, inability to understand the teacher's language, the teacher as a means to participation in classroom activities, and as a means to earn praise. Victor attended to Ms. Clark for reasons other

than performing good behavior, but seemed to rely on performances of good behavior to maintain his role as exemplary student.

Ms. Clark could have weaned Victor from this practice, by offering less praise for performed behaviors. It was not clear, however, to what extent his extrinsic performance orientation was problematic, because it supported a positive student identity. If “exemplary student” was no longer available, perhaps Victor would have identified more strongly with other aspects of his personality or his accomplishments in the class. The dichotomy between performance and learning orientations deserves further study, and the way children commit to these orientations in kindergarten is of special interest, since those commitments may have long-term effects.

Cultural Difference

I had hoped through this study to identify some aspects of Mexican culture that affected the transition to kindergarten for Mexican immigrant children so that becoming aware of them would help teachers support these children. These cultural differences did not emerge from the data, but I believe that some are there to be discovered. Further case studies of children outside the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic mainstream could identify specific cultural clashes. Such discoveries allow researchers and teachers to become more sensitive to the kinds of differences in children’s ways of being that may affect their education.

The Formation of Kindergarten Classes

This study did not allow comparisons to other classes not classified as EIP or ESOL, but Ms. Clark’s testimony suggests that the practice of forming classes consisting entirely of children performing below grade level expectations may be detrimental to

their academic achievement. Her comments focused on the lack of academically strong students and lack of well-behaved students. To my knowledge, there were no public debates or explicit statements of policy that preceded the formation of classes according to these criteria, which run counter to popular and professional objections to “tracking.”

Research on the effects of creating classes with high proportions of non-English speakers or children who are not “ready” for kindergarten could support Ms. Clark’s contentions and serve as evidence in policy debates. That such policies can be put in place without public debate (or outcry) is also worthy of study.

Placement Decisions

I am still a kindergarten teacher, and in recent months, as I worked through these findings and analysis, I found them applicable to the process of making placement decisions for entering kindergarteners with special needs. During the past year, I participated in three Individual Education Plan (IEP) placement meetings, where special education teachers, parents, and administrators decide how the child will be served. In all three cases, the findings and conclusions of this study guided my thinking about what was best for the children.

My belief that the child’s personal connection to the teacher would form a critical anchor point repeatedly led me to suggest to parents that they arrange a special meeting between their child and the kindergarten teacher. I also recommended teachers who seemed most likely to form personal attachments to children with differences or disabilities.

Some of the guidelines that served to ensure compliance with federal and state law at IEP meetings made it difficult to apply the insights provided by the study. In an

effort to arrange for students the *least restrictive environment*, we were obliged to consider each child's placement in terms of discrete segments of the school day. Many children are placed in small-group settings for subjects like reading or math, but return to the regular classroom for lunch, P.E., and other activities. Making decisions about the child's schedule one segment at a time, however, meant there was never a time when the character of the whole day was considered. A child could be assigned to several different settings and teachers, which, given the importance of the child's relationship with the teacher demonstrated by this study, would appear detrimental to the process of orientation. If orientation and a close relationship with the teacher are important, as this study and other literature suggest, then the placement process should allow for the inclusion of those factors in determining how to best serve children.

No One Transition to Kindergarten

The cases of Natalie and Victor illustrate that the nature of the transition to kindergarten depends on an array of factors. Each child has a unique set of needs and resources, and employs strategies for orientation and adaptation that reflect the child's individual qualities and situation within the new environment. Teachers and researchers who conceptualize and plan the transition to kindergarten should be careful not to imagine a single set of skills and orientation needed for success in kindergarten. What for one child is a brilliant adaptation might for another be a symptom of serious maladjustment. Whatever ways of being or identity a child adopts in kindergarten should be seen as a product of that child's particular needs and resources. Many students will not adapt as well as Natalie and Victor, and may need help modifying strategies that go

awry. The goal, however, should be an individual solution rather than a programmatic one, and should address children's adaptation in terms of orientation, culture, and identity.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Samples of Field Notes

Sample 1 of 3: 8/23/05

1

FIELD NOTES

date	8/23	activity	persons present
time	1:03		
location	Clark's class		
		Health lesson	13 students
			Ms. Clark

observations	reflections
<p>1:04 Just seated on rug. Natalie sits in back, legs crossed. Several are talking. Clark: Going to close eyes and count to 3 Class got quiet Special Me song Natalie follows motions On the 3rd chorus she moves her lips for the first part "Press pause." Natalie looks at me. Natalie and David raise hands.</p> <p>Clark goes on to introduce topic: All are Special Clark calls on David. He comments on picture. Other hands go up. Clark says "hands down" Clark starts poem: two little eyes that open and close... Natalie points at eyes/ears/nose, never taking eyes off of Clark.</p>	

1:08 2nd time through, Natalie starts looking at and touching her own legs, lifts shirt and looks at belly, then back on task after 10-15 seconds.

Brandon asks to go to bathroom.

Clark says "you can go in just a minute"

He goes toward door but stops to ask "Can I go now?"

She says no and he returns.

Natalie still watching, raises hand.

2-3 other hands are up.

"Yes, Natalie, thank you for raising your hand"

Natalie: "unintelligible?"

Clark: Not now...

Discussing poster: Clark calls for observations, raised hands.

How are children the same?

Natalie speaks to Nora, shaking her head

Refusing to play/talk?

Interrupted: Mr. Brown

1:15 Natalie puts fingertip in mouth, looks at wall/ceiling, feeling teeth with finger.

I don't think Natalie has much idea what the theme is. Song had movements pointing to body parts, now poster with group of smiling kids.

"Sophia you can go back and sit at your seat, please"

Working on defining "special".

Natalie looking down.

Clark has all stand for 5 Monkeys song.

Natalie shakes hips and moves to front, smiles doing motions, watching Clark.

David drops to floor.

"David, go have a seat please."

1:19 Natalie watches Clark- eyes wide

Shake-em shake-em shake-em...

1. Way to participate; vs.
2. Way to receive content

Mario: I'm not special because my mom and dad don't listen to me.

Ask me how to say "important" in spanish.

Clark continues lesson about all being special for different reasons.

Clark is having a harder time than I've seen. A combination of being late in the day and having a conceptual set of objectives?

"If you have a friend in Ms. Clark's class, raise your left hand."

Repeat, pledge to be best friends with each other.

I ask Natalie in Spanish if she liked the lesson and if she understood what they talked about. She smiled and nodded.

1:25

I like the pledge.

Samples of Field Notes

Sample 2 of 3: 9/02/05

FIELD NOTES			1
date 9/2	activity	persons present	
time 1:00	cleaning up	other class leaving	
location Clark's class	bingo	Ms. Ford's class to visit 1 in O.R.	
observations		reflections	
<p>Otehr clas is playing/cleaning up bingo as I arrive.</p> <p>Clark's class is arriving at the door.</p> <p>Lupe is in the doorway saying "bye bye bye bye.." as they leave.</p> <p>Natalie is 2nd and waves, smiling at Lupe.</p> <p>6 of Clark's clas come in and get book bags.</p> <p>Clark asks them to hurry because another class is coming.</p> <p>Natalie is putting on a jacket with a hood.</p> <p>1:02 Clark calls students to put bookbags on side of class.</p> <p>Natalie is packing bookbag.</p> <p>Natalie leaves bookbag in a pile, wearing jacket.</p> <p>Ms. Ford come sto door to check plans to work on books together.</p> <p>Ford's class enters as Clark's are at circle corner.</p> <p>Bring VCR tape boxes with crayons inside.</p> <p>Clark and Ford confer about how to organize.</p> <p>Clark begins to introduce</p> <p>Ford gets book, both call for order.</p> <p>Clark reads chart with class echoing (Community Helpers)</p> <p>Natalie is seated just below/in front of chart, twists to see and makes some effort to echo names/titles.</p> <p>(see diagram on original notes)</p> <p>Ms. Ford introduces and reads "Community Helpers" by Rockwell.</p> <p>1:09 Natalie removes Jacket</p>		<p>Jacket? Did it rain?</p>	

She is sitting cross-legged, facing toward Ms. Ford. Her head rolls forward to fall against two hands (resting on elbows) then back, to look up at ceiling.

Next touches behind ear, looking to side. Touches lips, looks around. Looks at book for a moment then all around. Palm is under chin with fingertips at mouth. Looks at book.

1:11 Ms. Ford asks "How many of you have seen the crossing guard" and 1/3 raise their hands.

Natalie raises her hand, sucking fingertip of right index finger.

She reaches up to put her hand on the chalk tray, looks at book, hands down, looks around.

1:13 Natalie looking around, looks at Clark, looks down, looks at kids, yawns, looks at book.

Ford's reading involves whole class and independent comments and responses.

1:15 Natalie pursing lips, looking around.

Ford calls on class to close eyes.

Natalie, staring up, doesn't notice.

Most raise hands to tell what they'd like to be and Ford calls on individuals.

Natalie doesn't raise hand, looks around at students.

Ford explaining how to work on books.

Clark sends kindergarteners to seats, promising to bring books.

Natalie stands, takes two hesitant steps.

She goes to seat with jacket, sits, opens book Clark has left there.

1:19 I sit with Natalie.

She shows me her book which has 2 pages complete.

Seating at table:

Braxton	Juan (absent)
Natalie	David

(01-06) Reminds me of feeling spaced out at brother-in-laws when I couldn't follow the long conversations in Spanish. Not knowing the language makes you detached.

Maybe confused between get book vs. go to seat

Braxton says she can't.
Natalie shows me 2 pages.
They say: "cake baker" and "teacher" but she shows drawings and says both are teacher.
I ask her what she wants for th next page and she says "maestra" again. I say no and she insists.
Ms. Clark passes and I tell her Natalie wants to put teacher again. Clark says OK and writes "teacher" with marker.
Natalie draws, turns to last page and wants to do teacher again. I start to write for her, but she doesn't want it in pen. I suggest I can use her crayon. She resists at first then says OK and I write.

Samples of Field Notes

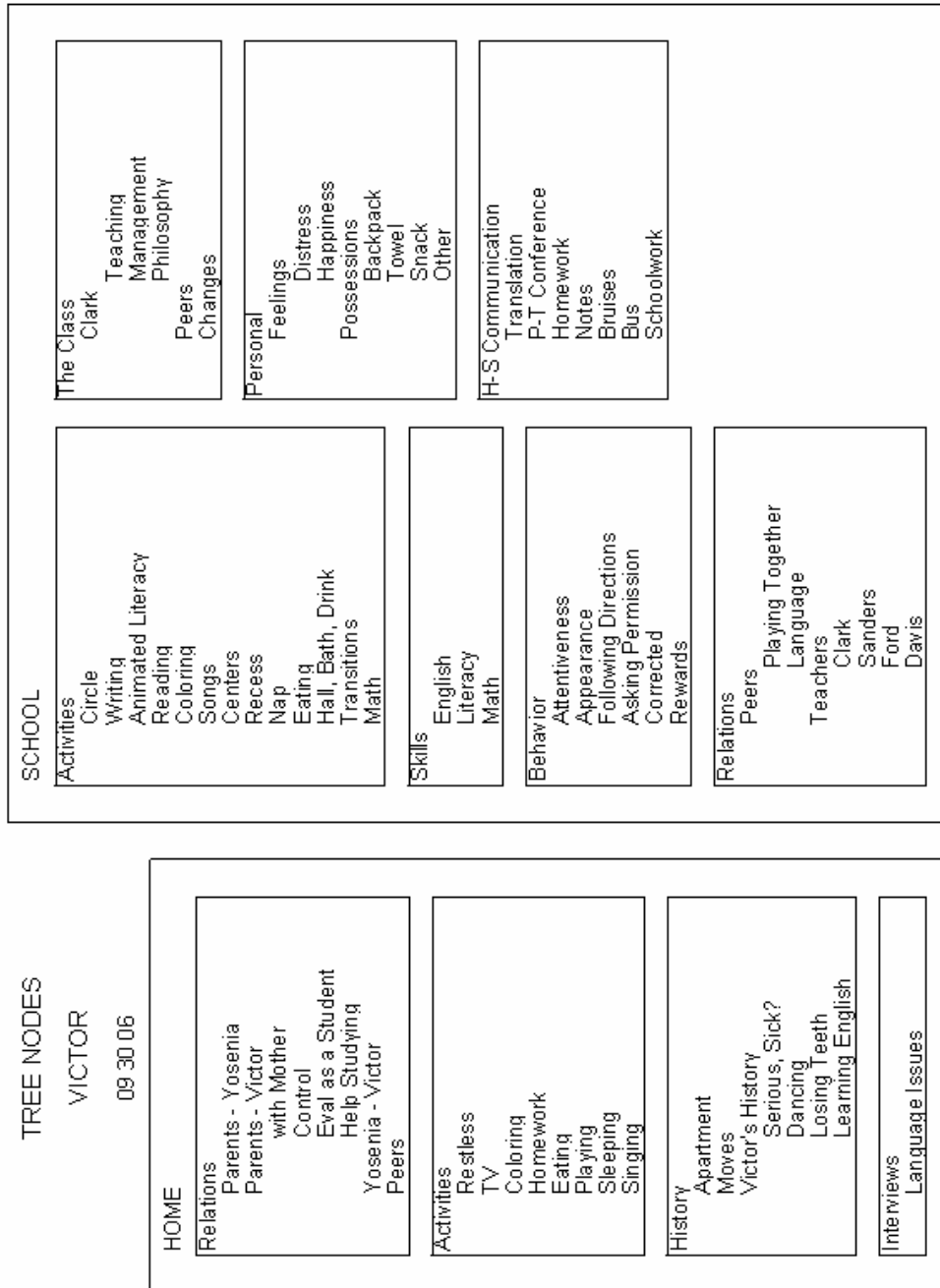
Sample 3 of 3: 1/20/06

FIELD NOTES			1
date	1/20	activity	persons present
time	1:08	When does Victor talk?	11 students
location	C's Class		
observations		reflections	
<p>New student Precious is absent</p> <p>V's table complimented and sent to move names up</p> <p>I sat at V's table.</p> <p>V holds up cracker "whats this" (what animal shape)</p> <p>I: "I don't know, a dolphin?"</p> <p>V holds up another cracker</p> <p>V: "this is a shark"</p> <p>V leaves to block center, sits with Guillermo</p> <p>V: "a rock"</p> <p>Guillermo comes to ask (in English) what I'm doing and Jordan brings food.</p> <p>Guillermo: "I'm gonna help you, Victor."</p> <p>V: _____</p> <p>G runs off to housekeeping.</p> <p>V: "I need some help"</p> <p>G: (from housekeeping) "You want some macaroni?", repeats</p> <p>V: Yeah.</p> <p>V has blocks in balance and is removing with tongs.</p> <p>V: "Ani!"</p> <p>G: (across counter) Here, macaroni. You sign it.</p> <p>V: Gimme the who</p> <p>G: They'r comin, Macaroni. Oooo, they're hot.</p> <p>V: Can you stop?</p> <p>V putting blocks in bucket</p> <p>Sidney coming, V says "Look what I made!"</p> <p>G (from HK) Macaroni</p> <p>V: Oh-</p> <p>V comes and gets a plate</p>		<p>V prefers English?</p> <p>V & G, both native speakers of Spanish, both prefer English.</p> <p>V speaks English when playing alone- use of English is not limited to being caused by listener's perceived needs.</p>	

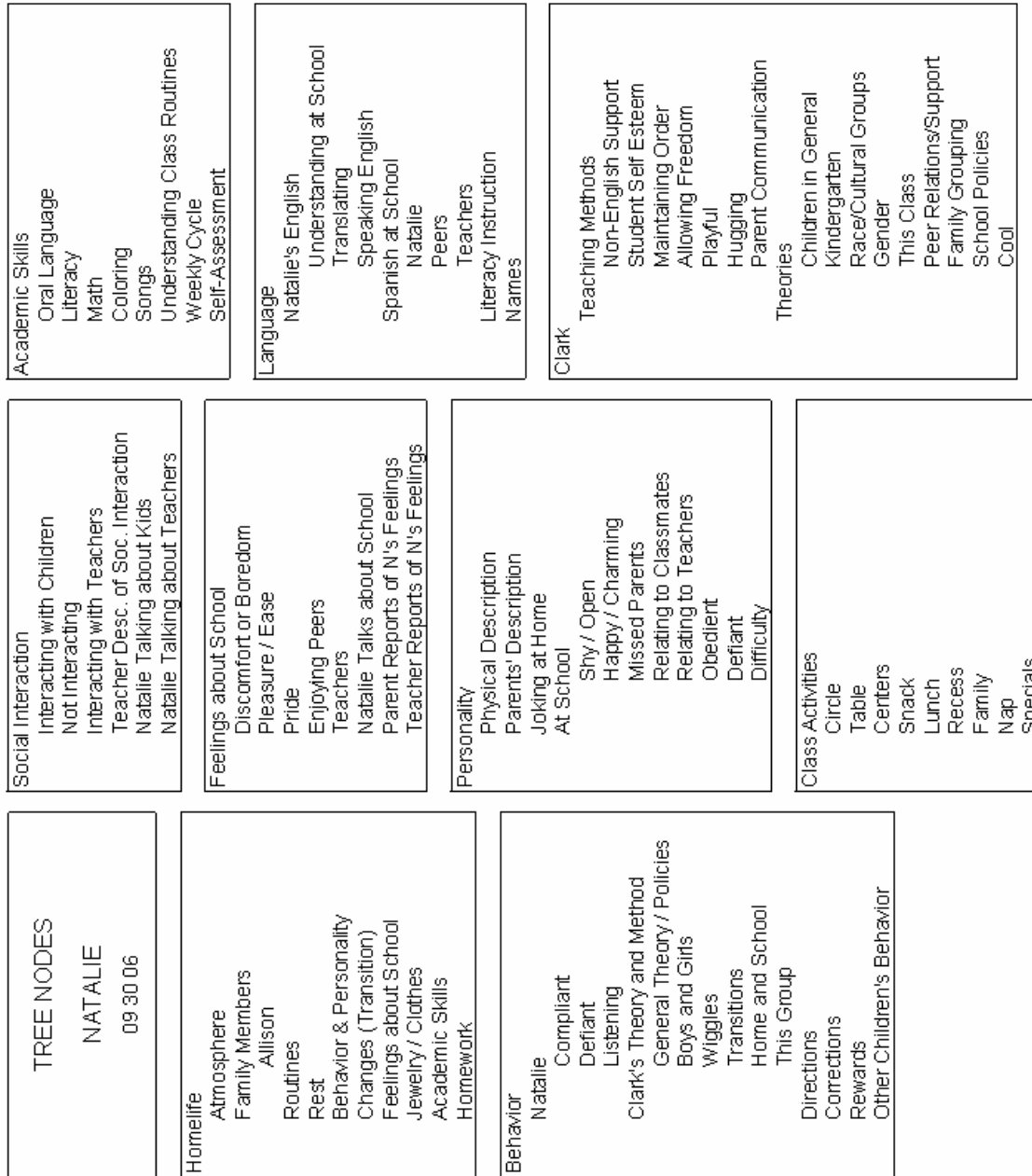
<p>Puts plate in front of me and pretends to eat ravenously.</p> <p>E stands, reaches over counter to HK sink.</p> <p>Sidney stayed beside V but not playing together.</p> <p>V has balance upside down, lifting base as if jet's spaceship</p> <p>V speaks to Sidney to get attention.</p> <p>V moves to HK without finishing putting blocks/balance away.</p> <p>V playing with food, microwave</p> <p>V hops up and down: "Heh heh"</p> <p>V continues to play alone, making plate</p> <p>V: "Oh yes, the food is coming"</p> <p>C comes and says HK is too messy, need to clean up.</p> <p>V is on floor picking up.</p> <p>V crawling to clean up still</p> <p>V: "I'm putting it in here."</p> <p>V: "Juan! Juan!"</p> <p>(interruption, 2 minutes)</p> <p>V stacks cups and plays as if it's a gun.</p> <p>V still playing alone.</p> <p>C calls for clean up.</p> <p>V works hard.</p> <p>V: "Owwwow!"</p> <p>Clark sends Natalie to show me her loose tooth.</p> <p>V: "You can see mine," showing me.</p>	<p>Sidney ignored him?</p> <p>Parallel play with instances/instant of contact - no sustained shared activity</p> <p>I spoke to Clark about V talking.</p> <p>She says he's talking a lot, that maybe he does less because he knows I'm watching.</p> <p>She's often amazed by things he says.</p>
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Appendix B: N6 Nodes

N6 Nodes (Victor)



N6 Nodes (Natalie)



Appendix C

Memo Samples

Sample 1 of 5: 8/13/05

PROCEDURAL MEMO

08-13-05

SELECTION OF FOCAL CHILDREN

The plan was to use kindergarten registration documents and brief phone interviews to select two focal children, and then to have them placed in Ms. C's class. This was not possible because I did not have approval from the school system to go ahead with the project until the classes were already made.

Class lists were made Monday (Aug. 8) afternoon, and "sneak-a-peek" was held Monday night. School began Wednesday morning. When tentative approval was awarded to the project (following a word from the superintendent) on Tuesday afternoon, I looked for possible participants who either had been placed in Ms. C's class, or who had not attended sneak-a-peek (and therefore were not aware of some other class assignment).

I first checked with Ms. C to see if any eligible candidates had been assigned to her class. All of her Hispanic boys (it was not clear who was Mexican) were bilingual and/or had attended pre-K. Next, I went to the kindergarten teachers to get names of

Hispanic boys who had not attended sneak-a-peek. Of the 10 names I was given, I found registration forms for only 6, and upon calling these families, got through to only three. Two of these agreed to participate in the study.

I spoke to my supervisor and she said these two could not be placed in Ms. C's class until they were tested and shown to qualify for the EIP (Early Intervention) program. This created an ethical dilemma, because it meant that the two boys would first go to Ms. B's class for all or part of their first day, and then be moved to Ms. C's class. I was assured they would be tested as early as possible, with the implication that they could be moved during the first day to lessen the impact of this change. Still, it seemed an unfair imposition.

I met with with one of these families at their home, to drop off a tape recorder and go through the consent process. I informed them of the problem of moving their son, but found some justification in the procedure because the move would put their child into the school's "family group", and his older sister was in a family class. In general siblings of "family members" are placed in those classes, and so the change would be somewhat in the way of a correction of an oversight. Still, I was troubled about making this imposition.

On the first day of school, the two boys were both tested and found to qualify for EIP services. I took those scores to the administrator but was informed that Ms. C's class had 9 boys and only 2 girls, and that to add more boys now would be a mistake. I agreed this was a serious consideration, and dropped my efforts with the two boys.

After school (the first day of school), I spoke to Ms. C. and as her list of students had grown, one clearly eligible boy had been added. As I searched for contact

information for this boy, he, his mother, and another woman and child appeared in the office, with the boy crying. It was reported that this boy and girl had refused to get off the bus at their stop, and so had been brought back to school. The mothers had just arrived to pick them up. It appeared they may have been on the wrong bus. I helped work through this situation by translating, and then apologetically asked the mother if I could speak to her for a few minutes. She quickly agreed to participate in the study and said I could visit at 8:00 PM that night.

I spoke to the mother of the second boy on the phone that afternoon, and seemed willing to participate. Her husband arrived from work as we were speaking and I said I'd call back to see whether he approved. I called back several times over the next couple of hours and no one answered. My wife called on Saturday and confirmed my suspicions that the husband had said no, presumably because it was improper for me to visit when he wasn't there.

I called the home of the boy whose mother had signed the consent forms and explained that he wouldn't be in the study. I also made arrangements to pick up the tape recorder on my way to the 8:00 appointment. The interview went well. I visited the E's home for about 40 minutes, got the mother to sign consent forms for herself and E, conducted a short interview, and met the father and brother in law.

I observed Ms. C's class on Thursday, the second day of school, for about 40 minutes.

Now it remains to find another focal child. During my Thursday observation I noticed three other Hispanic boys (inexplicably, none of them had the name of the other I'd attempted to recruit, though all students seemed to be present). Two of these were

among the most verbal in responding to the teacher's prompts and raising their hands to answer questions. The third also participated, and showed some proficiency in English. I also noticed three Hispanic girls, two of whom were among the least engaged members of the class.

Possible options for recruiting:

1. Continue the project with only one focal child

This would bring the danger of losing the focal child either due to the family moving or because they choose to stop participating. The family appears to be both stable and friendly to the project, but if they are lost the study could not continue.

2. Attempt to recruit one of the three other Hispanic boys for the study

The intent has been to find focal children without the support of English or older siblings in school, but given that something must be lost, a participant with more English skills might offer interesting comparisons.

3. Attempt to recruit one of the Hispanic girls for the study

The three Hispanic girls I noticed in the class seemed very quiet and less engaged than the other students, which would seem to suggest they are in danger of difficult transitions. The limitation of studying boys was an effort to narrow the approach to a particular population, but as the plans changed from four participants to two, this approach (thinking of them in terms of some sort of representative sample) makes less sense. Clearly it is individuals who are being examined.

Based on these reflections, I believe the best approach now is to attempt to recruit one of the girls for the study, beginning with whichever one is said to be least proficient in English. I hope to begin this process on Monday, August 15.

Memo Samples

Sample 2 of 5: 8/19/05

Process Memo 08 19 05, 4:30 PM (before two evening interviews)

Focus for Interview with Victor and Family tonight:

Victor cried all day on the first day of school, but by the second or third day he seemed to feel alright. He was still a little nervous, as when he seemed to “freak out” about needing to take his blanket home with him, but overall he seemed happy. When I saw him and according to reports from his teacher, he likes singing and movement, and manages needs like making requests of the teacher like going to the bathroom or getting a drink without any apparent problem. The teacher confirmed my observation that while there were some small hints that it occurs to Victor to say no to directions, to defy her authority, these impulses seem to be small and are quickly overwhelmed by obedience.

Today as I watched him participating in a step-by-step drawing and in singing and movement activities, several questions occurred to me.

- What motivates him to want to keep up: to pay attention, stay on task, follow directions? Is it for the pleasure of completing the task? For praise from the teacher? Belonging to the group? Because he has some image of himself he wants to live up to? Fear of the teacher? Maybe being ELL makes him feel the threat of being incompetent or a failure (or being categorized as such by peers, teacher, and/or parents), and so success in the things he can follow and complete becomes more important, becomes a defense against that threat. I don't think I have evidence to support any of these at the moment in regard to the drawing. In the case of songs and

motions, however, his facial expressions seem to be evidence that the activity is rewarding in itself, that it “just feels good” to move and sing.

I was thinking about what it means for a student to try to join the group and be accepted as a member of it as they began to sing, and I saw the other child making a fairly weak attempt to sing along with a song she likely couldn't understand. I remembered my observations about the possible psychological functions of choral reading and singing of adults in church. To read along with a large group is a sort of self-abandoning activity, a kind of ritual in which one experiences being part of a sort of larger entity. This comes in the forms of memorized passages (Lord's Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance), reading of unfamiliar passages (call and response in bulletin), and the singing of unfamiliar or partially familiar songs. That unfamiliarity also seems to lend something important to the experience. If I get a chance to sing Amazing Grace with a large group, I'll be “doing my thing” in a way that I'm not if I'm trying to get the feel of a song as I hear it enough to join in with parts of it. Putting your voice out there and trying to fit in strikes me as a naturally deeper (more emotive, more spiritual) experience than just listening and adjusting one's performance of a familiar piece to fit with the group.

So when these children who don't know the songs try to jump in, they might be experiencing a similar “loss of self” or “putting one's self out there” or “acting as part of a larger entity” experience.

Memo Samples

Sample 3 of 5: 9/15/05

Memo

Sept. 15, 2005

Morning vs. Afternoon / Conceptual Activities

I first observed Ms. C's class in the morning, as soon as the official school day started, as she did animated literacy and some other songs. She led the children in a series of activities one after the other in a way that impressed me with her efficiency. It seemed like they'd review a sound in two minutes, jump up for a song, sit back down and do something else for a couple of minutes, and then up for another song. She moved through a lot in a short time, and never seemed to (as I so often do) stop to consider what to do next.

In contrast to the momentum of this flow was the way in which she allowed students to make comments and both she and the other students waited and listened patiently to stories and tangents. This combination of speed and patience impressed me, made me think of her as a master of the art.

Then the schedules were changed and my opportunity to observe was shifted to the afternoon. In my first afternoon visit I immediately had a sense that the mood of the classroom was different. Both students and teacher seemed less sharp, less energetic. While Ms. C. continued to employ quite admirable techniques for teaching and behavior management (Perhaps I must retract my claim that she wasn't as sharp. I'm not sure I can substantiate it.), the kids drifted off task at a much higher rate.

I watched Natalie in particular and there was a marked difference between the amount of time she's spent in the mornings with her eyes on the teacher (in a large-group, seated on the floor setting) and in the afternoon. I do not mean to imply that Natalie's diminished attention was only a function of it being the afternoon or her being tired, but these factors should not be overlooked.

What struck me that afternoon was that the lesson objectives were conceptual in a way that seemed to mean language was the only way to get them across. To say the same thing in a different way, Natalie had many opportunities to participate in the morning activities. She seemed right there in the center of them, watching the teacher, moving and making hand motions with the group, following directions. In the social studies lesson I saw, however, in the afternoon, there didn't seem to be much opportunity for her to engage in the activity without understanding the teacher's words.

The lesson was part of a community helpers unit and in particular Ms. C showed the class a poster-sized photo from the social studies kit (or big book?) with several children's faces showing different expressions. She used the picture to talk about how everyone is special. There was also a song during which children pointed to the named body parts. There were points of access here even without understanding the language. Natalie did the movements of the song and tried to sing along, and certainly she could see the picture and tell it was the focus of the discussion. But she stared off into space and it seemed clear she was at least detached, if not bored.

So it seemed to me that one might categorize classroom activities according to whether or to what degree a child can participate in them without understanding the teacher's language. One might do the chicken dance without words and the non-English

speaking child could participate as fully as anyone else. On the other hand, a lesson might include a lecture with no visual aids or other guidance to non-English speakers about the topic under discussion. Then one might be able to talk about the child's day or the teacher's lessons in terms of being 40% language-dependent or 90% language-dependent. One could focus on identifying those language-dependent lessons and considering what part of the day they comprised, but one might also approach the question from the other end, counting activities in which the child can participate without English. Would we be able to categorize every activity or every moment of class time according to this scheme? Maybe there would be "down time" when the child was not missing anything by not having English, but couldn't be said to be participating in an activity either.

If one were to work out this way of examining what happens in a classroom, practical applications should follow. First, just defining activities along these lines makes the teacher more aware of this accessibility factor, and presumably changes her approach to planning lessons—gives her one more aspect to consider. That is to say that one might see a song about the P sound or a conceptual lesson differently after thinking about this. Second, the classification scheme could lead to a more formal analysis of the child's experience in the class.

Memo Samples

Sample 4 of 5: 7/18/05

Memo 07 18 06

Victor: Not About the Bus

Victor compressed his first day fears into a story blaming his mom. He didn't talk about the distress he clearly suffered during the school day, while he did describe some of the activities. The only problem he reported seemed to be his description of the confusion about trying to get home on the bus, when he said that his mother didn't come. It appeared that maybe because he blamed his mother for the bus problem and then somehow attached his memories of distress from the whole day to this story, but perhaps his initial complaints that his mother didn't come were not about the bus incident at all, but a general description of his day.

Day 1:

I: OK, Victor,

What happened today in the class?

V: ____ _____ me

an not ____ _____ _____

I: How's that?

V: I was here,

but _____ me _____ not _____ _____ _____ school?

I: I didn't understand.

Who was here?

V: _____ _____ _____ _____

I: So you could go here?

V: hm?

I: I didn't understand.

You were here?

Who was here?

V: My mom.

I: Ahh.. your mom was here, and you?

M: No, _____

I: hmm.

V: But you didn't come..

(pause)

I: She didn't come?

Day 13

I: And what else do you like to do at home
when you don't have to go to school?

V: _____

I: How's that?

V: I don't want to go anymore.

P: Speak up.

I: What?

V: I don't want to go anymore.

I: to school?

M: _____

V: Because my mom left me.

M: He doesn't forget about it ____ ____

I: Are you mad? Yeah?

In the day 13 text, Victor says “my mom left me”, still apparently referring to a single time (the first day of school) rather than “my mom leaves me,” or anything more general about having to go to school and not having her support there.

My belief that these two were both references to the bus incident (either his mother not meeting him at the bus stop or not coming to get him at school) was supported by the fact that the mother seemed to frame it this way on day 13, when she said, “he doesn't forget about it” as if the topic is a single incident, not the general issue of sending him to school and not going with him.

Overall, however, I think my interpretation was unjustified, presumably driven by my own experience with Victor crying in the office at the end of the day. I came with a preconception about the nature of his distress. In the day 8 interview, he says she “left me”, which doesn't seem to suggest the dismissal problem at all. Rather, it appears to refer to taking him to school in the morning.

So the new interpretation goes something like: Victor found himself lost at school and resented that his mother had left him and that she didn't come back (either to support him there or take him home). As he quickly learned enough routines to get by and not panic at school, this first day distress remained a salient memory. Victor was generally excited to be going to school. He didn't regret it. But he retained the memory of his terrible first day and kept the blame for it on his mother.

Memo Samples

Sample 5 of 5: 9/15/05

Memo 04 26 07

Cultural Reproduction*From Bowles & Gintis:*

The issue is that institutions preserve the status quo.

Schools reproduce in poor children:

- habits of authoritarian control
- skills suited to low-level, non-creative work
- acceptance of position through sense that school offered a fair evaluation of their abilities and they failed to earn privilege

In the case of the Mexican Immigrant Kindergarteners, the idea of reproduction vs. change can be applied in a very different light:

Reproducing the family's home culture or Changing to the majority culture

From the point of view of their parents (and perhaps the researcher), the best thing is not to reproduce 100% of their family ways of being, nor to fit completely into the new culture. Parents mostly want children to fit in, but have some desire for the children to maintain Spanish and not adopt anti-Mexican attitudes.

As a functionalist system works through generations, it is usually concerned with making the children be like the parents. When immigrants arrive, the stability of the system presumably relies on re-making parents and children (unless their role, skills, expectations, etc. in their home countries was the same as that they will be expected to fill in the new country). This raises the question:

- Which elements of the culture Mexican immigrants bring are suited to the roles available to them in this country, and which are not?
 - Fatalism: Mexicans are said to be fatalistic. This seems well-suited to satisfaction in the lowest strata of society.
 - Little Formal Education: This also gives Mexican immigrants a reason to accept a position in the lowest strata
 - Value Family more than Professional Achievement: This also keeps expectations for career rewards low. There will be clashes between family responsibilities and a sense in the U.S. that one has to comply with employer needs.

In the matter of children being successful in school (which immigrant parents and the government both want, and which to some level will serve the functioning of the society) all three of the above would seem to work against a school work ethic.

- Fatalism contradicts the sense teachers often want to pass on that hard work in school makes it possible for anyone to be successful. In terms of accepting a lower place and believing one has been fairly placed, the American model might be better. While "fatalism" suggests being resigned to one's fate, and perhaps a deep assumption of inferiority, it does not provide a "fair test." To have the sense

of having been personally placed by a fair test, one needs to believe the ladder is there, which is contrary to a fatalistic approach.

- Little Formal Education (parents): Many Mexican parents seem to value education for their children, despite their own poor education. Natalie's parents give this as the deciding factor about which country to live in. Education is seen as a key to (at least economic) well-being. This lack makes it likely that parents will be unable to offer much support for academic achievement.
- Valuing Family over Professional Achievement: While Mexican immigrant parents seem driven by an interest in their children's acquisition of a good education as a path to a good job, this drive is somewhat tempered by the sense that some things are more important. It also means kids miss school for family functions.

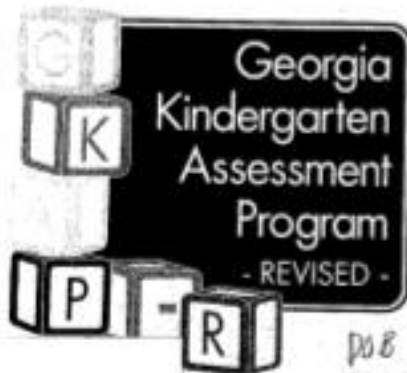
For Victor and Natalie, no great changes were seen in who they were at home during the year. Both had different ways of being at school than at home. Both were more disciplined and obedient at school. The contrast is more striking for Victor since his home environment seemed less structured.

Appendix D

GKAP Score Reports and Work Samples

For Victor and Natalie

Progress Profile



Name Victor Student # DOB 10/11/99
School _____ System # _____

Previous Placement: Kindergarten _____ Pre-K _____ Other (07-rose)

Current Kindergarten EIP: Eligible _____ Served _____ N/A _____

ESOL: Eligible Served _____

Next Placement Grade _____

Gender: Male Female _____

Ethnicity: White _____ Black _____ Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander _____
American Indian/Alaskan Native _____ Multi-Racial _____

IEP Considerations: IAP Considerations: LEP/TPC:

Non-Altering Accommodations Altering Accommodations GA Alternative Assessment



Literacy																																																																																																												
	Date	NI	IP	AC																																																																																																								
Prints name <small>baseline</small> <i>NE - scribbles; uses letters and letter-like forms</i> <i>IP - prints left to right; most letters are correct</i> <i>AC - begins with upper-case followed by lower case</i>	8/11	✓																																																																																																										
	1/23			✓																																																																																																								
Holds print materials in correct position <small>baseline</small> <i>Demonstrates left-to-right and top-to-bottom progression</i> <i>NE - unable to hold in correct position</i> <i>IP - holds in correct position; shows left-to-right</i> <i>AC - correct position; left-to-right; top-to-bottom</i>	8/15	✓																																																																																																										
	1/23		✓																																																																																																									
	4/13			✓																																																																																																								
Draws pictures and/or uses letters and phonetically spelled words to write about experiences, stories, people, objects, or events <small>baseline</small> <i>NE - unable to draw; unable to use letters</i> <i>IP - draws a picture and/or uses random letters</i> <i>AC - draws a picture and uses phonetically spelled words</i>	8/15		✓																																																																																																									
	1/23		✓																																																																																																									
	4/13		✓																																																																																																									
Identifies upper- and lower-case letters of the alphabet out of sequence <small>baseline</small> <i>NE - 0-3 upper- and lower-case letters</i> <i>IP - 4 or more but not all</i> <i>AC - all</i>	8/15	✓																																																																																																										
	1/23		✓																																																																																																									
	4/13			✓																																																																																																								
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Victor
 (at beginning of year don't know any)

Key: NE=Not Evident IP=In Progress AC=Accomplished

Literacy																													
	Date	NI	IP	AC																									
blends sounds orally to make words Part 1 and Part 2 <i>NE - combines sounds for 0 - 1 word</i> <i>IP - 2 - 3 words</i> <i>AC - 4 - 5 words</i>	8/15	✓			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Blends Sounds Part 1</th> <th colspan="2">Blends Sounds Part 2</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>ring</td> <td>✓</td> <td>girl</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>watch</td> <td>✓</td> <td>boy</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>book</td> <td>✓</td> <td>tree</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>cup</td> <td>✓</td> <td>king</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>spoon</td> <td>✓</td> <td>cow</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Blends Sounds Part 1		Blends Sounds Part 2		ring	✓	girl	✓	watch	✓	boy	✓	book	✓	tree	✓	cup	✓	king	✓	spoon	✓	cow	✓
	Blends Sounds Part 1		Blends Sounds Part 2																										
	ring	✓	girl	✓																									
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spoon	✓	cow	✓																										
1/23		✓																											
4/13		✓																											
Distinguishes between letters, words, and sentences <i>NE - 0 - 1</i> <i>IP - 2</i> <i>AC - 3</i>	1/23		✓		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Letter, Word, Sentence</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Letter</td> <td>✓ ✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Word</td> <td>✓ ✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sentence</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Letter, Word, Sentence		Letter	✓ ✓	Word	✓ ✓	Sentence	✓																
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Responds to literal, inferential, and evaluative questions <i>NE - answers none of the questions correctly</i> <i>IP - answers 1 of the 2 questions from 1 or 2 categories</i> <i>AC - answers 1 of the 2 questions from each of 3 categories</i>	1/23		✓		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Responds to Questions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Literal</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inferential</td> <td>✓ ✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Evaluative</td> <td>✓ ✓</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Responds to Questions		Literal	✓	Inferential	✓ ✓	Evaluative	✓ ✓																
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4/13			✓																										
Sequences pictures to tell a story Interprets pictures to predict logical outcomes <i>NE - unable to sequence pictures and tell a story</i> <i>IP - sequences pictures; tells a story; does not predict</i> <i>AC - sequences pictures; tells story; predicts</i>	1/23			✓	Put them in different order and then changed to correct order.																								
Recognizes rhyming words <i>NE - 0 - 2</i> <i>IP - 3 - 4</i> <i>AC - 5 - 6</i>	1/23	✓			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Recognizes Rhyming Words</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. yes</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. no</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. yes</td> <td>✓ ✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. no</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. bell</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6. cup</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Recognizes Rhyming Words		1. yes	✓	2. no	✓	3. yes	✓ ✓	4. no	0	5. bell	0	6. cup	0										
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	1. yes	✓																											
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5. bell	0																												
6. cup	0																												
4/13		✓																											
Verbalizes consonant sound when shown the consonant letter <i>NE - 0 to 4 sounds</i> <i>IP - 5 - 13 sounds</i> <i>AC - 14 - 17 sounds</i>	4/13			✓	See portfolio																								

Literacy					
	Date	NE	IP	AC	
Associates sounds with letters <i>NE - 0 - 3</i> <i>IP - 4 - 13</i> <i>AC - 16-19</i>	4/13			✓	See portfolio
Blends sounds orally to make words Part 3 <i>NE - combines sounds for 0 - 1 word</i> <i>IP - 2 - 3 words</i> <i>AC - 4 - 3 words</i>	4/14		✓		Blends Sounds ad in it map up
Reads selected sight words <i>NE - 0 - 2 words</i> <i>IP - 3 - 9 words</i> <i>AC - 10 or more words</i>	4/14			✓	See portfolio
Copies letters <i>NE - 0 - 10</i> <i>IP - 11 - 45</i> <i>AC - 46 - 52</i>	4/13			✓	See portfolio

Notes:

IEP/IAP Accommodations: List activities to which accommodations were made.

Key: NE=Not Evident IP=In Progress AC=Accomplished

Mathematics				
	Date	NE	IP	AC
counts by rote, 0 through 10 <i>baseline</i> NE - mixes 6 or more numbers IP - mixes 1 - 5 numbers AC - all correct from 0 to 10 or 1 to 10	8/11		✓	
	1/23			✓
Recognizes and selects the numerals 0 - 10 <i>baseline</i> NE - 0 - 5: recognizes none or some IP - 0 - 5: recognizes all 6 - 10: recognizes some AC - 0 - 10: recognizes all	8/11	✓		
	1/23	✓		
	4/13			✓
Identifies basic geometric shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle, oval, and diamond) <i>baseline</i> NE - identifies 0 - 2 shapes IP - identifies 3 - 5 shapes AC - identifies all 6 shapes	8/15	✓		
	1/23		✓	
	4/13			✓
Uses words indicating relationships Part 1: top, bottom, inside, outside, in front of, behind <i>baseline</i> NE - 0 - 2 IP - 3 - 5 AC - all 6	8/15	✓		
	1/23			✓
Sorts geometric shapes NE - sorts by 0 - 1 attributes IP - 2 attributes AC - 3 attributes	1/23	✓		color
	4/13		✓	color, shape,
Continues simple patterns (AB) NE - unable to recognize the pattern IP - recognizes, copies the pattern AC - recognizes, copies, and extends the pattern	1/23		✓	recognized & copied
	4/14			needed help w/ extending

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0		✓	✓								
1	✓		✓								
2	✓	✓									
3	✓	✓	✓								
4	✓	✓	✓	✓							
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0		✓	✓								
1	✓		✓								
2	✓	✓									
3	✓	✓	✓								
4	✓	✓	✓	✓							
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						

	circle	square	triangle	rectangle	oval	diamond
circle			✓	✓	✓	✓
square		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
triangle			✓	✓	✓	✓
rectangle				✓	✓	✓
oval					✓	✓
diamond						✓

	top	bottom	inside	outside	in front of	behind
top			✓			
bottom			✓			
inside			✓	✓		
outside				✓		
in front of					✓	
behind						✓

Mathematics				
	Date	NE	IP	AC
Uses words indicating relationship Part 2: above, below, under, in, on, out of, between, left, right NE - 0 - 3 IP - 4 - 8 AC - all 9	1/23		✓	
	4/14			✓
Determines equivalence (using physical models) by establishing one-to-one correspondence between two sets (same as, fewer than, more than) NE - makes 0 - 1 set IP - makes 2 of the 3 sets AC - makes all 3 sets	1/23	✓		more
	4/14		✓	same, more,
Compares and describes lengths (longer than, longest, shorter than, shortest, and same as) NE - 0 - 1 IP - 2 - 4 AC - all 3	1/23		✓	
	4/13		✓	
Counts the number of elements in a set and writes the corresponding numerals 0 to 10 NE - writes 0 - 3 sets IP - writes 4 or more but not all sets AC - writes all of the sets	1/23		✓	
	4/13		✓	
Constructs and interprets graphs using actual objects or pictorial representations NE - unable to construct graph IP - constructs graph, no interpretation AC - constructs graph, correctly interprets	1/23	✓		
	4/13		✓	
Names and identifies coins (penny, nickel, dime, quarter) and dollar bill NE - 0 - 1 piece of money IP - 2 - 3 pieces of money AC - 4 - 5 pieces of money	4/13		✓	

Relationships (Picture)			
above	✓	✓	✓
below	✓	✓	✓
under	✓	✓	✓
in	✓	✓	✓
on	✓	✓	✓
out of	✓	✓	✓
between	✓	✓	✓
left	✓	✓	✓
right	✓	✓	✓

Compares and Describes Lengths			
same	0	✓	✓
longer	0	✓	✓
shorter	✓	✓	✓
longest	0	✓	✓
shortest	0	✓	✓

Money			
penny			
nickel			
dime			
quarter	✓		
dollar bill	✓		

Key: NE=Not Evident IP=In Progress AC=Accomplished

Mathematics				
	Date	NE	IP	AC
Uses ordinal numbers to indicate positions first through fifth <i>NE - names 0 - 1 positions</i> <i>IP - names 2 - 4 positions</i> <i>AC - names all 5 positions</i>	4/14	✓		
Models, acts out, and uses a picture to solve simple problems <i>NE - moves manipulatives, no correct response</i> <i>IP - moves manipulatives, correct response to 1 story</i> <i>AC - moves manipulatives, correct response to 2 stories</i>	4/14	✓		

Ordinal Numbers			
yellow - second			
blue - first	✓		
pink - fifth			
purple - third			
green - fourth			

Bear Stories Problems			
A			
B			

Notes:

IEP Accommodations: List activities to which accommodations were made.

Key: NE=Not Evident IP=In Progress AC=Accomplished

Social / Emotional				
	Date	NE	IP	AC
Follows teacher's directions <i>NE - can't follow directions; teacher repeats several times</i> <i>IP - one reminder or clarification</i> <i>AC - occasional reminder or no reminders or clarifications</i>	baseline		✓	
	3/15			
	1/23			✓
Treats others with respect <i>NE - frequent interventions</i> <i>IP - few interventions</i> <i>AC - no interventions</i>				
	1/23			✓
Follows classroom rules <i>NE - unable to follow rules</i> <i>IP - follows some rules</i> <i>AC - follows all established rules</i>				
	1/23			✓
Stays on task <i>NE - 1 minute or less</i> <i>IP - up to 3 minutes</i> <i>AC - entire lesson</i>				
	1/23			✓

Notes:

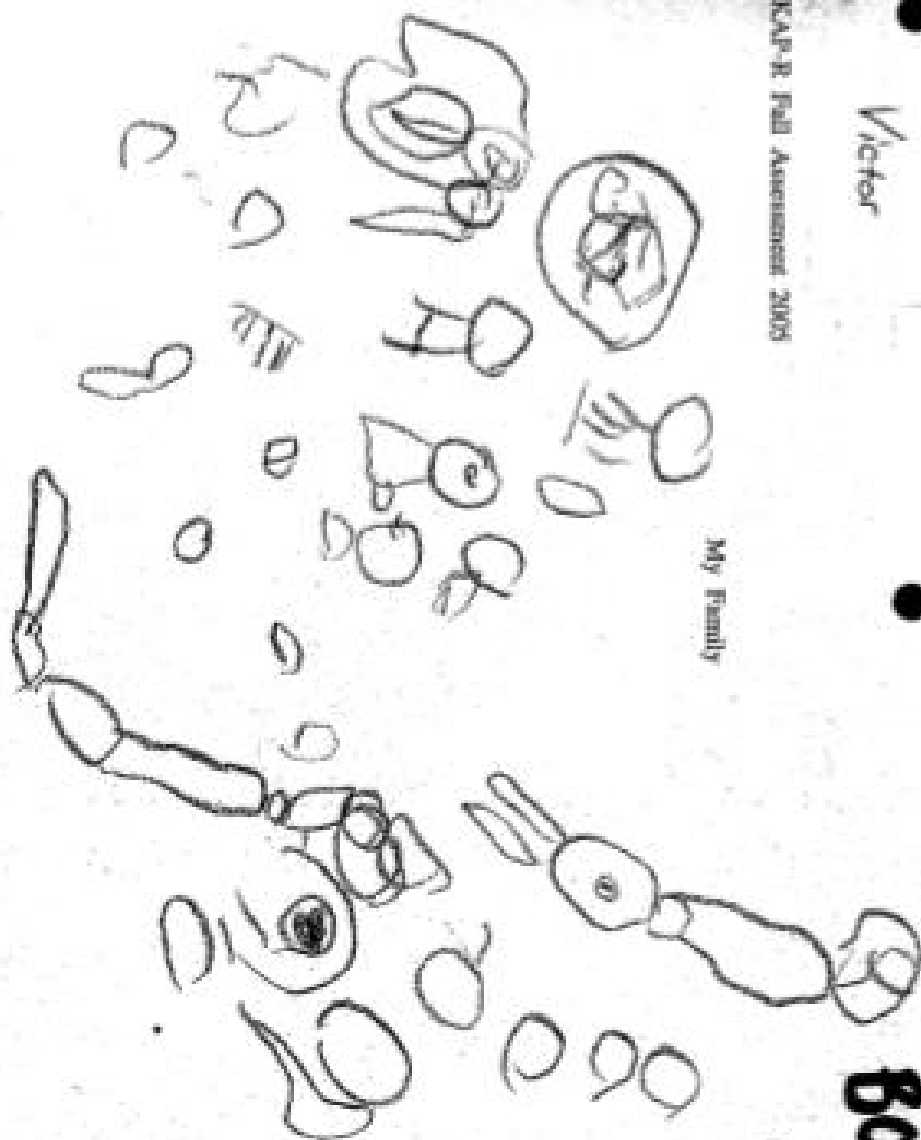
IEP/LAP Accommodations: List activities to which accommodations were made.

Key: NE=Not Evident IP=In Progress AC=Accomplished

Victor

OSKAP-R Fall Assessment 2003

My Family



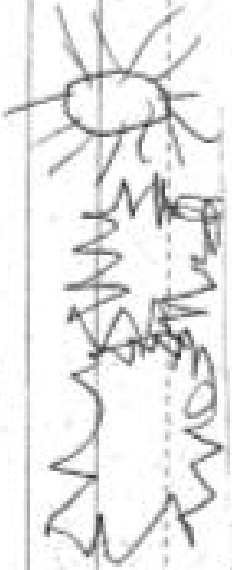
BORN

8/1/005

Victor

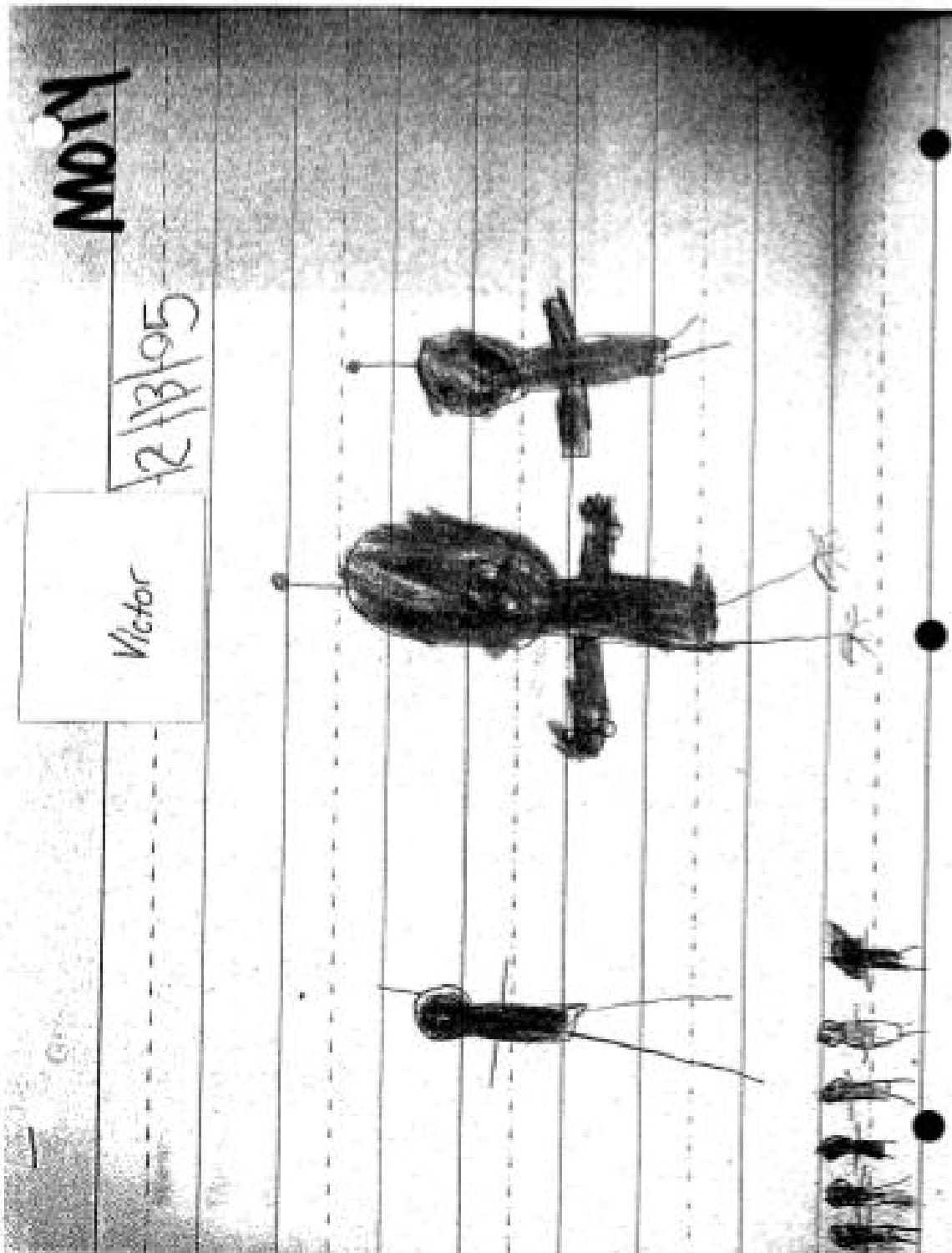
2/16/06

r



It is sunny.

The sun's hot



Area ■ Kindergarten Math Assessment

Name:

Victor

This form is to be placed in the student portfolio*

1. Student orally counts to 20.
(GKAP M1)

Aug. yes no
 Jan. yes no
 Apr. yes no (20)

2. Student can write numbers to 20.

Aug. yes no
 Jan. yes no
 Apr. yes no

3. Student can count number of elements
in a set and writes the corresponding
numerals 0 to 10. (GKAP M10)

Jan. yes no
 Apr. yes no

4. Student understands concept of more,
equal, and fewer. (GKAP M8)

Jan. yes no
 Apr. yes no

*Scoring: Scores will be reported as 50% for answering two questions out of four correct for the Aug pre-test. 25% for answering one out of the two questions correct for the Aug pre-test. For Dec/May, all four questions will be scored.

Literacy																																																																																																												
	Date	NE	IP	AC																																																																																																								
Prints name <small>baseline</small> <i>NE - scribbles; uses letters and letter-like forms</i> <i>IP - prints left to right; most letters are correct</i> <i>AC - begins with upper-case followed by lower case</i>	8/11	✓																																																																																																										
	1/23			✓																																																																																																								
Holds print materials in correct position <small>baseline</small> Demonstrates left-to-right and top-to-bottom progression <i>NE - unable to hold in correct position</i> <i>IP - holds in correct position; shows left-to-right</i> <i>AC - correct position; left-to-right; top-to-bottom</i>	8/15		✓																																																																																																									
	1/23		✓																																																																																																									
	4/17			✓																																																																																																								
Draws pictures and/or uses letters and phonetically spelled words to write about experiences, stories, people, objects, or events <small>baseline</small> <i>NE - unable to draw; unable to use letters</i> <i>IP - draws a picture and/or uses random letters</i> <i>AC - draws a picture and uses phonetically spelled words</i>	8/15		✓																																																																																																									
	1/23		✓																																																																																																									
	4/17		✓																																																																																																									
Identifies upper- and lower-case letters of the alphabet out of sequence <small>baseline</small> <i>NE - 0 - 5 upper- and lower-case letters</i> <i>IP - 6 or more but not all</i> <i>AC - all</i>	8/15																																																																																																											
	1/23		✓																																																																																																									
	4/17			✓																																																																																																								
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Literacy								
	Date	NE	IP	AC				
blends sounds orally to make words Part 1 and Part 2 NE - combines sounds for 0 - 1 word IP - 2 - 3 words AC - 4 - 5 words	Baseline							
	5/15	✓						
	4/23			✓				
Distinguishes between letters, words, and sentences NE - 0 - 1 IP - 2 AC - 3	1/23			✓				
					Letter, Word, Sentence			
					Letter	✓		
					Word	✓		
Responds to literal, inferential, and evaluative questions NE - answers some of the questions correctly IP - answers 1 of the 2 questions from 1 or 2 categories AC - answers 1 of the 3 questions from each of 3 categories	1/23		✓					
	4/17		✓					
Sequences pictures to tell a story Interprets pictures to predict logical outcomes NE - unable to sequence pictures and tell a story IP - sequences pictures; tells a story; does not predict AC - sequences pictures; tells story; predicts	1/23	✓						
	4/17		✓					
Recognizes rhyming words NE - 0 - 2 IP - 3 - 4 AC - 5 - 6	1/23	✓						
	4/17	✓						
	Recognize Rhyming Words							
				1. yes 0 0				
				2. no ✓ ✓				
				3. yes 0 ✓				
				4. no 0 0				
				5. baby / bow 0 0				
				6. ready / rat 0 0				
Verbalizes consonant sound when shown the consonant letter NE - 0 to 4 sounds IP - 5 - 13 sounds AC - 14 - 17 sounds	4/17			✓				
See portfolio								

Literacy																													
	Date	NI	IP	AC																									
Associates sounds with letters <i>NE - 0 - 3</i> <i>IP - 4 - 13</i> <i>AC - 16-19</i>	4/13			✓	See portfolio																								
Blends sounds orally to make words Part 3 <i>NE - combines sounds for 0 - 1 word</i> <i>IP - 2-3 words</i> <i>AC - 4 - 5 words</i>	4/17		✓		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="4">Blends Sounds</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>unl</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>fan</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>rat</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>map</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>tap</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Blends Sounds				unl				fan	✓			rat				map				tap			
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Reads selected sight words <i>NE - 0 - 2 words</i> <i>IP - 3 - 9 words</i> <i>AC - 10 or more words</i>	4/17			✓	See portfolio																								
Copies letters <i>NE - 0 - 10</i> <i>IP - 11 - 43</i> <i>AC - 46 - 52</i>	4/13		✓	✓	See portfolio																								

Notes:

IEP/IAP Accommodations: List activities to which accommodations were made.

Key: NE=Not Evident IP=In Progress AC=Accomplished

Mathematics				
	Date	NE	IP	AC
Counts by rote, 0 through 10 <i>NE</i> - mixes 0 or more numbers <i>IP</i> - mixes 1 - 5 numbers <i>AC</i> - all correct from 0 to 10 or 1 to 10	baseline		✓	
	1/24			✓
Recognizes and selects the numerals 0 - 10 <i>NE</i> - 0 - 5: recognizes none or some <i>IP</i> - 0 - 5: recognizes all 6 - 10: recognizes some <i>AC</i> - 0 - 10: recognizes all	baseline	✓		
	1/24			✓
Identifies basic geometric shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle, oval, and diamond) <i>NE</i> - identifies 0 - 2 shapes <i>IP</i> - identifies 3 - 5 shapes <i>AC</i> - identifies all 6 shapes	baseline	✓		
	1/24		✓	
	4/17			✓
Uses words indicating relationships Part 1: top, bottom, inside, outside, in front of, behind <i>NE</i> - 0 - 2 <i>IP</i> - 3 - 5 <i>AC</i> - all 6	baseline	✓		
	1/24		✓	
	4/17			✓
Sets geometric shapes <i>NE</i> - sorts by 0 - 1 attributes <i>IP</i> - 2 attributes <i>AC</i> - 3 attributes	1/24		✓	
	4/17		✓	
Continues simple patterns (AB) <i>NE</i> - unable to recognize the pattern - recognizes, copies the pattern - recognizes, copies, and extends the pattern	1/24		✓	

Rote Counts			
0	✓	6	✓
1	✓	7	✓
2	✓	8	✓
3	✓	9	✓
4	✓	10	✓
5	✓		

Recognizes Numerals 0 to 10			
0	✓	6	✓
1	✓	7	✓
2	✓	8	✓
3	✓	9	✓
4	✓	10	✓
5	✓		

Names Shapes			
circle		✓	✓
square		✓	✓
triangle		✓	✓
rectangle		✓	✓
oval		✓	✓
diamond		✓	✓

Relationships (Objects)			
top		✓	✓
bottom		✓	✓
inside		✓	✓
outside		✓	✓
in front of		✓	✓
behind		✓	✓

Key: NE=Not Evident IP=In Progress AC=Accomplished

Mathematics				
	Date	NE	IP	AC
<p>Uses words indicating relationship Part 2: above, below, under, in, on, out of, between, left, right NE - 0 - 3 IP - 4 - 8 AC - all 9</p>	1/24	✓		
	4/17			✓
<p>Determines equivalence (using physical models) by establishing one-to-one correspondence between two sets (same as, fewer than, more than) NE - makes 0 - 1 set IP - makes 2 of the 3 sets AC - makes all 3 sets</p>	1/24	✓		
	4/17			✓
<p>Compares and describes lengths (longer than, longest, shorter than, shortest, and same as) NE - 0 - 1 IP - 2 - 4 AC - all 5</p>	1/24		✓	
	4/17			✓
<p>Counts the number of elements in a set and writes the corresponding numerals 0 to 10 NE - writes 0 - 3 sets IP - writes 4 or more but not all sets AC - writes all of the sets</p>	4/17			✓
<p>Constructs and interprets graphs using actual objects or pictorial representations NE - unable to construct graph IP - constructs graph, no interpretation AC - constructs graph, correctly interprets</p>	4/19		✓	
<p>Names and identifies coins (penny, nickel, dime, quarter) and dollar bill NE - 0 - 1 piece of money IP - 2 - 3 pieces of money AC - 4 - 5 pieces of money</p>	4/17			✓

below	✓	✓
in	✓	✓
out of	✓	✓
under	✓	✓
on	✓	✓
between	✓	✓
left	✓	✓
right	✓	✓

some, more, fewer

same	0	✓
longer	✓	✓
shorter	✓	✓
longest	0	✓
shortest	0	✓

See portfolio

penny	✓	
nickel		
dime	✓	
quarter	✓	
dollar bill	✓	

Key: NE=Not Evident IP=In Progress AC=Accomplished

Mathematics				
	Date	NE	IP	AC
Uses ordinal numbers to indicate positions first through fifth. <i>NE - names 0 - 1 positions</i> <i>IP - names 2 - 4 positions</i> <i>AC - names all 5 positions</i>	4/17			✓
Models, acts out, and uses a picture to solve simple problems. <i>NE - moves manipulatives, no correct response</i> <i>IP - moves manipulatives, correct response to 1 story</i> <i>AC - moves manipulatives, correct response to 2 stories</i>	4/17			✓

Ordinal Numbers	
yellow - second	✓
blue - first	✓
pink - fifth	✓
purple - third	✓
green - fourth	✓

Bear Stories Problems	
A	✓
B	✓

Notes:

CPIAP Accommodations: List activities to which accommodations were made.

Social / Emotional				
	Date	NI	IP	AC
Follows teacher's directions <i>NE - can't follow directions; teacher repeats several times</i> <i>IP - one reminder or clarification</i> <i>AC - occasional reminder or no reminders or clarifications</i>	5/11/12		✓	
	1/24			✓
Treats others with respect <i>NE - frequent interventions</i> <i>IP - few interventions</i> <i>AC - no interventions</i>	1/24		✓	
	4/17			✓
Follows classroom rules <i>NE - unable to follow rules</i> <i>IP - follows some rules</i> <i>AC - follows all established rules</i>	1/24			✓
Stays on task <i>NE - 1 minute or less</i> <i>IP - up to 5 minutes</i> <i>AC - entire lesson</i>	1/24			✓

Notes:

IEP/IAP Accommodations: List activities to which accommodations were made.

Key: NE=Not Evident IP=In Progress AC=Accomplished

Natalie

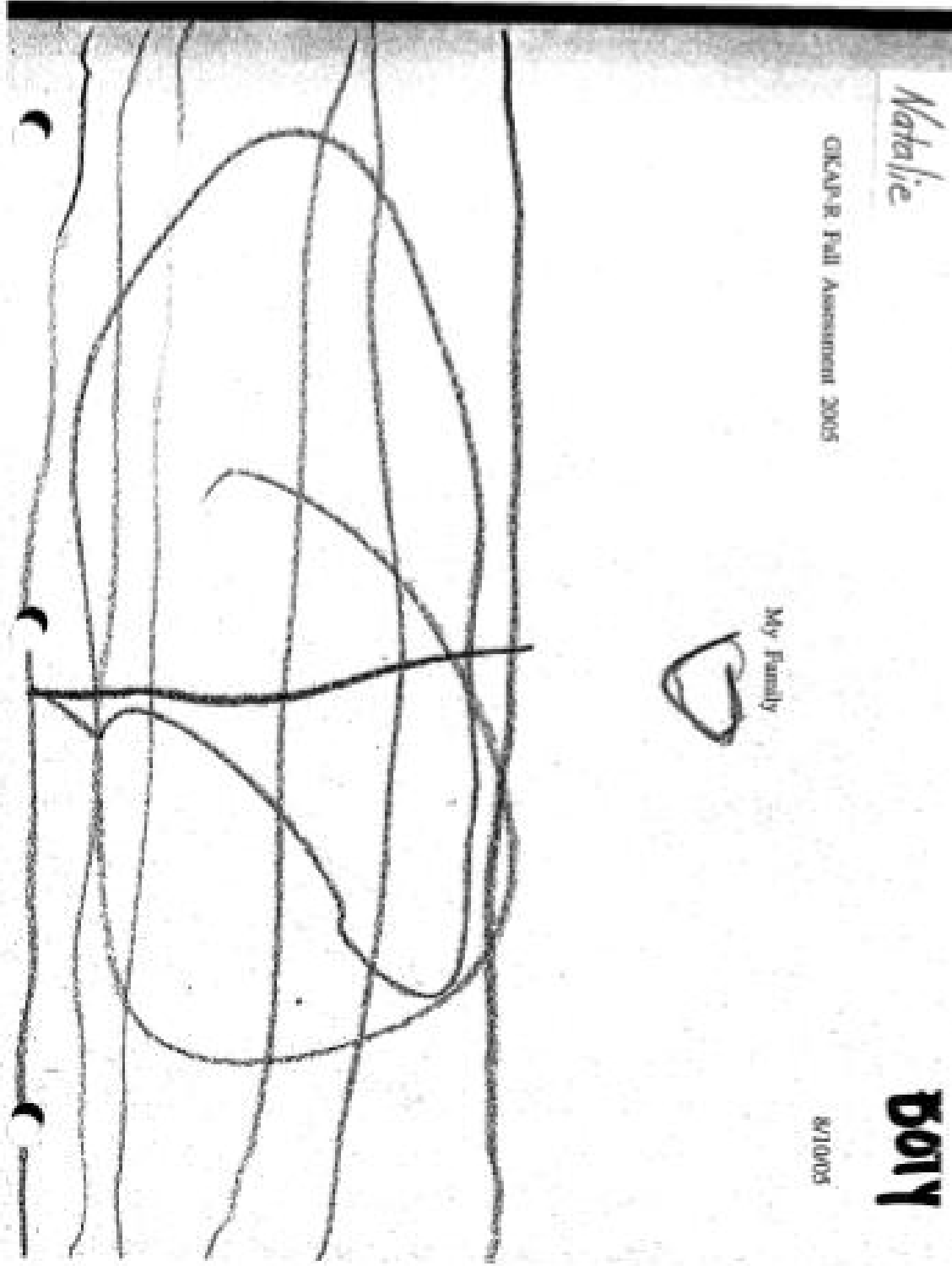
OKAP-R Fall Assessment 2005

My Family



BOY

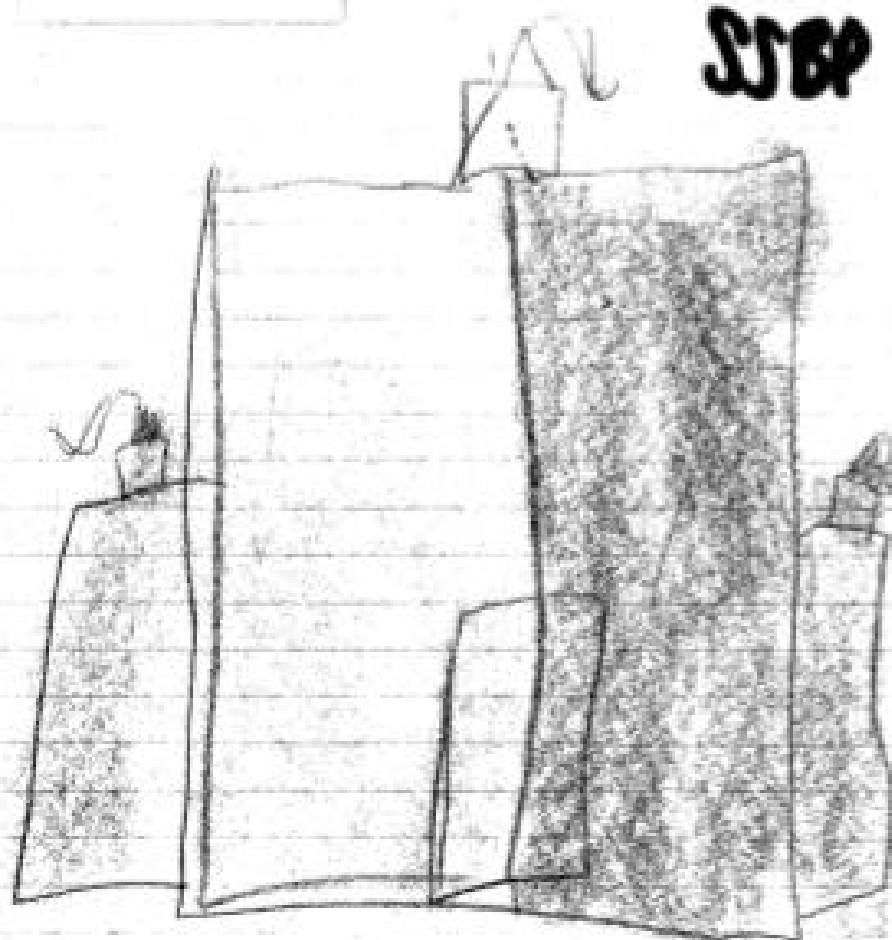
8/10/05



Natalie

317106

SS
SSP



the CASO is req

the CASO is orig

Area ■ Kindergarten Math Assessment

Name:

Natalie

Place in the student portfolio*

1. Student orally counts to 20.
(GKAP M1)

Aug. yes no
 Jan. no (90)
 Apr. no (24)

2. Student can write numbers to 20.

Aug. yes no
 Jan. no
 Apr. no

3. Student can count number of elements
in a set and writes the corresponding
numerals 0 to 10. (GKAP M10)

Jan. no
 Apr. no

4. Student understands concept of more,
equal, and fewer. (GKAP M8)

Jan. no
 Apr. no

*Scoring: Scores will be reported as 50% for answering two questions out of four correct for the Aug pre-test. 25% for answering one out of the two questions correct for the Aug pre-test. For Dec/May, all four questions will be scored.