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Latina Immigrant Mothers' Counterstories of Education: Challenging Deficit Myths

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LATINA IMMIGRANT MOTHERS' COUNTERSTORIES OF EDUCATION: CHALLENGING DEFICIT MYTHS

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Dissertation Abstract

Latina Immigrant Mothers' Counterstories of Education: Challenging Deficit Myths

Despite major gains in working-class Latin@ immigrant graduation rates and college attendance in recent years, most educators and administrators still perceive Latin@ students with deficit mindsets. Majoritarian storytelling perpetuates deficit myths about working-class Latin@ immigrant students and their families not valuing education. This study joins a growing body of research that uses counterstories to challenge deficit mentalities in education toward working-class Latin@ immigrant students and their families.

This qualitative study involved individual, focus group, and member checking interviews with four Latin@ immigrant mothers in the San Francisco Bay Area. The goal of the study was to learn about the following areas: 1) the educational and schooling experiences and academic aspirations of the mothers, 2) the educational and schooling experiences of their children and grandchildren along with the mothers' academic aspirations for them, and 3) the mothers' schooling and education-related hopes for working-class Latin@ immigrant students in the United States in general.

The educational counterstories shared by the mothers provided very rich data and detail, powerfully contradicting deficit ideas in education about working-class Latin@ immigrant students and their families. The findings support the importance of bilingual education, bilingualism, and biliteracy. Furthermore, the study concludes that amazing educational counterstories like these should be used as tools in teacher and administrator preparation programs for bilingual and social justice educators. The rich data provided

by the counterstories is ideal material for teaching important educational concepts, theories, strategies, and methods.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

Nancy McNee	May 19, 2015
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Dissertation Committee

Susan Katz	May 19, 2015
Chairperson	Date
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Sarah Capitelli	May 19, 2015
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This dissertation is dedicated to all the teachers in the New Latino Diaspora (Murillo and Villenas, 1995) who are advocating for educational equity for working-class Latin@ immigrant students and bilingual students outside of liberal, progressive, supportive communities. In the small towns and the rural schools, when you feel like you are the only one who cares about social justice in education, do not give up. When it is lonely, awkward, and even scary to speak up- that is the most important time to do so. When you know that your silence would buy approval and acceptance for yourself and comfort for your colleagues and those in power, refuse to be silent! By taking a chance, you will make a difference and will be glad you did!

It is also dedicated to my aunt, Dr. Margaret Stanton. This journey has been much easier for me because I was not the first one in our family to take it. Thank you for your support and encouragement. Your love of teaching and learning is contagious and your interest in the Spanish language and Spanish-speaking world has positively influenced me ever since I was a little girl. Thank you for these gifts and for being a wonderful role model and inspiration. I am delighted that, as soon as you retired from your position as a Spanish professor, you began studying French! I want to be a lifelong learner, like you.

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CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

Working-class Latin@s, including immigrants, have a long history of fighting for high-quality, equitable education in the United States. Many Latin@s have resisted the marginalizing and conformist intentions of the schools and have struggled for an education reflective of their own linguistic and cultural heritage and corresponding to their political and social interests. According to San Miguel and Donato (2010), Latin@s in the United States, including immigrants and the working class, have overcome considerable obstacles in their historic quest for access to education, and they will continue to do so. Despite challenges such as campaigns to eliminate bilingual education, anti-immigrant sentiment, and increasing segregation, "These obstacles…will not halt the tremendous will of the Latino population to excel" (p. 44). History suggests that the Latin@ community's determination to preserve its culture and language and to obtain an equitable and quality education will continue and intensify in the near future.

Majoritarian storytellers, those in power who subscribe to the dominant narrative, have frequently characterized working-class Latin@ immigrant parents in the United States as not caring about education and schooling. However, scholars such as San Miguel and Donato (2010) have documented the many ways that Latin@ parents have fought for their children's education. Over centuries in the United States, Latin@ parent activists have expressed deep caring about education and resistance to discrimination in education in many different ways, including establishing their own schools, using lawsuits, and participating in boycotts, walkouts, and protests.

An example from this long history of struggle by working-class Latin@ parents in the United States for equal education for their children is the *Mendez v. Westminster* class-action lawsuit filed in March, 1945 (Norris, 2004). Gonzalo Mendez, a Mexican immigrant father of three school-aged children in Westminster, gathered the support of other Latin@ immigrant parents to fight for the end of segregated schooling in Orange County, California. Mendez was an asparagus farmer in rural Orange County. Seven years before Brown vs. the Board of Education, Mendez successfully led a campaign to end the separate schooling of Mexican American children in Orange County's fifteen "Mexican schools" (Norris, 2004).

Background and Need for the Study

According to a report from the Pew Hispanic Center (Fry & Taylor, 2013), 69% of Latin@ high school graduates in 2012 had enrolled in college for the following fall, as compared to 67% of white high school graduates. Between 2000 and 2012, the share of Latin@ high school graduates enrolling immediately in college increased from 49% to 69%. This represents a long-term increase in Latin@ college-going which accelerated with the beginning of the recession in 2008, in contrast to white college-going which has decreased slightly.

Furthermore, Fry and Taylor (2013) reported that the percentage of Latin@ high school dropouts in 2012 was half of what it was in 2000, with a decrease from 28% to 14%. Yet the dropout rate among whites during the same time period only declined by 2%. Fry and Taylor credited these positive trends in Latin@ educational indicators to "…the importance that Latino families place on a college education" (p. 5).

As of 2012, Latin@s were, for the first time, the largest non-white group among four-year college and university students in the United States (Fry & Lopez, 2012). In addition, in 2011 Latin@s made up 25.2% of 18- to 24-year-old students enrolled in two-year colleges. Fry and Lopez stated "…population growth alone does not explain all the enrollment gains made by Hispanic students in recent years" (p. 5) and emphasized that both greater eligibility and demographic trends have led to the growth in the number of Latin@ young people enrolled in college.

The number of college degrees earned by Latin@s has also reached a new high (Fry & Lopez, 2012). In 2010, 140,000 Latin@s earned bachelors and 112,000 earned associate's degrees. In only one academic year (2010-2011), the number of Latin@ college students grew to 2.1 million, an increase of 15%, or 265,000 students. Latin@ college enrollments increased by 24% between 2009 and 2010. Also as of 2012, Latin@ representation among the traditional college student population in the United States matched their overall population representation, which Fry and Lopez called "a significant milestone" (p. 7).

In 2012, the Editorial Projects in Education (E.P.E.) Research Center focused on Latin@ graduation rates in school systems with large Latin@ populations (Swanson, 2012). The research center identified 134 majority-Latino districts in the United States with enrollments of a minimum of 10,000 students. Of these 134 districts spread across 14 states, graduation rates for Latin@s exceeded expectations by margins ranging from 1 to 22 percentage points in 38 districts. Results indicated that three of the top four districts were in California. The top district was Lompoc Unified School District, where 89 percent of Latin@ students graduated; other high-performing districts were Ceres

Unified and Merced Union. Lompoc is near the coast, north of Los Angeles, and Ceres and Merced are in the Central Valley.

The Pew Hispanic Center (2009) reported that, according to a national survey of Latin@s ages 16 to 25, "…nearly all young Latinos believe that it is necessary to have a college education to get ahead in life" (p. 50). While 82% of all young people in general believed this, even more young Latin@s -89%- believed it. Latin@s ages 16 and older were also more likely than the overall U.S. population ages 16 and older to agree that a college education helped one get ahead in life -88% and 74%, respectively. Among foreign-born young Latin@s, 94% said that a college education was important, while 86% of second-generation young Latin@s and 84% of third generation young Latin@s held the same belief. Among Spanish-dominant young Latin@s, 97% said that a college education was important, while 89% of bilingual youths and 83% of English-dominant youths agreed.

The 2009 National Survey of Latinos (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009) concluded "Latino youths are not the only ones to place a great emphasis on a college education; so do their parents" (p. 50). More than three quarters (77%) of young Latin@s said that their parents thought going to college was the most important thing for them to do after high school graduation, in contrast to only 11% who reported that their parents thought the most important thing was working full-time.

In summary, much recent research on Latin@s, education, and educational attainment shows positive trends. Yet there are still many arenas where majoritarian voices continue to tell deficit stories about Latin@s and schooling. Because these mainstream stories have been accepted as the norm for so long, it is difficult to interrupt

them. Even when tellers of majoritarian stories are exposed to research that counters their deficit ideas, they often seem to cling stubbornly to subtractive theories about students, parents, and families. These theories highlight their weaknesses and ignore their strengths (Valenzuela, 1999).

Statement of the Problem

Despite a growing body of countering evidence, the myth persists that Latin@ parents of low socioeconomic status do not value education (Valencia & Black, 2002). The myth blames unequal outcomes in schooling for Latin@ students on the supposedly faulty value systems of their parents:

> …the basis for the myth that Mexican Americans do not value education stems from the general model of deficit thinking, and from the specific variant of putative familial deficits. The argument goes as follows: Given that Mexican Americans do not (allegedly) hold education high in their value hierarchy, this leads to inadequate familial socialization for academic competence, which in turn, contributes to the school failure of Mexican American children and youths. Furthermore, the myth of Mexican Americans' indifference to the value of education can be more fully understood when viewed as part of a historical tradition of deficit thinking in which Mexican Americans are described under the "Mexican American cultural model (stereotype)" in which their value orientations are presented as the root cause of their social problems (Valencia, 2010, pp. 131-132).

The myth and the historical tradition of deficit thinking persist and continue to be used as excuses and explanations for inequitable experiences and outcomes in education for Latin@ youth. Latin@ youths themselves, and their parents, families, and communities continue to be blamed for structural and systemic inequalities.

The educational counterstories of the working-class Latin@ immigrant mothers in this study are powerful tools for combatting deficit perceptions of Latin@ families. The detailed accounts provided by the participants provide much evidence to counter the mindsets of those who hold subtractive views. Counterstories like these can be used to

help eliminate excuses used by educational professionals to explain unequal educational outcomes, thus allowing those in the field of education to focus on actual systemic problems.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the educational counterstories of four Latin@ immigrant mothers living in San Francisco, California. In sharing their counterstories, the mothers in the study teach us in their own words and in rich detail what they really believe and have experienced related to education and schooling. In doing so, they take back the power from those who have described them using deficit views. In using their own voices to define themselves and their families, they provide impetus for abandoning deficit myths and investing all energy into eliminating authentic structural impediments in schooling.

Significance of the Study

This study aimed to add to a growing body of literature using counterstories to challenge deficit views of Latin@ immigrant parents and schooling. The study provided an opportunity for the mothers to voice their own beliefs, values, and hopes about schooling. If future and current teachers, staff, and administrators take the time and invest the effort to find out what Latin@ immigrant parents really believe about education, rather than accepting dominant narratives as truth, perhaps a new kind of mutual respect and collaboration will be possible between educators and Latin@ immigrant parents which will help maximize educational outcomes for Latin@ students.

According to Montoya (2002), "Stories must move us to action and inform our praxis…storytelling and other critical tools must refashion our curricula and pedagogies"

(p. 246). Really hearing the counterstories of immigrant parents could be an important first step in a journey towards structural change in education. According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), "The 'voice' component of critical race theory provides a way to communicate the experience and realities of the oppressed, a first step on the road to justice" (p. 58).

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the participants' stories describing their own educational and schooling trajectories?
2. What are the participants' stories describing the educational and schooling trajectories of their children and grandchildren?
3. What are the participants' hopes regarding the future of education and schooling for working-class Latin@ students in the United States?

Theoretical Framework

According to Solórzano and Yosso (2002), counterstorytelling is a manner of telling the stories of people whose experiences are not frequently told. A counterstory is a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging majoritarian or dominant stories of racial privilege. The power of counterstories is that they can shatter complacency, further the struggle for racial reform, and challenge the majoritarian discourse on race. Moreover, counterstories can strengthen traditions of cultural, social, and political resistance and survival.

According to Yosso (2006), critical race theory (CRT) originated in law schools in the late 1980's with a group of scholars motivated to study and challenge racism and

race matters in society and in the U.S. legal system. These legal scholars (Derrick Bell, Kimberly Crenshaw, etc.) believed that critical theory was limited by its separation from the study of racism and race. They argued that critical theory within the field of law excluded the lived experiences and histories of People of Color and that critical legal scholars needed to examine race and racism in order to offer strategies for social transformation. Similarly, scholars in history and social science, and especially in women's and ethnic studies, were presenting these arguments.

CRT is rooted in the scholarly traditions of internal colonialism, cultural nationalism, Marxism/neo-Marxism, U.S./third-world feminisms, and ethnic studies (Yosso, 2006). In the beginning, CRT scholarship focused on the failures and shortcomings of civil rights legislative efforts. Scholars challenged the Black/white binary in CRT literature and, as a result, the tree of CRT branched out to include LatCrit, AsianCrit, TribalCrit, FemCrit, and WhiteCrit.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) made the first argument for a need for Critical Race Theory in education. They claimed that just as civil rights law has been regularly subverted to benefit whites (as in the case of desegregation and re-segregation in schooling), multicultural education has also been subverted to benefit those in power. More specifically, "…the current multicultural paradigm is mired in liberal ideology that offers no radical change in the current order" (p. 62). Unlike multicultural education, Critical Race Theory in education requires a serious critique of both the status quo and proposed reforms. The multicultural education paradigm is not enough because it claims to maintain the spirit and intent of justice for the oppressed without challenging the hegemonic rule of the oppressor.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) outlined the characteristics of a critical race methodology in education. A critical race methodology in education recognizes the intercentricity of racialized oppression. This methodology acknowledges the layers of subordination based on sexuality, accent, phenotype, surname, immigration status, class, gender, and race. In addition, a critical race methodology in education exposes deficit-informed research that distorts and silences the epistemologies of People of Color, rejects the misconception of an objective or neutral researcher, and challenges white privilege.

This methodology also recognizes that multiple layers of discrimination and oppression must be challenged with multiple forms of resistance. Furthermore, critical race methodology in education challenges traditional theories, texts, and research paradigms used to explain the experiences of People of Color. It reveals deficit-informed methods and research that distort and silence the experiences of People of Color. Instead, it focuses on their classed, gendered, and racialized experiences as sources of strength. Finally, a critical race methodology in education uses the methodological base and transdisciplinary knowledge of law, history, sociology, women's studies, and ethnic studies to guide research that is better informed of the effects of classism, sexism, and racism on People of Color.

LatCrit is one of the branches of the tree of CRT. According to Solórzano and Yosso (2002), LatCrit extends critical race discussions to Latinas/Latinos and Chicanas/Chicanos in education. Solórzano and Yosso adapted information from the *LatCrit Primer* (2000) to create a working definition of a LatCrit theory in education:

> A LatCrit theory in education is a framework that can be used to theorize and examine the ways in which race and racism explicitly and implicitly impact on the educational structures, processes, and discourses that effect people of color generally and Latinas/os specifically. Important to this critical framework is a

> challenge to the dominant ideology, which supports deficit notions about students of color while assuming "neutrality" and "objectivity". Utilizing the experiences of Latinas/os, a LatCrit theory in education also theorizes and examines that place where racism intersects with other forms of subordination such as sexism, classism, nativism, monolingualism, and heterosexism. LatCrit theory in education is conceived as a social justice project that attempts to link theory with practice, scholarship with teaching, and the academy with the community.

LatCrit acknowledges that educational institutions operate in contradictory ways with their potential to oppress and marginalize co-existing with their potential to emancipate and empower. LatCrit theory in education is transdisciplinary and draws on many other schools of progressive scholarship (p. 38). LatCrit's focus on discrimination based on additional factors such as immigration status, language, culture, accent, and surname (Yosso, 2006) is especially relevant in the case of this study of Latina mothers.

CRT and LatCrit in education are theoretical lenses that place at the center the daily, lived experiences of People of Color related to schooling and education. According to Yosso (2006), "CRT finds the experiential knowledge of People of Color legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination" (p. 7). While majoritarian storytelling in education dismisses stories of the lived experiences of People of Color as anecdotal, CRT and LatCrit recognize these counterstories as important tools for teaching about truth and bringing about transformation in education and society.

Definition of Terms

Counterstorytelling: A method of telling the stories of people whose experiences are not frequently told, including those on the margins of society. A tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging majoritarian tales of racial privilege (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Critical Race Methodology: A theoretically grounded approach to research that (a) foregrounds race and racism in all aspects of the research process; (b) challenges the traditional research paradigms, texts, and theories used to explain the experiences of Students of Color; (c) offers a transformative or liberatory solution to racial, class, and gender subordination; (d) focuses on the racialized, classed, and gendered experiences of Students of Color and (e) uses the interdisciplinary knowledge base of ethnic studies, women's studies, history, sociology, humanities, and the law to better understand the experiences of Students of Color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Critical Race Theory (CRT): A movement created and supported by activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship between race, racism, and power. The movement considers many of the issues of conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses but locates them within a broader perspective that includes history, economics, group- and self-interest, context, feelings, and the unconscious. The movement questions the foundations of the liberal order, including neutrality in the legal system (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Critical Race Theory in education: A framework or set of basic insights, methods, perspectives, and pedagogy that seeks to analyze, identify, and transform those cultural and structural aspects of education that maintain dominant and subordinate racial positions inside and outside of the classroom. Challenges biological and cultural deficit stories using counterstories, historiographies, *corridos*, oral traditions, films, poetry, and *actos* (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Deficit Thinking: A theory that educators, scholars, and policymakers have advanced to explain school failure among low-SES Students of Color. The deficit thinking model is

an endogenous theory that claims that a student who fails in school does so because of internal deficits or deficiencies. Adherents posit that these deficits manifest in linguistic shortcomings, limited intellectual abilities, immoral behavior, and lack of motivation to learn. Deficit thinking has a long history in the United States and over time, proponents have blamed supposed deficits on genetics, familial socialization, culture and class (Valencia, 2010).

Educational trajectories: Often-followed sequences of education-related transitions that are influenced by structural and cultural forces (Pallas, 2003).

Latinas/Latinos and Latin@/Latin@s: Those who come from and identify with the countries of Latin America and those within the United States who are their descendants. The @ sign is the deference to the determination to develop and use nonsexist language (Wallerstein, 2006).

Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit): Scholarship that brings a Chican@, Latin@ consciousness to CRT, examining racialized layers of subordination based on surname, sexuality, accent, immigration status, phenotype, language, and culture. A LatCrit consciousness extends critical race discussions to address the layers of racialized subordination that compose Latin@ and Chican@ experiences in the United States and globally (Yosso, 2006).

Majoritarian storytelling: A method of recounting the perspectives and experiences of people with social and racial privilege. Majoritarian stories told through academia and the mass media are based on stereotypes. Majoritarian narratives silence and dismiss people who offer evidence that contradicts the racially unbalanced portrayals of People of Color (Yosso, 2006).

Race/Racism: Eurocentric accounts of U.S. history reveal race to be a socially constructed category that was created to differentiate racial groups and to demonstrate the dominance or superiority of one race over another (Banks, 1993).

White privilege: A system of benefits and opportunities bestowed upon people only because they are white (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In this review of the literature, I began by examining recent writing by Richard Valencia (2010), a leading scholar in challenging contemporary deficit thinking about Students of Color and their families in the field of education. Valencia's explanation of the primary reason why deficit thinking remains prevalent (despite much recent scholarship discrediting its foundations) provides the departure point for the body of the literature review. Next, I presented literature on the genre of counterstories, which has proved successful in efforts to combat deficit thinking. Finally, I explored recent education studies and literature which specifically employed counterstories to challenge deficit views of working-class Latin@ immigrant parents.

Challenging Contemporary Deficit Thinking

According to Valencia (2010),

> …one aspect of deficit thinking that fails to die is the major myth that low-SES parents of color typically do not value the importance of education, fail to inculcate such a value in their children, and seldom participate—through parental engagement activities—in the education of their offspring (p. 131).

Valencia credited the prevalence of persistent deficit thinking in education to the comparative ease of blaming individual students and families for academic failure in contrast to the challenge of recognizing and transforming structural inequality at the micro and macro levels. If students supposedly fail in school because of their own internal deficiencies or the imagined shortcomings of their parents, families, or communities, then school personnel are relieved of all responsibility to change practice

and policy. This "victim blaming" (p. 18) is a person-centered explanation of the academic failure of diverse individuals from lower SES backgrounds.

There are six characteristics of deficit thinking in the context of schooling (Valencia, 2010) including victim blaming, oppression, pseudoscience, temporal changes, educability, and heterodoxy. Victim blaming bases students' poor performance in school on their supposed motivational and cognitive deficits. Oppression occurs because of the unequal power arrangements between deficit thinkers and Students of Color from lower socioeconomic classes. The deficit thinking model is a form of pseudoscience in which researchers function within a framework of "deeply embedded negative biases toward people of color, pursue such work in methodologically flawed ways, and communicate their findings in proselytizing manners" (p. 18). The deficit thinking model has reflected temporal changes in pseudoscientific thinking by subscribing to fads in the research such as a belief in the existence of "low-grade genes" (p. 18), inadequate familial socialization, and inferior culture and class. The deficit thinking model does not only contain these descriptive, explanatory, and predictive elements. It is also a prescriptive model rooted in perceptions of educability of low-SES Students of Color. The final characteristic of deficit thinking within the context of schooling is heterodoxy, which has come to play an important role in the ideological and scholarly spheres where deficit thinking has been situated.

The Genre of Counterstories

In his writing about counterstories in the field of law, Delgado (1989) claimed that, "Stories are the oldest, most primordial meeting ground in human experience. Their allure will often provide the most effective means of overcoming otherness, of forming a

new collectivity based on the shared story" (p. 2438). Delgado used the term counterstorytelling for the telling of stories within the field of law that sought to challenge the status quo and shatter complacency. Counterstories are devices or tools "whose purpose and effect is to discourage and reduce prejudice" (p. 2438).

Delgado (1989) urged those in the field of law to use counterstories about brutalization, victimization, and oppression as a way of bringing about the liberation and healing of the oppressed. Delgado described how both listeners and tellers of counterstories benefit. The tellers of counterstories "have known instinctively that stories are an essential tool to their own survival and liberation" (p. 2436). For members of what Delgado called "outgroups" (p. 2412), counterstories provide a means of psychic self-preservation and lessen their subordination. Members of what Delgado named "the majority race" (p. 2439) benefit from listening to counterstories because they enrich the impoverished view of the world that results from ethnocentrism and counter racial and class-based isolation.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) define counterstories as:

> …a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society). The counter-story is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege. Counter-stories can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform…Indeed, within the histories and lives of people of color, there are numerous unheard counter-stories. Storytelling and counter-storytelling these experiences can help strengthen traditions of social, political, and cultural survival and resistance
> (p. 32).

Solórzano and Yosso described three main types of counterstories. First, personal stories or narratives give autobiographical accounts of individuals' experiences with various forms of racism and sexism. Secondly, other people's stories or narratives reveal

experiences with and responses to racism and sexism, told in a third person voice: "This type of counternarrative usually offers biographical analysis of the experiences of a person of color, again in relation to U.S. institutions and in a sociohistorical context" (p. 33). Lastly, composite stories or narratives are based upon different forms of data and recount the racialized, sexualized, and classed experiences of people of color. These counterstories may use both biographical and autobiographical analyses, as authors create composite characters and place them in social, historical, and political settings in which they discuss racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of subordination.

Counterstories serve at least four functions (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). They build community among marginalized groups by putting a familiar and human face on educational practice and theory. They also challenge the supposed wisdom of those at the center of society by providing a context for understanding and transforming established belief systems. In addition, they open new views into the reality of marginalized groups by showing different possibilities and demonstrating how the marginalized are not alone in their position. Furthermore, they teach others that by combining elements from the current reality and the counterstory, another world is possible that is better than either the reality or the story alone.

Yosso (2006) explained Critical Race Counterstorytelling as a method of recounting the perspectives and experiences of socially and racially marginalized people. According to Yosso, counterstories raise critical consciousness about racial and social injustice by reflecting on the lived experiences of People of Color. Counterstorytellers recognize the rich and enduring traditions of storytelling in Communities of Color as sources of valuable knowledge and data and challenge majoritarian stories that distort and

omit the realities and histories of these communities. With the goal of questioning the racially stereotypical portrayals in majoritarian stories, counterstories have traditionally drawn from judicial records, academic research, and humanities and social science research.

Yosso (2006) stated, "Majoritarian stories along the Chicana/o educational pipeline often feature Chicana/o parents who supposedly do not care about educating their children" and "The majoritarian story asserts: if Chicana/o students perform poorly in school, then their parents probably do not 'value' education enough to inculcate academic excellence in their children" (p. 9). While Yosso acknowledged the importance of countering these majoritarian stories, she also pointed out that counterstories can go way beyond this and become critical tools for transforming education and society.

Tate (1997) wrote about the applications of Delgado's method of counterstorytelling and urged readers to keep in mind Delgado's warnings of the possible dangers of storytelling, especially for a first-time storyteller. For example, a listener to an unfamiliar counterstory may reject both the story and the teller because "the story reveals hypocrisy and increases discomfort" (p. 220). In addition, the listener may reinterpret the new story, framing it within her own belief system and therefor reversing or muting the meaning. Tate emphasized Delgado's (1995) warnings that co-opting another person's story, refocusing the original story, and muting and devaluing another's meanings must be avoided.

According to Tate (1997), Delgado (1995) also explained two other main strategies used by tellers of majoritarian stories to lessen the power of counterstories. They are praising the stories for their emotional qualities and translating a counterstory

into a safe conceptual state. Classifying an article or a story as individual soul searching allows those in power to "selectively ignore the uncomfortable truths about race, society, and injustice" (p. 222). Furthermore, translating a discomforting counterstory or academic work into "a familiar, safe, and tame conceptual state" (p. 222) reduces its power.

Challenging Deficit Views of Working-Class Latin@ Immigrant Parents With Counterstories

According to Fuentes (2011), "Counter-stories…provide new narratives that include traditionally marginalized communities in the development of a new vision of education" (pp. 397-398). From 2001-2004, Fuentes was an active member of a Latin@ parent organization called VOCES in a Northern California city. VOCES was formed at a local Catholic church in the city after the priest at the parish invited professional organizers from PICO, a national faith-based organization. The priest was motivated to take action because of the many stories of educational inequity he was hearing from his Latin@ parishioners, who were also parents of students at the local high school. As both an active member of VOCES and a researcher, Fuentes documented the actions taken by VOCES members in their struggle to achieve access to an equitable education for their own children and other Students of Color.

Fuentes' (2011) study is an example of a counterstory because the Latin@ members of VOCES successfully challenged "the way they as a community were being defined" (p. 413). Furthermore, it illustrates the power of counterstories to challenge deficit views of working-class Latin@ immigrant parents:

> …schools are often unwelcoming spaces for low-income parents and parents of color. Often times these same parents are seen as obstacles to academic success and as uncaring, non-involved members of the school community. In effect this

> labeling of whole communities as the primary "problem" in the academic success of their children renders their everyday realities and aspirations invisible. VOCES' struggle sheds a light on the ways in which people who have been denied a voice find ways to be heard while raising questions regarding the meaning and forms of belonging" (p. 400).

Dyrness (2011) conducted another study that challenges the myth of Latin@ parents not caring about education. From 2001 to 2004, Dyrness chronicled the experiences of a group called *Madres Unidas* (Mothers United), formed by five Latin@ mothers who participated in the new small schools reform movement in the flatlands of Oakland, California. As both a researcher and member of *Madres Unidas*, Dyrness documented the reproduction of social injustice within the well-intentioned, progressive school change movement. The mothers of *Madres Unidas* found that teachers, administrators, and professional school reformers wanted the participation and input of the Latin@ mothers and working-class Latin@ parents in general only on a very superficial level. When *Madres Unidas* attempted to communicate real concerns, they were called difficult and demanding.

According to Dyrness (2011), a counterstory "necessarily disrupts the dominant story," while "majoritarian stories fault Latino communities and students for unequal schooling outcomes" (p. 4). When the mothers became aware that they were considered by other members of the reform movement to be among the "least powerful actors" (p. 4), they responded by creating a counterspace. The group used the kitchen of one of the *Madres* as a safe place to discuss the "politics of exclusion" (p. 156) that they were experiencing as marginalized members of the reform movement. Just as the members of VOCES (Fuentes, 2011) contributed to transformational change in ways that genuinely served the needs of the Latin@ community and truly represented who they were and what

they believed in, *Madres Unidas* also "drew on cultural resources, experiences, and strategies for change that differed from those of professionals in the movement and were not often recognized or granted legitimacy by professionals"
(p. 5).

The ways in which the Latin@ parents in VOCES (Fuentes, 2011) and *Madres Unidas* (Dyrness, 2011) supported their children's educational trajectories contradict dominant narratives of what Latin@ parental participation in schools 'should' be. Rather, these Latin@ parents challenged and continue to challenge deficit views and being defined by others with their own counterstories of advocating for their children's educations through their own cultural resources.

While Fuentes (2011) and Dyrness (2011) engaged in research on the West Coast, in an area where Latin@ communities have a long history, counterstories have also begun emerging from areas with relatively new Latin@ populations. Gallo and Wortham (2012) used film to document the counterstories of twelve Mexican immigrant families in the small Northeastern suburban community of Marshall, part of the New Latino Diaspora or NLD (Murillo & Villenas, 1995), where 27% of the district's students were Latin@ and Spanish-dominant, including 44% of kindergarteners. However, most of the teachers in the district were white monolingual females who lived in wealthier suburbs nearby. The dominant discourse in the district was that the new Mexican parents did not care about their children's educations. Gallo and Wortham used the film that they created, *Sobresalir*, to counter deficit myths, showing the film in professional development sessions and using it in local teacher formation classes. In the subtitled film, parents explained how deeply they cared about everything related to their children's

educations, including homework, parent-teacher communication, and equitable schooling.

Some positive outcomes of the film project included a weekly bilingual resource room at elementary schools in the district, where parents and children could come to ask questions about homework and academics in general, and regular parent visits to classrooms, where they shared their funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 1995). *Sobresalir* was highly effective in countering dominant deficit discourses in the district; "Parents' counter-stories in *Sobresalir* opened teachers' eyes to legitimate concerns that they had not previously considered and gave them new repertoires to use with their Mexican immigrant students and families and to understand their strengths and values" (p. 11). According to Gallo and Wortham (2012), counterstories illustrate alternatives to dominant discourses and "films appear to be a promising medium for counter-storytelling and for the professional development of educators who work with immigrant children and their parents" (p.14).

It is important to note that longitudinal studies have also documented the power of counterstories for challenging deficit views of Latin@ parents in education. Delgado Gaitan (2012) led a 15-year longitudinal research project in Carpintería, California. Throughout the years of the study, Delgado Gaitan witnessed many gains and accomplishments of working-class Latin@ immigrant parents as they mobilized and organized as a community to "maximize student achievement through parent involvement" (p. 307). The Latin@ parents countered significant linguistic and socioeconomic barriers by building networks with each other, which transformed their lives and empowered them.

Delgado Gaitan (2012) recorded evidence of deficit thinking among white teachers about Latin@ students, families, homes, and communities as exposed by this quote from a teacher at a school in Carpintería, "Some students come to school hungry, dirty, and ill. They come from places that cannot be defined as homes and they arrive at school unprepared to learn or behave properly" (p. 307). Delgado Gaitan expressed her conviction that educators have held "diminishing beliefs about Latino students' home life" (p. 305) for too long. She concluded that bilingual parents participated actively in their children's education, contrary to majoritarian stories about Latin@ immigrant parent participation in schooling.

The Latin@ parents in Carpintería organized their group outside of the schools and created cultural and social support systems that resulted in a political presence in the community and at the schools. They reached out to one another and expanded their access to resources and opportunities by building upon the strengths of a common language, family ties, and cultural values. In this example of a counterstory, the Latin@ immigrant parents "managed to merge their efforts toward change, ultimately transforming their life of strife to one of transcendence" (Delgado Gaitan, 2012, p. 310). According to Delgado Gaitan, the parents used their culture and language to learn a new literacy, which empowered them to change the power relationships between themselves and the schools. The new literacy of political involvement in the schools gave voice to injustice, isolation, and finally, empowerment.

Counterstories about working-class Latin@ parents and education have also emerged from Texas. Valencia and Black (2002) interviewed four grandparents and six parents from six Mexican American families in Austin, Texas. The results of this

transgenerational case study countered the major myth "…that Mexican Americans, particularly parents of low-socioeconomic status background, do not value education…" and "…As a consequence, the myth asserts, Mexican American children experience poor academic achievement" (p. 81).

Valencia and Black's (2002) case study found that the Mexican American families demonstrated the importance they placed on education and schooling through "rich, varied, and positive expressions" (p. 99). These expressions included both external and internal involvements with school. Among examples of external involvements with schools were school visits, initiation of teacher contact and regular communication, and participation in the Parent Teacher Association. Some examples of internal involvement with school were helping children and grandchildren with homework, walking children to and from school, volunteering in schools, and sharing *consejos,* or "advice-giving narratives" (p. 94) about the importance of formal schooling.

One grandmother in the Valencia and Black (2002) study shared the story of her heartbreak when she had to leave school as a teenager during the Depression. In order for her family members to have enough food to eat, she had to begin washing clothing for $2.50 per week. The grandmother used the story to motivate her children and grandchildren to study and to remind them of the sacrifices she had made for their education.

Valencia and Black (2002) expressed the importance and urgency of countering deficit views of Latin@ parents in the field of education, "…it is quite evident that the myth of Mexican Americans not valuing education has evolved into a stereotype of epic proportions" (p. 92). According to the authors, attributing the achievement gap between

Mexican American and white students to a value orientation of Mexican American indifference to the importance of education is racist, irresponsible, and baseless. Counterstories such as those of the four grandparents and six parents are powerful tools for debunking these myths.

A scholar who has demonstrated the value of composite counterstories for challenging inequitable structures and systems in education is Tara Yosso. As a reader and a teacher, I especially appreciate the way that Yosso makes theory and history real and accessible through her counterstories. Yosso (2006) provided a composite counterstory about a group of Latin@ mothers working for change at an urban elementary school in the Southwest. Named *Madres por la educación*, the group of concerned mothers met in the evening at a café/art gallery to discuss strategies for improving the quality of education for their children at the school. Through the conversation of the immigrant and Chican@ mothers, Yosso communicated her thoughts on deficit thinking and presented her ideas for combatting it. Paulo Freire even appeared at one of the meetings of *Madres por la educación* (p. 51). Yosso creatively connected deficit models of schooling to Freire's magical consciousness and naïve consciousness stages.

According to Freire (1973), at the magical consciousness stage of thinking, facts are apprehended and attributed to a superior power. Magical consciousness is characterized by a fatalism in which humans resign themselves to the impossibility of resisting the power of facts. At this stage, no connections to causality are made. At the naïve consciousness stage, humans consider themselves superior to facts, in control of facts, and therefor free to understand facts as they please. This stage views causality as a

static, established fact. At the critical consciousness stage, humans accurately grasp true causality, such as structural and systemic causality, in a critical understanding of reality. Deficit thinking models lack this grasp of true (systemic and structural) causality.

Yosso (2006) expressed the belief that Chican@ parents are some of the most marginalized but important voices in Chican@ elementary education. According to Yosso, "Deficit models blame Chicana/o students and communities for lacking certain attributes and therefore causing low academic outcomes. Little empirical evidence exists to support deficit models" (p. 22) and "…deficit thinking permeates U.S. society, and both schools and those who work in schools mirror these beliefs" (p. 23). Many educators insist that low academic achievement results from parents' supposed lack of involvement. However, as Yosso explained, the problem is actually that educators and schools usually do not understand or recognize Latin@ parents' special ways of teaching and supporting education.

Mainstream educators, administrators, and schools do not recognize the cultural wealth which Latin@ students, parents, families, and communities bring to schools, passed down from generations. Yosso (2006) described how this cultural wealth consists of many different forms of capital; aspirational, linguistic, navigational, social, familial, and resistant. Yosso explained that deficit views of Latin@ students and parents are prevalent precisely because tellers of majoritarian stories are ignorant of the many types of resources (capital) that Latin@ students and parents possess. Ideally, these forms of capital would become the center of the curriculum, which Yosso believes would optimize education for Latin@ students.

In Yosso's (2006) composite counterstory, *Las madres por la educación* made a plan to teach educators and administrators at their children's school about the different forms of capital their children brought to the school and how this cultural wealth needed to become the center of the curriculum at the school. The parents taught the teachers and administrators in an example of problem-posing methodology, which countered the prevalent deficit thinking and banking methodology still found in many schools.

In contrast to majoritarian stories about low-SES Latin@ parents supposedly having a negative influence on their children's educational trajectories, Ceja (2004) found that parents' stories of struggle served as inspiration for college-bound Latin@ students, making the students even more determined to succeed academically. Ceja interviewed 20 Chican@ high school seniors in Los Angeles with the goal of learning how the students' educational plans had been influenced by their parents. All of the students were college-bound and set to become first-generation college students. Ceja selected participants from working-class Mexican immigrant households in which most parents had not had opportunities to earn high school diplomas. According to Ceja, cultural deficit models that assume that low-income Mexican immigrant parents do not hold high educational aspirations for their children are seriously flawed.

Ceja's (2004) study found that parental encouragement and parents' educational aspirations for their daughters played a key role in all 20 participants' decisions to pursue higher education. "Contrary to cultural deficit perceptions on the role of Mexican families, and consistent with earlier work on the educational achievement of Chicana students, the important role of parents on academic success and educational aspirations was mentioned consistently by all 20 Chicana students in the current study" (p. 345).

The parents in the study motivated their daughters by sharing the stories of their own everyday hardships and struggles, past and present. Many of the parents had had to leave elementary school to begin working to help support their families and most continued to face difficult economic situations, working hard, low-paying jobs in the United States. They also faced the challenges of learning English and regularizing their immigration statuses. These honest stories of *lucha* (struggle) were always framed within a context of resiliency, possibility, and hope for a better future.

Non-mainstream approaches such as storytelling used by Mexican parents to transmit educational messages to their children are not recognized in majoritarian stories or in mainstream schools. Ceja (2004) urged schools to "acknowledge that Mexican parents, despite their low levels of educational and occupational attainment, act as an important resource in the schooling process of their children" (p. 358). Ceja credited the powerful educational resiliency of the Chican@ students in the study to the ways that they had found meaning, motivation, and aspiration in their parents' stories of struggle. Ceja encouraged schools to increase the educational success and college participation of Chican@ students by structuring educational opportunities with the goal of developing educational resiliency through the use of cultural resources present in the community, such as parents' stories of struggle.

In an example of how strongly majoritarian storytellers adhere to their deficit beliefs about Latin@ parents despite evidence to the contrary, Miano (2011) documented all of the ways in which Latin@ mothers at an elementary school in Northern California participated in their children's educations and the ways in which administrators and teachers at the school dismissed the mothers' involvement, refusing to recognize it at all.

As part of a larger ethnographic study, Miano interviewed seven Mexican immigrant mothers of students at an elementary school in the Silicon Valley of California. Her focus was on parental involvement practices, with special attention given to parental literacy practices as a particular type of parental involvement. Miano described the school as low-income, with 95% Latin@ students. The mothers' educational and literacy backgrounds varied, from one without any access to formal schooling whom Miano classified as pre-print literate, to one who had graduated from a vocational high school in Mexico.

In the review of the literature, Miano (2011) described a trend in which studies pointing to the supposed failure of marginalized parents to support the formal schooling of their children neglect to fairly define parental participation, relying instead on assumptions that outline middle class, white, dominant forms of parental participation practices. She further explained the serious problem with this prevalent shortcoming in the research, "An unfortunate byproduct of this trend has been an unwitting engagement in mythmaking, a form of stereotyping projected largely upon racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, or otherwise societally marginalized parents based on a presumption of deficit" (p. 30).

The results of Miano's (2011) study indicated that the seven focal mothers and Latin@ parents at the school in general were "highly active and supportive of their children's education, as well as their own lifelong learning" (p. 37). Miano identified six broad categories of parental participation in schooling: presence at school, school and community activities, moral support, material support, role modeling, and communication with and within the school. In addition to supporting the formal

schooling of their children in these ways, all of the focal mothers regularly attended Spanish language literacy and English classes to advance their own learning.

Despite all that the focal mothers were doing at the school to support the formal schooling of their children and to continue their own learning, Miano (2011) found that teachers and administrators at the school rigidly adhered to their own definitions and prescriptions for parental involvement, remaining oblivious to the women's activities and contributions. Miano suggested that, rather than expecting working-class Latin@ immigrant parents to conform to majoritarian expectations for parental involvement, teachers and administrators should "consider ways to expand our vision of involvement and provide spaces and resources to further encourage it" (p. 37).

Much deficit thinking is based on stereotypes. Menard-Warwick (2007) conducted a study which demonstrated the importance of resisting the essentialization of Latin@ immigrant parents. The study explored the multiple ways in which two Nicaraguan immigrant mothers in the San Francisco Bay Area supported the formal schooling and informal learning of their elementary school-aged daughters. The two women lived together with their husbands (who were brothers) and daughters in an extended-family household. According to Menard-Warwick, both women from the same small town had been born into political unrest and economic instability in Nicaragua. Despite these similarities in backgrounds, the mothers supported the formal schooling of their daughters in very different ways, and a goal of Menard-Warwick's article was "to show the diversity of approaches to literacy and schooling that can exist within one household" (p. 125).

In Nicaragua Raquel had left school after sixth grade to help care for her grandmother while Brenda had graduated from high school (Menard-Warwick, 2007). In the U.S. both women were students in a local adult ESL program. Although they began the program at the same time, Brenda dedicated time outside of class to studying and she advanced through the program more quickly. The two women had three daughters attending the same under-resourced elementary school. Brenda attended meetings and conferences at the school and volunteered in her daughter's classroom, while Raquel joined a "team of parents who did a thorough cleaning of the run-down school building, especially the bathrooms" (p. 130).

Brenda had dreams of going to college in the U.S. and having a career, while Raquel claimed not to be studious and stated that she wanted to learn just enough English to get a job to help her husband support the family. Brenda took her daughter to the public library more frequently but both mothers encouraged their daughters to read outside of school. In addition, both mothers believed in their daughters and had dreams for their futures, including college and careers, "with their long-term high expectations for their daughters' achievements, they countered societal beliefs about the life chances of Latino immigrant children, especially the undocumented; they were refusing to let economic and political limitations constrict their dreams" (Menard-Warwick, 2007, p. 133).

Menard-Warwick (2007) cautioned against essentializing Latin@ immigrant parent involvement in learning and schooling and described how, even within the same household and the same extended family, literacy and educational practices are not unitary and unchanging, "concrete support can take myriad forms, even within one

extended-family household" (p. 135). While Brenda's ways of supporting her daughter's schooling more closely resembled mainstream ideals of parental involvement, Menard-Warwick reminded readers that contributions like Raquel's cleaning of the school building "should not be underestimated" (p. 130). Menard-Warwick countered other parental involvement literature, urging that rather than one-sided efforts to either have schools teach parents about family literacy practices or educating teachers on the cultural characteristics of immigrant communities, "the results of this study point more to the value of learning directly from immigrant parents how best to support education in their families" (p. 135).

Mainstream research on family influence on schooling often focuses on nuclear families. However, a study conducted with youths in New York City indicated that extended family members also play a role for Latin@ and Black college-bound youths. Knight, Norton, Bentley, and Dixon (2004) led a one-year critical ethnography study with 27 Latin@ and Black ninth graders at a public high school. The main goal of the study was to document and analyze how ninth graders' families influenced their college-going processes. Knight et al. described the participating students as working-class and poor and the high school as under-resourced. The high school students acted as youth co-researchers, interviewing their immediate and extended family members. Each student researcher was given a tape recorder and a tape. Knight et al. reflected on the stories collected by the students that the "Counterstories work against traditional representations of these families as deficient, disinterested, with confused priorities, and responsible for their youth's failure to enter college" (p. 100). Each youth researcher was also

interviewed about her/his own perceptions of family members' influences and support around college-going processes.

Knight et al. (2004) found that while some of the ninth graders chose to interview their mothers and fathers, many others chose to interview extended family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. For example, Raquel, a Puerto Rican youth co-researcher, chose to interview her cousin Angel, who shared a very powerful and motivating counterstory. Angel's method of encouraging Raquel to go to college and to make the most of her opportunities involved speaking to her very honestly about his life situation at that time. Angel had not graduated from high school and was working as a painter to support his family and get by. He described the work as "backbreaking" (p. 115) and also dangerous, due to the chemicals involved. Angel spoke about the injustice of having to jeopardize one's health just to survive.

Knight et al. (2004) found that "These counterstories reconceptualize traditional storied perspectives of parent involvement in urban schools by addressing who, what, and how college-going processes are shared" (p. 116). The results of the study indicated a need for a reconceptualization from parent involvement to family involvement in new family-school partnerships that utilize, respect, and understand the ways that students find support for schooling through multiple interpersonal relationships. Counterstories like Angel's make visible the types of involvement that are spiritually, economically, racially, and linguistically relevant to the lives of young people like Raquel.

In Chicago, Olmedo (2003) found evidence of how Latin@ mothers and grandmothers cared deeply about education and the broader concept of *educación*, which includes not only formal schooling but also both moral values and manners (Valdés,

1996, p. 125). Olmedo interviewed four Mexican immigrant mothers living in the Pilsen area in the southern part of Chicago and six Puerto Rican grandmothers living in Humboldt Park, on the north side. At the time of the study, the Mexican women were participating in a family literacy workshop and the Puerto Rican women resided in a senior citizen residence. All of the women had experience raising children in urban neighborhoods and negotiating schooling for their children at Chicago-area public schools.

Olmedo (2003) found that both groups of women had used strategies for resistance when they felt that schools were not respecting their values and cultures. For example, Doña Carmen, one of the Puerto Rican grandmothers, had quit her job in a factory so that she could be more present at her children's school. She started a business cooking and selling traditional Puerto Rican food, getting up early in the morning to finish all of the work before taking her children to school. She wanted to be physically present at the school and in her children's lives because she felt that the children whose parents were absent did not learn *vergüenza* and were not able to resist negative peer pressure. According to Olmedo, "*Vergüenza*…can be translated either as shame, honor, or self-respect" (p. 382).

Doña Norma, one of the Mexican immigrant mothers, shared her concerns with her son's second grade teacher. She felt that he was not inculcating the value of *respeto* in the classroom because he was not strict and allowed the children to address him informally. Olmedo opined, "She also expressed herself assertively to the teacher. Such assertiveness was atypical for a Mexican immigrant mother addressing a professional" (p. 385).

Although Olmedo (2003) found that the Puerto Rican grandmothers and the Mexican immigrant mothers shared some of the same cultural values (*vergüenza*, *respeto*, and *educación*), she urged educators to remember that individuals do not respond to challenges to their value systems in "monolithic, stereotypical ways" (p. 391). Rather, when accommodating to a new environment, they engage in resistance and exercise agency, rely on their funds of knowledge to navigate changing circumstances, and develop multiple strategies in response to challenges. Olmedo concluded that schools should respect and welcome parents' cultural practices and beliefs as complimentary to the missions of schools, instead of viewing these beliefs and practices as non-productive challenges to institutional power. The counterstories Olmedo heard in Chicago made explicit that the Latin@ grandmothers and mothers not only cared deeply about formal schooling, or education, but also strongly desired *educación*, or moral education, so that their children and grandchildren would learn both content and how to be good people.

Majoritarian storytellers often evaluate Latin@ parents' involvement in their children's schooling based on what they do and do not see in schools. For example, some typical expectations of "good parents'" participation in their children's schooling might be joining the PTA or volunteering at school. However, majoritarian stories completely ignore all that working-class Latin@ immigrant parents do at home to teach and educate their children. Villenas (2001) conducted a study that provides excellent examples of the kinds of teaching Latin@ parents do outside of schools on a daily basis.

Villenas (2001) interviewed 11 Latina immigrant mothers in a small town in North Carolina. At the time of Villenas' study in the 1990's, the town was part of the New Latino Diaspora in North Carolina. Six of the women were from Mexico, two were

from Guatemala, and there was one woman each from El Salvador, Honduras, and Colombia. Villenas called the town "Hope City" and described it as a place filled with much benevolent racism expressed through deficit framing of Latina mothering. Education, health, and social service providers in Hope City constructed Latina mothers "as 'needy'—needing English, parenting skills, and health care—and 'lacking'—wanting language, cleanliness, adequate housing, and, most of all, knowledge of how to raise and educate their children in a 'modern' way" (p. 8). According to Villenas, ideas such as these commonly result in some of the key "insidious 'helping' practices of benevolent racism" (p. 8).

The 11 mothers in Villenas' (2001) study responded to this public deficit framing by creating their own counternarratives of education, claiming their voices to describe themselves as educated, moral, and dignified women and mothers. They narrated themselves as resourceful and intelligent women who knew how to raise children properly and challenged public constructions of them as "poor educators judged against the norms of 'superior' Western ways of rearing children" (p. 15). The mothers took pride in their roles as moral and cultural educators in the home, and were key resilient role models for their children in resisting racism and discrimination and in practicing cultural maintenance and pride.

According to Villenas (2001), the resistance and resilience nurtured by Latina mothers in their homes in Hope City is an important foundation for the community organizing and collective action that often follows when New Latino Diaspora communities develop into more established immigrant communities. The mothers in Hope City were teaching an understanding and critique of discrimination and racism and

were reclaiming their dignity. Villenas called this the "intimate education of the home" and emphasized the importance of valuing these teachings and bringing them out into the public, in order to collectively create change and transformation.

Villenas (2001) explained that Latin@ parents' teaching of resistance and resiliency within the home is the first step toward an organized community resistance and a united quest for equitable education. Cline and Necochea (2001) described what was possible when Latin@ parents organized and engaged the support of outside organizations in their battle for high-quality schooling for their children. Cline and Necochea's study documented Latin@ parent activism in Lompoc, California. The working-class Latin@ immigrant parents of children in the Lompoc Unified School District organized in the late 1990's to fight against the racist treatment of their children in the schools.

Led by a *campesino* named Rudolfo Bueno, the parents sought access for their children to bilingual programs and other high-quality programs for English Language Learners (Cline & Necochea, 2001). When the parents attempted to express their concerns at a school board meeting, they were shocked and angered when the president of the school board tried to silence their spokesperson (Mr. Bueno) by telling him that he was not allowed to deliver his speech in Spanish. The spokesperson finally convinced the president to allow him to speak in Spanish because 40 Spanish-speaking parents had come to the meeting to hear him speak.

Cline and Necochea (2001) reported that this experience in which the president of the school board belittled the concerns of the Latin@ immigrant parents and publicly humiliated their leader sparked a successful, long-term parent activism campaign.

Convinced that district administrators did not care about Latin@ children's access to an equitable education, the parents went outside of the district, seeking and winning the support of the California Department of Education and the Office of Civil Rights. These outside organizations agreed that Latin@ children's rights were being violated in the LUSD because they did not have access to quality bilingual and English Language Learner programs. They also agreed with the Latin@ parents' concerns that Latin@ students were failing and were being disciplined and suspended at a disproportionately higher rate than other students.

Even after Latin@ parents in Lompoc had been involved in activism and advocacy for their children's educational rights for several years, non-Latin@s in Lompoc still sent racist opinions about Latin@ parents not caring about education to the editorial section of the *Lompoc Record*. Cline and Necochea (2001) stated, "Some of the letters were especially acrimonious, with racist overtones and sarcasm, implying that the parents did not care about educating their children, or that the parents themselves were at fault for educational failure" (p. 106). This happened after Latin@ parents had dedicated countless hours to attending school board meetings, reaching out to outside organizations on behalf of their children's educational rights, and educating themselves about a school system that was not created to serve their families.

The persistent racism, lasting deficit views of Latin@ families, and continued majoritarian storytelling in Lompoc motivated the Latin@ parents to develop their activism from reactionary to proactive and according to Cline and Necochea, the parents became very skilled at advocating for their children's educational rights. As mentioned previously, a recent study (Swanson, 2012) found the graduation rate of 89% for Latin@

students in the Lompoc Unified School District to be the highest out of the 134 school districts included in that study. The Latin@ parents in Lompoc knew that a better reality was possible and they made it happen.

Within one of the most economically marginalized communities of Latin@ families, the migrant farmworker community, López (2001) found evidence of strong Latin@ parent support for and deep valuing of education. López interviewed and observed five migrant families living in the Texas Rio Grande Valley and selected the Padilla family as his focus of study. Mr. and Mrs. Padilla had grown up in poverty in Nuevo Leon, Mexico, and they met when both were working as farmworkers in California's Central Valley.

At the time of the study (López, 2001), four of the five Padilla children were college students and the youngest was a high school student. The four oldest children had graduated in the top ten of their high school classes and were pursuing majors in pre-medicine, biology, nursing, and business. The five Padilla children had worked beside their mother and father in the fields of California and Texas throughout their childhoods. Mr. Padilla explained that the purpose of having the children work in the fields was not to earn money for the family but rather, to teach them the value of hard work and, at the same time, the injustice of being paid so little for so many hours of backbreaking work.

In an interview, Mr. Padilla shared an experience with one of his sons. Watching his father load heavy boxes onto a truck, the son mentioned that it was getting late and asked when they would be able to leave. Mr. Padilla responded that they could leave when the work was finished because that was the way things were. The father and son then had the following conversation:

> "Dad, I'm gonna follow school. I don't want to do this all my life. You have your life, and I'm going to look for another." "Well you have the doors in front of you son. That's what we've told you all your life. You follow school." (Pause) Man, I got all choked up! I was very, very proud of my son (p. 432).

López (2001) described the Padilla family's story as "a counter-story of involvement, a story that has been suppressed by and excluded from the academic literature" (p. 418). According to López, migrant parents have been judged by the tellers of majoritarian stories to be uncaring and unconcerned about schooling because their forms of involvement in their children's schooling do not conform to majoritarian prescriptions of involvement. López recommended that schools listen to the subjugated narratives of migrant parents to begin to identify the ways that marginalized parents are already involved in their children's schooling, and to find creative ways to capitalize on these diverse forms of involvement.

López, Scribner, and Mahitivanichcha (2001) found that having school personnel who were able to relate to the experiences of Latin@ migrant parents had a very positive impact in Texas and Illinois. López et al. examined migrant parent relationships with schools in four high-performing migrant-impacted school districts. The researchers chose the four school districts because they had high rates of migrant student promotion, graduation, and attendance. In addition, they had high passing rates on state standardized tests and all of the districts had successful migrant parent involvement programs. The districts and schools had positive and constructive relationships with migrant parents because rather than having a goal of trying to make the parents fit the perceived needs of the school, as if seeing through a prescriptive, deficit mentality lens, the schools and districts sought to discover how they could best serve the needs of the migrant parents.

Many of the school and district personnel had also grown up in migrant families and so they respected and understood migrant experiences.

In a manner that preserved the dignity of the migrant parents, the schools and districts worked together to connect families with resources that improved their physical, economic, and social well-being. The schools and districts desired to help improve the overall well-being of the migrant families because they believed that when the migrant parents did not have to invest as much energy in the survival of their families they would be able to invest much more energy and time in their children's schooling. López et al. (2001) concluded that this did indeed happen in these four school districts. The researchers discovered that these schools and districts countered majoritarian stories in which "the concept of parental education has reified a deficit perspective" (p. 282) and reported "schools in this study fully recognized the cultural and educational strengths of migrant families" (p. 282).

Finally, Ramirez (2003) emphasized how Latin@ parents were aware of the deficit views teachers and administrators had of them and how the parents actively resisted and challenged these views. Ramirez interviewed 29 Latina immigrant mothers and 14 Latino immigrant fathers in a predominantly Latin@ community in Southern California. A majority (80%) of the children attending the public schools in the area received free or reduced-price lunch. The immigrant parents who participated in the study had children in the public elementary, middle, and high schools. Ramirez found that the parents cared deeply about the schooling of their children and that they had many concerns about what had been happening in the schools.

One example was a recent open house at one of the schools which had had low attendance by Latin@ parents. The parents shared with Ramirez (2003) that they had not even been notified about the open house. Notes in English had been sent home with students at the beginning of the school year, but no other attempts to inform the Spanish-speaking parents had been made. The only exception had been a new teacher who had sent personalized invitations to the parents of the children in her class, resulting in high parent attendance at the open house. However, the Latin@ parents reported that other teachers had been upset with the new teacher for making extra efforts.

Ramirez (2003) also found that the Latin@ parents wanted teachers to have high expectations of them and of their children. An example the parents gave of low expectations was teachers accepting sloppy work. The parents discussed actions they had taken to have their children placed in gifted programs and honors classes. In addition, some parents were upset because their neighborhood high school offered only two advanced placement classes, while a nearby high school in a neighborhood with more economic resources offered 15. Overall, the parents wanted the teachers to demonstrate more respect and caring for their children and their families.

The parents in Ramirez's (2003) study felt that teachers and administrators unfairly characterized them as not caring about their children's schooling. They felt that it was unjust for teachers to label them as not caring about education because they did not attend an open house of which they were not even aware. Ramirez's study gives insight into the viewpoints of the parents, turning the table and illuminating how the parents felt that the teachers and administrators were the ones who did not care.

Conclusion

In this review of the literature, I explored deficit thinking about working-class Latin@ immigrant parents in the United States, especially as it relates to schooling and education. In addition, I examined the counterstories of working-class Latin@ immigrant parents caring deeply about and struggling for equitable schooling for their children. Working-class Latin@ immigrant parents positively impact the educational trajectories of their children in numerous ways, from teaching resistance and resilience in the home (Villenas, 2001) to organizing with state and national organizations (Cline & Necochea, 2001; Fuentes, 2011) to gain access for their children to equitable schooling.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

Restatement of the Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study was to add to the growing body of recent literature in education describing the counterstories of working-class Latin@ immigrant parents. More specifically, the study aimed to challenge majoritarian stories about Latin@ immigrant parents not valuing education (Valencia & Black, 2002) by providing an opportunity for four Latin@ immigrant mothers to tell their own stories related to education and schooling. Counterstories have been used to challenge deficit thinking about Latin@ students, their parents, families, and communities (Yosso, 2006).

The significance of the study is that it could contribute to efforts to replace deficit myths frequently repeated by majoritarian storytellers about Latin@s, education, and schooling, with the actual voices and stories of Latin@s. If the true educational and schooling stories of Latin@ immigrant parents like the mothers in this study could be used to provide professional development for educators and administrators, then practice in schools might begin to move away from using deficit excuses as reasons not to fight against educational inequity. The counterstories of Latin@ parents are legitimate and rich resources for teacher preparation and professional development, and they have the potential to meaningfully fill a knowledge void in the field of education that is frequently filled with mythical deficit beliefs. I am not claiming that my study and research findings alone can accomplish this, but rather that the counterstories of the four participants in this study might be added to a growing body of counterstories of working-class Latin@ immigrant parents in education.

Research Design and Methodology

This study began in late July 2012. All of the initial interviews, both individual and focus group, were conducted in July, August, and September of 2012. The individual follow-up interviews were conducted in September of 2012. The individual member checking interviews were conducted in July of 2014.

The research design in this study is qualitative and based on individual and focus group interviews. All interviews were conducted in Spanish. During the initial interviews, I met individually with each of the four participants five times at a centrally located public library, with a total of 20 one-to-one meetings. Interviews at these meetings lasted no longer than one hour and were audiotaped.

Research Setting, Population, and Participants

Each participant chose a pseudonym, which is used throughout the study. The pseudonyms chosen by the participants were Maria, Adelina, Laura, and Isabel. The four participants in the study were Latin@ immigrant women who had been studying in an adult literacy and ESL program at a community college in a Northern California city for several years at the time the study began in 2012.

The program began with a Spanish Language Literacy class, which I taught for several semesters. All of the participants took the Spanish Language Literacy class with me for at least one semester. After the Spanish Language Literacy class, students took three levels of ESL literacy classes before moving on to the integrated ESL classes offered at the campus, which included ESL Levels 1 through 9. I also taught an ESL Literacy class for several semesters and all of the participants took this class with me at least once. Some of the participants took both classes with me twice. I was involved

with the adult literacy program at the campus for three years, first as a substitute, then as an instructor with my own classes, and finally as a volunteer. For this reason, I was able to get to know the participants quite well before the study began.

I chose the four participants for the study because over time I had noticed that they were natural tellers of counterstories about education and schooling and about life in general. Before, after, between, and sometimes even during classes, they told pieces of their immigration stories, stories of growing up in Central and South America, and stories of raising children and grandchildren in the United States or of supporting children and grandchildren in their countries of origin by sending remittances. Because all four were gifted storytellers, their classmates and I were captivated by their tales and looked forward to listening to them each evening. The participants contributed a great deal to the sense of community in the classes with their humor and laughter and they motivated and encouraged their working-class Latin@ immigrant classmates to come to class after long days of working hard jobs.

The women talked about their own educational trajectories and those of their children and grandchildren, clearly expressing how important education and schooling were to them. In addition, the four participants that I chose for the study had consistent attendance in the program during the semesters that I was their teacher. They showed a very high level of motivation and determination to attend and learn, even when they were exhausted after full days of cleaning, taking care of other people's children, and caring for the elderly.

The Four Participants

In Chapter IV I provided detailed information about each participant. In order to avoid repetition, I limited the information in this section to a very general introduction to the participants. Although the four participants were from different countries and had different immigration stories and life stories, each woman had been the primary economic and educational supporter of her family. Despite having had limited access to formal schooling themselves, these women believed in the transformative power of education and had instilled this value in their children and grandchildren. The educational counterstories of strong Latina immigrant women who have overcome such obstacles as civil wars and hunger have value for teacher formation and teacher development. These counternarratives have the potential to serve as great resources for future and current teachers of working-class Latin@ students in the United States.

Data Collection and Analysis

I audiotaped the 20 one-hour individual interviews and the two one-hour focus group interviews in the late summer and early fall of 2012. I labeled the cassette tapes of each participant with her name and a number (for example, Adelina 1). I did not use formal interview protocols but I did take notes during the individual interviews. Facial expressions, gestures, and posture were a major part of the counterstories told by the participants, so I only took notes to the extent that it did not cause me to miss their use of body language. During the focus group interview, I was positioning the tape recorder and passing the microphone from participant to participant, so I was not able to take notes. In addition, I was watching for non-verbal communication between the participants as they

told their counternarratives. At home, I grouped the cassette tapes for each participant together with the notes from her sessions.

The process of transcribing and analyzing the data began in January of 2014. I followed certain steps that are common in analyzing qualitative interview data. First, I transcribed the interviews. The interviews were conducted completely in Spanish and I transcribed them in Spanish.

Lichtman (2010) created one of the most accessible descriptions of the process of analyzing qualitative research. I found her guidelines to be very "user-friendly" and followed them in analyzing the transcriptions of the interviews. Lichtman summarized her process with a catchy phrase; "the three Cs of analysis: from Coding to Categorizing to Concepts" (p. 197). Lichtman's six-step process for data analysis is the following (p. 204):

1. Initial coding
2. Revisiting initial coding
3. Developing an initial list of categories or central ideas
4. Modifying the initial list based on additional rereading
5. Revisiting categories and subcategories
6. Moving from categories to concepts

I followed Lichtman (2010) and Creswell's (2009) recommendations that researchers reduce initial lists of concepts (Creswell used the term "themes" (p. 268)) to the five to seven most important or relevant concepts.

In addition, throughout the steps of data analysis, I kept in mind the theoretical frameworks or lenses of CRT and LatCrit, reminding myself frequently of the five tenets

of CRT (Solórzano, 1997): 1) The intercentricity of race and racism, 2) the challenge to dominant ideology, 3) the commitment to social justice, 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge, and 5) the interdisciplinary perspective. In addition, I viewed all information with a LatCrit lens that, as Yosso (2006) explained, examines racialized layers of subordination based on immigration status, culture, language, phenotype, accent, and surname. I attempted to do this by listening very carefully to the audiotapes and reading between the lines of the transcripts.

Finally, I added my personal reflections and interpretations to the analysis (Drew, Hardman, & Hosp, 2008). The background and experiences of the researcher always influence data analysis in qualitative research. My own life experiences as a white middle class woman born in the U.S. are quite strikingly different from those of my participants. Consequently, it was necessary for me to pay very careful attention to their descriptions of their racialized experiences of being *mestiza* (mixed-race) or Afro Colombian, a Spanish-dominant immigrant, undocumented, and from a lower socioeconomic class. I will never really fully understand what it is like to experience all of these intersecting layers of identity, but throughout the study I was committed to dedicating extra time and effort to truly hearing their counterstories and developing my own empathy. This meant listening to the audiorecordings multiple times and asking more clarifying questions during the member checking interviews in order to reach understandings than would be necessary for a researcher with more in common with her participants.

In Chapter IV I reported my findings in a narrative discussion using quotes from the participants and in Chapter V I added my own personal reflections and

interpretations. Before I wrote the narrative discussion, I conducted member checking interviews with the participants. The purpose of the member checking step in data analysis was to determine whether or not the participants felt that the findings were accurate. In some cases, the participants added to the conclusions I had drawn. I have summarized these suggestions near the end of Chapter IV.

Research Schedule

As previously mentioned, all of the initial 20 individual interview meetings, the two initial focus group interview meetings, and the celebration dinner took place over a period of two months in the late summer and early fall of 2012. Five months later, in February of 2013, we met for a reunion dinner in a neighborhood near the community college campus. All of the following dates are in 2012, except for the reunion dinner, which took place in February of 2013, and the individual member checking interviews, which took place in the summer of 2014.

Week One

Monday, July 30th, 3:00 p.m.	Isabel, Interview 1
Tuesday, July 31st, 5:00 p.m.	Adelina, Interview 1
Wednesday, August 1st, 3:00 p.m.	Laura, Interview 1
Thursday, August 2nd, 4:00 p.m.	Maria, Interview 1

Week Two

Monday, August 6th, 3:00 p.m.	Isabel, Interview 2
Tuesday, August 7th, 5:00 p.m.	Adelina, Interview 2
Wednesday, August 8th, 3:00 p.m.	Laura, Interview 2
Thursday, August 9th, 4:00 p.m.	Maria, Interview 2

Week Three

Monday, August 13th, 3:00 p.m.	Isabel, Interview 3
Tuesday, August 14th, 5:00 p.m.	Adelina, Interview 3
Wednesday, August 15th, 3:00 p.m.	Laura, Interview 3
*Sunday, August 19th, 2:00 p.m.	Maria, Interview 3

*Fall semester 2012 classes at the community college began on Wednesday, August 15th. For this reason, Maria and Adelina requested to do the remainder of their initial interviews on weekends. Isabel and Laura, who left work earlier in the afternoon, were able to continue with the same schedules and still take public transportation to class after their interviews, within a comfortable time frame.

Week Four

Monday, August 20th, 3:00 p.m.	Isabel, Interview 4
Wednesday, August 22nd, 3:00 p.m.	Laura, Interview 4
Saturday, August 25th, 4:00 p.m.	Adelina, Interview 4
Sunday, August 26th, 2:00 p.m.	Maria, Interview 4

*Labor Day week break

Week Five

Sunday, September 9th, 3:00 p.m.	Focus Group Interview 1

Week Six

Sunday, September 16th, 3:00 p.m.	Focus Group Interview 2

Week 7

Sunday, September 23rd, 2:00 p.m.	Maria, Interview 5
Monday, September 24th, 3:00 p.m.	Isabel, Interview 5

Wednesday, September 26th, 3:00 p.m.	Laura, Interview 5
Saturday, September 29th, 4:00 p.m.	Adelina, Interview 5
Week 8	
Sunday, September 30th, 6:00 p.m.	Celebration dinner at a Salvadoran restaurant chosen by Adelina
Five Months Later	
Monday, February 18th, 2013, 7:00 p.m.	Reunion dinner at a Mexican restaurant chosen by Adelina
A Year Later	
Saturday, January 4th, 2014, 5:00 p.m.	Reunion dinner
Dates of Member Checking Interviews	
Sunday, July 6th, 2014, 2:00 p.m.	Maria
Sunday, July 13th, 2014, 1:00 p.m.	Adelina
Sunday, July 20th, 2014, 2:00 p.m.	Isabel
Sunday, July 27th, 2014, 2:00 p.m.	Laura

In the late summer and early fall of 2012, I met with each participant once a week for the individual interviews. These meetings took place on the same weekday at the same time, at a time convenient for the participant. The audiotaping of the individual interviews lasted no more than one hour and the total time for each individual meeting, including tutoring, visiting, and sharing snacks and drinks in the café, was no more than two hours. The central library of the public library system turned out to be a convenient meeting place for the participants, as it was located between their work sites and the

community college campus and the main door was a two-minute walk from an escalator to the underground transit system.

After I transcribed and analyzed the data, I contacted the participants to schedule individual member checking interviews. I wanted each participant to give me feedback on the themes I identified during coding. As noted in the Research Schedule section, the individual member checking interviews were conducted during July of 2014. Finally, I used the feedback from the participants to make the results section more complete and accurate. I added a section at the end of Chapter IV explaining their suggestions.

During the period when I conducted the initial interviews in 2012, in addition to the time during each meeting dedicated to the interview, I made myself available to the participants at the end of each session for tutoring in the areas of ESL, Spanish and ESL Literacy, Computer Literacy (using my laptop), and learning how to use the library. I helped Laura, Maria, and Adelina get new library cards (Isabel already had one). Adelina wanted to learn how to e-mail her son in Nicaragua, so we used my laptop to set up a g-mail account and send him a message. After following sessions we checked for messages from him and composed responses together. By the time Adelina finished her fifth individual meeting with me, she had gained much confidence in using g-mail and composing e-mail messages in Spanish. She told me later that she continued to communicate with her son regularly through e-mail using the computer lab at the campus. I also showed Adelina where the large selection of ESL books was and, using her new library card, she checked out several books and tapes.

At the beginning of each of these meetings in 2012, I offered to treat participants to something to drink and/or eat in the café in the basement of the library and joined them

in drinking some tea or coffee and eating a bagel or sandwich. This social time provided a necessary transition between busy mornings or long days of work and commuting to the library by public transportation. It provided some time to slow down and relax a little. Maria told me that she enjoyed having the "time for me."

After I met with each participant four times, the group met twice for focus group interviews in September of 2012. The focus group interviews took place in a reserved study room in the library at the private university where I studied. I audiotaped the focus group interviews, neither of which lasted longer than an hour. The participants and I all arrived at the university campus by public transportation. The journey to the university library was longer for all of the participants and for me, so we took some time before each focus group interview to use the restrooms and drink water. We met outside in front of the library each time. Adelina called Laura both times, to make sure that she had not gotten lost. Laura was the least *atrevida* (daring or bold) about exploring unknown parts of the city, and throughout the study Adelina tried to assist and encourage her in arriving at new places.

When the study began in July 2012, the four participants had been studying together for at least two years in an Adult ESL and ESL and Spanish Literacy program. Laura and Adelina, the participants from Colombia and Nicaragua, were friends before the study, and all four participants were friendly acquaintances. The atmosphere during the focus group interviews was very supportive and mutually respectful. Although the participants had known each other for some time, I believe that during the focus group interviews in September of 2012 may have been the first time they had ever spoken to each other about their experiences during the civil wars in their respective countries of

Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Laura had not experienced the same type of civil war as the others, but she had been exposed to guerilla violence and domestic violence as a child in Colombia. I sensed a feeling of solidarity during both focus group meetings.

After the two focus group meetings, I met for a fifth time with each participant at the central public library to audiotape the final individual interviews. These focus group meetings and the follow-up individual meetings took place in September of 2012. The purpose of the fifth and final individual interviews was to record any additional thoughts or memories brought to mind or stimulated by the focus group interviews and to share reflections on the experience of participating in the focus group interviews.

When the fifth individual interviews had been completed, we had a celebration dinner at a restaurant recommended by Adelina. The restaurant was Salvadoran and was located in a predominantly Latin@ area of the city. We met at the restaurant on Sunday, September 30th, 2012, at 6 p.m. I treated the participants to thank them for participating in the study.

Five months later, on Monday, February 18th, 2013, we had a reunion dinner at another restaurant recommended by Adelina. That day was a holiday, which was a good opportunity for us to meet and catch up in a more relaxed way. Adelina recommended a Mexican restaurant. On Saturday, January 4th, 2014, we met again for dinner, this time at a restaurant right next to the community college. As previously mentioned, after I had written up the information from the individual and focus group interviews, I met again with the participants, to member check the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2009). I conducted the member checking interviews during July, 2014.

Individual Qualitative Interview and Focus Group Interview Questions

Research Questions	Individual and Focus Group Interview Questions
1. What are the participants' stories describing their own educational and schooling trajectories?	1. Tell me about your educational and schooling experiences and hopes.
2. What are the participants' stories describing the educational and schooling trajectories of their children and grandchildren?	2. Tell me about the educational and schooling experiences and hopes of your children and grandchildren.
3. What are the participants' hopes regarding the future of education and schooling for working-class Latin@ students in the United States?	3. Describe your hopes regarding the future of education and schooling for working-class Latin@ students in the United States.

Preguntas de la investigación	Preguntas para las entrevistas individuas y en grupo
1. ¿Cómo describen las participantes sus propias experiencias y esperanzas escolares y de la educación?	1. Cuéntame sobre sus propias experiencias y esperanzas escolares y educativas.
2. ¿Cómo describen las participantes las experiencias y esperanzas escolares y de la educación de sus hijos y nietos?	2. Cuéntame sobre las experiencias y esperanzas escolares y educativas de sus hijos y nietos.
3. Enfocándose en el futuro, ¿cuáles son las esperanzas escolares y educativas de las participantes en cuanto a los estudiantes Latinos de la clase obrera en los Estados Unidos?	3. Enfocándose en el futuro, cuéntame sobre sus esperanzas escolares y educativas en cuanto a los estudiantes Latinos de la clase obrera en los Estados Unidos.

Protection of Human Subjects

I obtained permission from the University of San Francisco's IRBPHS committee prior to beginning the study. Permission was granted on Monday, July 23rd, 2012. In addition, I discussed the problem and the purpose statement of the study with the participants before I began. The participants were given an oral explanation in Spanish and copies of consent forms in English and Spanish to read and sign. Because the participants have different levels of emerging literacy skills, I read all IRBPHS

documents (Spanish versions) aloud to each participant. Participants were asked for permission to audiotape their interviews. Participation was strictly voluntary and participants were made aware of their right to discontinue participation in the study at any time. Participants were not pressured to talk about any topic that made them uncomfortable; they were able to choose to refrain from discussing any topic.

Validity

To increase the validity of the study, I used three of the eight strategies recommended by Creswell (2009). Most importantly, as described previously, I included a member checking step. Creswell explained, "This procedure can involve conducting a follow-up interview with participants in the study and providing an opportunity for them to comment on the findings" (p. 191). Also as stated previously, before I wrote the results section of the study, I took the themes back to the participants to determine whether or not they felt that they were accurate.

Creswell (2009) also stated that researchers could increase validity by presenting some information that may counter the themes of a study, "By presenting this contradictory evidence, the account becomes more realistic and hence valid" (p. 192). Thus, to add to the credibility of my study, I will discuss in the narrative report information that may contradict the general perspectives of the themes. As Creswell noted, this makes studies more believable to readers.

Finally, Creswell (2009) stated that the findings of a study are more valid or accurate when a researcher has more experience with participants in their actual settings. Although my study did not involve formal observations of the participants in their Adult ESL Literacy and Spanish Literacy classes at the community college, I had many

opportunities to observe the participants informally during the three years that I was involved with the literacy program at the campus. The participants were my students for time periods ranging from a minimum of several semesters to a maximum of several years, including summers. According to Creswell, spending prolonged time in the field allows a researcher to develop "an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study and can convey detail about the site and the people that lends credibility to the narrative account" (p. 192).

Researcher Positionality and Potential Bias

McIntosh (1988) wrote that before she began thinking about white privilege, racism for her consisted of individual acts of meanness and not invisible systems bestowing racial dominance on whites. Before I began my doctoral studies, my (incorrect) understanding of racism was similar to McIntosh's initial understanding. My doctoral classes and studies have helped me to learn about racism and white privilege as systems and structures that permeate society at every level. Because of my skin color, I have benefitted from unearned advantages in education, employment, housing, and health care.

Another form of privilege and power that benefits me stems from being a teacher. One might question whether a researcher having been the participants' teacher could somehow negatively influence the outcomes of research. I did not find this to be the case in my study. In fact, each participant talked about her own role as teacher for her children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews and seemed to take great pride in teaching the young people in her family about life. The participants seemed to have respect for me as a teacher while at the same time esteeming their own roles as teachers in their families.

They did not seem to value my status as a credentialed teacher more than their own roles as mother-teachers. This remained consistent throughout the study.

Furthermore, the participants were my students in the past but not my students at the time of the study. In fact, they knew that I was no longer teaching at the community college. In addition, the adult ESL and Spanish literacy classes were non-credit classes for which students do not receive letter grades as these were not required classes. These special qualities of non-credit adult ESL classes and the fact that I was no longer teaching at the community college somewhat lessened the difference in power that sometimes influences research conducted by educators.

Likewise, the participants knew before they agreed to participate in the study that I was an immigrants' rights advocate and a strong supporter of the educational rights of the undocumented. The non-credit adult ESL program in which I met the participants, like many similar programs, is very pro-immigrant. The participants had shared voluntarily their immigration status with me long before we began the study. Because of the trusting relationships that we had developed before the study began, the differences between us had less of an impact on the research than they might have had otherwise. I selected these four participants specifically because of the honest and open way that I had often heard them discuss challenging topics such as discrimination, poverty, and immigration status.

Still, the fact that I was not a mother may have been relevant for this study. The participants may have believed that since I did not have children, I could not understand some things related to being a mother. Therefore, they may not have shared some information with me that they might have shared with a researcher who was also a

mother. I cannot be sure that this actually happened, nor was I able to do anything about it. However, it was important for me to be aware of this difference and its possible relevance for my study. In addition, I am not Latin@, and although I speak Spanish and am literate in Spanish I am not a native speaker.

The participants also had much knowledge about being immigrants that I lacked. They had survived civil wars, genocide, poverty, and the challenges of living and thriving in the United States without documentation. In addition to overcoming these challenges themselves, they had been key in supporting their immediate and extended families and had made better lives possible for many people. The participants had "real-life" knowledge and skills that I did not have, such as the ability to navigate life while learning the dominant language in the United States. For all of these reasons, I had the utmost respect for the participants.

The member checking (Creswell, 2009) interviews that I conducted ensured that the interview transcripts and analysis were accurate. The participants helped "serve as a check throughout the analysis process" (p. 199). As Creswell recommends, I maintained an ongoing dialogue with the participants regarding my interpretations of their meanings and realities to ensure the truth value of the data.

Background and Interests of the Researcher

The four participants in the study were all women I admire. They came to the United States without the benefits of having formal educations or of speaking or writing English. They established themselves in a very expensive metropolitan area. Each woman led a balanced life, working hard but also taking time to enjoy life, family, and friends. I also admired them because they were leaders in their families and had

positively impacted the lives of many people, both relatives and those who benefitted from their paid work. They continue to be role models for me of strength and persistence.

I grew up in northeastern Iowa and earned a BA in Elementary Education. I later completed a MA in TESOL/Spanish. While working on my MA, I fulfilled the requirements for teaching secondary Spanish and ESL. In Iowa, I am licensed to teach grades K-6, K-8 Social Studies, K-12 ESL, and K-12 Spanish. In California, I have a Multiple Subjects Teaching Credential and a Single Subject Teaching Credential for Spanish. I also have the California Bilingual Authorization in Spanish.

I love teaching and have been a Spanish and ESL teacher for 20 years. I have taught at the elementary, secondary, community college, college, and university levels and have taught in Iowa, Chicago, California, Ecuador, and Japan in rural, suburban, and urban areas. My students have ranged in age from six to 80 and have come from many different linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

In the future I would like to become a teacher educator at a college or university. I am open to teaching anywhere, but I think it might be interesting to teach in what has been theorized as the New Latino Diaspora (Murillo & Villenas, 1995), possibly in my home state of Iowa. It would be exciting to help prepare teachers to teach linguistically diverse learners in an area that is now experiencing very rapid demographic change.

Furthermore, I am interested in immigrants' rights and the rights of the undocumented in the United States. I strongly support the rights of bilingual and biliterate working-class Latin@ immigrant students (both documented and with irregular status) to an equitable education and would like to dedicate my future academic career to

working towards supporting and developing equity in this area. As I finish my doctoral studies, Iowa is just beginning to recognize the potential and promise of expanding and developing bilingual education in the state. It is an exciting time for me to be a part of this educational movement here, as I believe very strongly in the value of bilingual education for increasing educational equity and intercultural understanding.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Introduction

I organized the responses in this chapter according to the research questions. The themes for each research question were identified since they emerged frequently in my coding of transcripts. Table 1 provides an overview of the participants to give background to the findings.

Table 1

Information About Participants

Participant	Country of Origin	Children	Grand-children	Status	Years in the U.S.
Maria	Guatemala	2 sons	0	resident	32
Adelina	Nicaragua	2 sons, 2 daughters	2	undocumented	19
Isabel	El Salvador	2 sons	5	U.S. citizen	35
Laura	Colombia	1 son, 4 daughters	9	undocumented	19

Limited Access to Schooling Due to Violence and Poverty, Being There for Their Children's Schooling, and the Importance of Bilingualism and Biliteracy

As children and young adults, the participants faced serious issues related to survival, such as food insecurity and violence in the form of war or other forms of instability. They experienced intense emotions of sadness and frustration when they did not have access to schooling, stating that they felt happiness and joy later when they learned to read and write in Spanish and English. They shared the learning goals of

wanting to read and write better in both languages and all believed that improved abilities in these areas would lead to a higher quality of life.

For Maria and Isabel, being physically present at their children's schools and in their lives was important. Adelina and Laura, who were not able to be physically present, nevertheless were actively involved through frequent phone calls to their children and grandchildren in which they regularly discussed schooling. All of the women were the principal financial supporters of their children's formal educations, believed in the transformative power of education for their children and grandchildren, and paid for the basic needs of their children so that their children would not have to be engaged in the same kind of struggles for survival that had taken their mothers away from school when they were children and young adults.

The participants explained that bilingualism and biliteracy should be important educational aims for working-class Latin@ students in the U.S. because these qualities lead to higher pay, better careers, and an overall higher quality of life. In addition, the participants advocated for more financial assistance for higher education for working-class Latin@ students to reduce graduate debt burdens and increase opportunities for graduate studies. Finally, all of the participants believed that the government should take action to ensure that there are good jobs available for young graduates.

Research Question 1:

What Are the Participants' Stories Describing Their Own Educational and Schooling Trajectories?

All of the participants except Isabel had limited or no access to formal schooling due to poverty. Maria, Adelina, and Laura mentioned that their families could not afford

uniforms or books and two noted that they even struggled to have enough to eat. Maria and Isabel were both young children when the civil wars took place in their respective countries of Guatemala and El Salvador. Both spoke of not being able to leave their homes for extended periods, due to the risk of being killed. Children could not go to school and adults could not go to work. Adelina and Laura both wanted to study as adults in their respective countries of Nicaragua and Colombia but their lives were interrupted by violence. Adelina became a refugee and fled to other Central American countries, while Laura left the village of Morales for Cali to get away from the narcotraffickers and guerrillas.

Adelina and Laura mentioned discrimination due to gender as impacting access to formal education. For example, Laura felt the negative impact of gender discrimination the most intensely, as her mother and stepfather forced her to quit school while allowing her brothers to continue attending. Adelina spoke about girls in Estelí in general not being encouraged to go to school.

All of the participants wanted to improve their English skills by continuing to take ESL Literacy and ESL classes at the community college. All four participants specifically mentioned the goal of writing better in English, and three of the four also identified a goal of reading better in English. Isabel wanted to learn to read and write well enough in English to be able to pay bills and read on her own the documents that came in the mail as well as those related to her properties. Adelina wanted to take nursing classes after completing the ESL Program because she had dreamed of studying medicine since she was a child.

Limited Formal Schooling

Schooling Limited by Poverty, Life Circumstances, and War

Maria

Maria was the youngest of eight siblings who grew up in a small town outside of San Marcos, Guatemala. Her parents were both speakers of Kaqchikel and she understands and speaks both Kaqchikel and Spanish. Both of her parents performed hard physical labor harvesting coffee and it negatively impacted their health. Her father died while working before she was born. For several years her mother supported the eight children by herself, harvesting coffee and raising animals to sell. When Maria was eight years old, her mother died of heatstroke while harvesting coffee. Maria explained:

> *Yo sólo fui un año a la escuela, nada más. Después teníamos que trabajar todos. Mis hermanos también fueron, pero poquito. Mi mamá se murió y tuvimos que trabajar todos. Entonces yo empecé a trabajar y ya no pude estudiar. Trabajé para ganar por la comida para mí. Fui a trabajar en el campo, a cortar café, o lo que sea. Entonces ya no pude ir a la escuela, hasta ahora que sí voy.*
>
> I only went to school for one year, no more. After that we all had to work. My brothers and sisters also went, but only a little. My mother died and we all had to work. So I started to work and could no longer study. I worked to earn money for my own food. I went to work in the field, harvesting coffee, or whatever. Then I could no longer go to school, until now, when I am going.

Although she only attended school for one year, Maria remembers the neighborhood school very well. She described it as the school that the Kaqchikel-speaking students attended, mentioning that the Spanish-dominant students attended a better school that was far away. Maria remembered the school:

> *La escuela era bien pobrecita. No había mucho dinero. Era pobre el pueblo donde vivíamos. Los papas no tenían dinero para comprar lapiceros ni libros. Todo era pobre. La escuela era bien pobre. Apenas tenían las sillas de madera y unas bancas largas.*

> The school was very poor. There was not much money. The town where we lived was poor. Parents did not have money to buy pencils or books. Everything was poor. The school was very poor. They only had wooden chairs and some long benches.

According to Maria, many Kaqchikel families and other indigenous families in Guatemala were struggling for basic survival at that time. Her mother worked very hard to provide food, shelter, and clothing for the family.

Maria was a little girl in Guatemala during the time of the Civil War. She remembers hiding under her bed for three days when she was eight years old. Once, her mother, who was the sole supporter of the family at that time, was not able to go to work for a week because Kaqchikel workers were being killed on their way to and from the fields. The family survived that time by eating only bananas from a tree in their yard. None of the Kaqchikel children that Maria knew were able to go to school during that time because the people feared for their lives:

> *Cuando yo me vine, antes de que me viniera, es de, ya había pasado la guerrilla, pero estaba siempre mal el pueblo. Estaba mal porque apenas acaba de pasar la guerrilla. Y entonces estaba la gente con miedo, no salía. No podíamos ir a comprar nada porque…por la guerrilla. Entonces uno no podía salir a hacer nada. Toda la gente estaba encerrada, no podría salir. La guerrilla hizo bastante daño a nuestro pueblo. Las personas, cuando estaban cortando la milpa o estaban haciendo algo, cuando fuimos a trabajar…Dicen que lo que pasó en Guatemala era una guerra civil, pero guerra es guerra, ¿verdad? Igual, matan a la gente.*
>
> When I came, before I came, um, the guerrillas had already passed through, but the town was always in bad shape. It was bad because the guerrillas had just passed through. And then the people were scared and did not go out. We could not go to buy anything because…because of the guerrillas. Then one could not go out to do anything. All of the people were locked inside, they could not go out. The guerrillas did a lot of damage to our town. The people, when they were harvesting the corn or were doing something, when we went to work…They say that what happened in Guatemala was a civil war, but war is war, isn't it? Either way, they kill the people.

Adelina

Adelina grew up in Estelí, Nicaragua, as one of eight children. Life was hard because the family was large and only her father worked. Neither Adelina nor any of her seven siblings ever had the opportunity to go to school. She shared that life was sad because they lacked basic things such as clothing and food. She was not ashamed to talk about experiencing hunger as a child, as she noted:

> *Teníamos carencia de todo- de ropa, zapatos, a veces hasta comida. La familia era de ocho hermanos y solo papá trabajaba. Nosotros no fuimos a la escuela, ninguno de mis hermanos. No fuimos a la escuela porque la familia era grande y demasiado pobre. Por el dinero, no teníamos como comprar los libros, como comprar los vestidos, la ropa, y a veces comiendo mal. La gente solamente quería criar a sus hijos, nada más. Darles de comer, vestir, y no más.*
>
> We lacked everything- clothing, shoes, and sometimes even food. The family had eight brothers and sisters and only dad worked. We did not go to school, any of us. We did not go to school because the family was big and very poor. Because of money, we did not have the means to buy books, dresses, clothing, and sometimes we did not eat well. People only wanted to raise their children, nothing more. Give them food and clothing, and nothing more.

Even when she was a child, Adelina was keenly aware of the socioeconomic disparities that existed in Estelí and the rest of Nicaragua and of how they impacted educational opportunities. She saw the schools attended by the children of the wealthy and remembered their uniforms and books. Even though there was a school near her house, she could not attend. She commented about the educational opportunities available to the children of the wealthy in Estelí:

> *Había escuela, pero solamente para algunos. Solamente el que tenía acceso a la escuela era el que tenía dinero. Podía mandar a educar a sus hijos afuera del pueblo, a la ciudad. Y después los mandaban afuera del país, las personas que tenían la posibilidad de educar a sus hijos. Él que tenía más se sentía más poderoso. Él que tenía menos quería competer con él que tenía más pero él que tenía más se quedó con todo el poder. La clase media siempre sigue siendo la clase media. No puede hacer nada.*

> There was school but only for some. The only ones who had access to school were those who had money. They were able to send their children to be educated outside of the town, to the city. And later they sent them abroad, the people who had the possibility of educating their children. Those who had more felt more powerful. Those who had less wanted to compete with those who had more but those who had more kept all the power. The middle class always continues to be the middle class. They cannot do anything.

Adelina did not have an opportunity to reclaim her right to formal schooling as an adult in Nicaragua because when she was a young married woman with three children, the Sandinistas came and disrupted her life. The Sandinistas rationed ham, coffee, food, and oil, and Adelina, her husband, and their three children did not have enough to eat. Nicaragua was not importing food. She described the situation, '*Ya no llegaba comida extranjera de otros países, estaba como bloqueado el país y por eso tuvimos que inmigrar.'* "Foreign food from other countries no longer arrived. The country was blocked and for that reason we had to immigrate."

Here Adelina illustrated her perspective on the situation, which was influenced by her political views. The Sandinistas sought to disrupt the inequities from the Somoza regime. The United States disagreed with the socialist policies of the Sandinistas, which was the reason for the blockade. However, Adelina described the situation as the Sandinistas not providing food for the Nicaraguan people.

Adelina left Nicaragua with her family and went to Costa Rica. However, they only stayed there for eight months because it was expensive. Next, the family went to Honduras, where they lived for four years and became residents. After that the family returned to Nicaragua but life continued to be stressful. Before the Sandinistas came, Adelina had been living in Managua and her family was there when the capital was bombed. Estelí, where Adelina's parents and many of her relatives lived, experienced

very heavy bombing and Adelina told me that people began calling it *La Guernica de América* (The Guernica of America). I asked her if her parents and other relatives survived, but she did not respond. I sensed that she did not want to talk about this, so I changed the subject. Later, in her final individual interview, she said:

> *Hubo esta guerra, una guerra interna, y entonces para uno es muy difícil ver estas cosas porque hacen…la cantidad de armas que disparaban! No sabía de donde venían y de que país, como se llamaban. Era bastante horrible y difícil, la situación que pasé en este tiempo porque la pasé en la propia ciudad, en la propia capital, donde estaba la guerra. Entonces uno tiene que salir a otro lugar, a otro país, y es una lucha porque si uno sobreviví esta guerra, uno puede sobrevivir en otro país, en otro lugar. Y uno tiene que olvidarse de los recuerdos tristes. Porque no hay beneficio para la salud de uno, su mente, si…tiene que cerrar este episodio, este problema, y seguir con el nuevo que viene. Y pensar en el futuro.*
>
> There was this war, an internal war, and so it is very difficult for one to see these things because they make…the quantity of weapons that they used! One did not know where they came from and from which country, nor what they were called. It was so horrible and difficult, the situation that I experienced at that time because I was right in the city, right in the capital, where the war was. So one has to leave to go to another country, to another place. And one has to forget about the sad memories. Because there is no benefit for your health, your mind, if…one has to close this episode, this problem, and continue with the new that comes. And think about the future.

Laura

Laura was born in a town called Morales, Colombia, which is a small town located outside of Cali. She attended primary school through third grade. It was difficult for parents in Morales to be able to afford to send their children to school at that time because there was not much work available in Morales. Laura remembered:

> *Bueno, yo si tuve la oportunidad de ir a la escuela tres años. Eramos muy pobres y mis padres casi no tenían para darnos los uniformes. Pero si hice el esfuerzo de ir a la escuela. Nos poníamos tristes, los que no teníamos dinero. Los padres también se ponían tristes porque hacían mucho esfuerzo para que sus hijos estudiaran y para darles lo que ellos podrían darles. Entonces, fue muy triste para ellos. Y no podrían mostrarles a sus hijos las partes en la ciudad o en el campo porque no tenían dinero.*

> Well, I did have the opportunity to go to school for three years. We were very poor and my parents almost did not have enough (money) to buy the uniforms. But I did make the effort to go to school. We were sad, those of us who did not have money. The parents were also sad because they worked very hard so that their children could study and to give them what there were able to give them. So, it was very sad for them. And they were not able to show their children areas of the city or the country because they did not have money.

When Laura was in third grade, her father left the family and her mother remarried. Her new stepfather did not allow her to go to school since he wanted her to stay home and take care of her younger brothers and sisters. In addition, he made her go to work in the coffee fields and the gold mines when she was only nine years old. Laura loved studying and going to school, so it was very traumatic for her when she was not allowed to continue:

> *Lo que fue difícil fue cuando no pude seguir mi escuela. Yo quería seguir estudiando. Pero pasaron muchas cosas y no pude seguir. Me hizo sentir muy triste, me hizo sentir muy mal.*
>
> What was difficult was when I was not able to continue going to school. I wanted to continue studying. But many things happened and I was not able to continue. It made me feel very sad, it made me feel very bad.

When she was 11 years old, Laura went to work as a domestic servant for a white family. Her stepfather and her mother took all of the money she earned at this job and they also took her pay for her work in the gold mines and coffee fields. Finally, her grandparents realized that their daughter and her second husband were exploiting Laura, and so they brought her to live with them on their farm. The rest of her childhood was happier there, but she was never able to return to school.

Many families who lived in Morales, Colombia, including Laura's family, moved to Cali partly due to fear of the guerrilla groups that were active near the village. She mentioned that the people in Morales always lived in fear because they never knew when

there was going to be gunfire. According to Laura, the guerrillas stole livestock from the people in the village and destroyed houses. She added:

> *En Colombia fue algo muy horrible. Vivía uno con miedo porque había demasiados traficantes y por las guerrillas. Corría uno mucho riesgo. Siempre es muy miedoso. Para todas las personas que viven allí.*
>
> In Colombia it was something very horrible. One lived in fear because there were so many traffickers and because of the guerrillas. One ran much risk. It is always very scary. For all of the people who live there.

Many of the families who lived in Morales at the same time as Laura ended up leaving for Cali because of these problems and the lack of economic opportunity. Laura stated that almost no one currently lived in the small town.

Laura's family had experienced violence long before the time of the guerrillas and the narcotraffickers. When she was a child, her grandfather often told stories about slavery and about how her ancestors escaped from slavery, hiding during the day and moving at night. He talked about their journeys from Africa to Colombia also. Laura was the only Black Latin@ in the study and the only one whose ancestors had experienced slavery. In addition, she was the only participant from South America, whereas the other three participants were from Central America.

Isabel

Isabel grew up in Usulután, El Salvador, with 13 brothers and sisters. Unlike the families of the other three participants, Isabel's family always had enough money for food, clothing, and schooling and never experienced hunger. Isabel did not work as a child as her family owned several orchards and a farm. They cultivated cotton, corn, coffee, and many kinds of fruit. Isabel attended school until third grade. She left school not because of economic limitations, but because the teacher believed in corporal

punishment and punished Isabel frequently. To avoid the harsh and embarrassing physical punishments, Isabel would wander the streets or go to play in the river. She described her experiences at school and with the teacher:

> *Yo fui a la escuela, no más, al tercer grado. Porque la maestra nos castigaba. Yo me portaba bien, pero ella siempre estaba enojada. Mi escuela era bonita, el salón, muy bien. Pero la maestra, un poquito delicada. Yo sí tuve la oportunidad de ir a la escuela. Lo que pasa es que yo no quería estar todo el tiempo y andaba en la calle. ¡Cuando la maestra me quería castigar, yo estaba afuera! (Se ríe.) Ella no podía llamar a la atención, porque yo ya estaba afuera. Nosotros no eramos ricos ni eramos pobres, gracias a Dios. Sí, gracias a Dios, ¿sabes? ¡Todos los maestros eran muy enojadizos y por eso yo me iba! (Se ríe otra vez.)*
>
> I only went to school until third grade. Because the teacher punished us. I behaved myself very well but she was always angry. My school was pretty, the classroom, very good. But the teacher was a little difficult. I did have the opportunity to go to school. What happened was that I did not want to be there all the time and I wandered the streets. When the teacher wanted to punish me, I was not there! (Laughter) She could not point me out because I was already gone. We were neither rich nor poor, thank God. Yes, thank God, you know? All the teachers were very quick to anger and that is why I left. (Laughs again)

During the war in El Salvador, Isabel's parents told her and her siblings to hide under the bed when there was bombing and gunfire. They kept the children calm by telling them that it was a game. Isabel began to understand that her father and mother did this '*Para protegernos de las balas*' ("To protect us from the bullets"). She remembers playing this "game" for about one month when she was eight or nine. They would sleep under the bed all night. They could not go to school during that time.

Schooling Limited by Gender Discrimination

Adelina

In Adelina's family, none of her seven brothers or sisters went to school because her parents did not have the means to send them. She was not sure if her parents would have sent her and her sisters even if they had had enough money. Adelina reported that

some families in Estelí with the means to educate all of their children only invested in formal schooling only for their sons. Adelina stated:

> *Los hombres no querían que estudiaran las hijas porque decían que las hijas eran por el hogar. Ellas se casaban. Los esposos las tenían que mantener. No había necesidad de trabajar para las mujeres porque la vida era estar en el hogar.*
>
> The men did not want their daughters to study because they said that the daughters belonged in the home. They got married. Their husbands had to support them. There was no need for the women to work because their lives were in the home.

Laura

Of the four participants, Laura talked the most about how girls in her area were discouraged from attending school for long. She had eight brothers and sisters and she was the oldest girl. She was expected to stay at home and cook for her brothers and sisters, do their laundry, and take care of the younger ones. All of her brothers were allowed to stay in school through high school but Laura's mother and stepfather would not allow her to continue past third grade. Since she loved school and learning, being denied the opportunity to continue studying took a serious emotional toll on her:

> *Bueno, yo fui a la escuela tres años. Mis hermanos si fueron a su escuela hasta graduarse de la secundaria. Recibieron su bachillerato y todos salieron adelante. Yo fui la única que mi madre quería que trabajara. Mi padrastro quería que mi madre me castigara mucho. Y entonces no pude salir de la casa.*
>
> Well, I went to school for three years. My brothers went to their school until they graduated from high school. They received their high school diplomas and all did well. I was the only one that my mother wanted to work. My stepfather wanted my mother to punish me a lot. And so I could not leave the house.

Laura wanted to become a lawyer in order to be able to help people and she knew that she needed to go to school in order to make her dream come true. That made being forced to stay at home even more painful for her. She resented having to comply with what her mother and stepfather believed was her role as the eldest sister:

> *Las hermanas mayores teníamos que quedarnos en casa para hacerles la comida a los pequeños y lavar la ropa. Teníamos que cuidar a los niños mas chicos porque los padres se iban a la finca o a las minas para trabajar. La hermana mayor tenía que estar en la casa para hacer los quehaceres y por esa razón, pues, yo no podía salir adelante. Como que tenía que quedarme en casa para los hermanos menores, entonces, me sentía mal porque quería salir para hacer mis cosas, para estudiar, salir adelante, pero no podía hacerlo. No lo logré. Entonces solamente pude ir a la escuela hasta el tercer año.*
>
> The older sister had to stay at home to prepare food for the little ones and wash clothes. We had to take care of the little ones because our parents went to the farm or to the mines to work. The oldest sister had to be at home to do chores and for that reason, well, I could not get ahead. As I had to stay at home for the little ones, then, I felt bad because I wanted to go out to do my things, to study, to get ahead, but I was not able to do it. I did not achieve it. So I was only able to go to school until the third grade.

Strong Desire to Participate in Formal Learning as Adults

Goal of Speaking, Reading, and Writing English Well and Other Formal Learning Goals

Maria

Like the other participants, Maria began her studies at the community college in the Spanish Language Literacy class. Although she enjoyed the class, her sons began encouraging her to move on to the ESL Literacy class. Since they had been helping her frequently by acting as interpreters at doctors' appointments, reading important documents, and making phone calls, they wanted her to become more independent. She recalled: *Mis hijos me dijeron, 'Mami, tienes que estudiar, porque nosotros no podemos hacer tus cosas.'* My sons told me, "Mom, you have to study because we cannot do your things."

In addition, at the time of the study, Maria had cleaned the house of one woman for 18 years, and she wanted to be able to talk with her more. She said:

> *Para mí, estudiar es importante para trabajar y ahora que los muchachos casi terminan sus estudios, yo sí necesito conversar con alguien. Yo, con mi patrona,*

> *no sé mucho pero yo trato con ella. Y ella me dice, 'Maria, usted está mejorando', y yo platico con ella. Ella no habla español, sólo inglés.*
>
> For me, studying is important for work and now that my sons are almost finished with their studies, I do need to be able to speak. With my boss, I do not know a lot but I try with her. And she tells me, "Maria, you are getting better", and I chat with her. She does not speak Spanish, only English.

Maria wanted to improve her spoken and written English so that she could get better jobs than the ones she had been working all those years. Studying had much value for her in trying to reach her goal of getting better jobs, *'Y si uno estudie, puede agarrar otros trabajos. Hay muchas clases de trabajo que no puedo hacer.'* "And if one studies, one can get other jobs. There are many kinds of jobs that I cannot do." Maria believed that learning to speak, read, and write English *'es lo que más me sirve'* "is what serves her the most". Finally, her sons teased her that if she did not learn English, she would not be able to talk with her grandchildren. However, she assured me that her grandchildren were going to be bilingual.

Maria wanted to master spoken and written English, not just for herself, but because she wanted to teach others:

> *Quiero estudiar, seguir estudiando para…pues, gracias a Dios tengo trabajo ahorita, pero… No, no puedo pedir mas, gracias a Dios. Tengo trabajo, pero seguir estudiando y como le digo, seguir estudiando para saber y para enseñarles a otros. También me va a servir para mis nietos.*
>
> I want to study, continue studying for…well, thank God I have work now, but… No, no I cannot ask for more, thank God. I have work, but to continue studying and as I tell you, to continue studying to know and to teach others. It will also serve me with my grandchildren.

When I asked her whom she would like to teach, she responded that she wanted to teach new immigrants from Guatemala. She wanted to teach those who were struggling financially as much as she had been when she first arrived. She remembered not having

enough money to buy diapers for her older son soon after she arrived in San Francisco. At the time of the study, she said she knew that there were newcomers from Guatemala who were suffering; she wanted to teach them English so they could get jobs.

Adelina

Adelina began studying at the community college in 1997, soon after she arrived in the United States. She enjoyed the experience of studying as an adult because it made her feel different. She liked being able to choose a book in Spanish or English and read about topics that interested her. She said that the Spanish and ESL literacy classes had changed her life, *'Mi vida ha cambiado. Ahora ya sí puedo mandarles cartas a mis hijos. Leer las cartas de ellos también ha sido una experiencia muy bonita.'* "My life has changed. Now I can already send letters to my children. Also, reading letters from them has been a nice experience."

She explained her learning goals and what it was like to be able to read English:

> *Uno puede estudiar, puede leer. Para mí, es muy importante. Una experiencia bonita. Puedo ir a lugares. Me dan la dirección, y yo la leo, y puedo llegar. Leo la dirección de la casa o el parque o lo que sea, y puedo llegar. Para mí es muy importante. Mis metas son aprender a leer y escribir. Estas son las metas más importantes para mi ahorita. Estoy aprendiendo a leer y escribir el inglés. He avanzado en la escritura, pero en el español. Y también la lectura. Y un poquito de inglés- charlar, nada más. Me gustaría avanzar en la escritura del inglés.*
>
> One can study and read. For me, it is very important. A nice experience. I can go places. They give me the address, and I read it, and I can go there. I read the address of the house or the park or whatever, and I can get there. For me this is very important. My goals are to learn to read and write. These are the most important goals for me right now. I am learning to read and write English. I have advanced in writing, but in Spanish. And also reading. And a little English- chatting, no more. I would like to advance in writing English.

Adelina expressed frustration about classes being cut at the community college due to budget problems. Before the reductions, she said that her classes were small and teachers

were able to give individual attention to each student. After the cuts, her classes were crowded and had students at many different levels. Despite the challenges, Adelina remained determined to pursue her goals.

Adelina wanted to take nursing classes. As a girl in Nicaragua, she wanted to become a doctor. She had always been interested in science, and in biology, more specifically. It had been very easy for her to find work taking care of the elderly because she had a good reputation for being able to take care of those with special health conditions, such as diabetes, well. She commented:

> *Cuando yo era joven mi sueño era estudiar, tener una carrera, ir adelante. Quería ser doctora de medicina pero mi sueño no se cumplió. Y…no sé…seré una enfermera algún día. Quería ser doctora pero no lo pude hacer porque no pude ir a la escuela. Una vez mi madre estaba teniendo un baby y no había quien le cuidara y yo lo hice. Corté el ombligo al baby. Yo estaba un poco nerviosa pero sí lo hice y la segunda vez también y ahora lo hago sin miedo. Se manejar cuando una persona esté enferma o cuando sea diabética, yo puedo trabajar con estas personas.*
>
> When I was young my dream was to study, to have a career, to get ahead. I wanted to be a medial doctor but my dream did not come true. And…I don't know…I will become a nurse someday. I wanted to become a doctor but I could not because I was not able to go to school. Once, my mother was having a baby and there was no one to take care of her and I did it. I cut the baby's umbilical cord. I was a little nervous but I did it and the second time also and now I do it without fear. I know how to handle it when a person is sick or diabetic- I can work with these people.

Isabel

The first class Isabel took at the community college was a dance class. As she was walking near campus one evening and heard music, she followed the sound of the music and discovered a dance class. She registered immediately and joined the class; that was her introduction to the campus. Afterwards she learned that Spanish Literacy and ESL Literacy classes were offered in the same building, and she signed up. She had

enjoyed both the Spanish Literacy and ESL Literacy classes but still wanted to improve her English reading and writing skills more:

> *Es importante que aprenda uno el inglés. Para mí, lo que yo quiero aprender es leer y escribir. Eso es los que necesito. ¡Con hablar no tengo problema! (Se ríe.) Empecé hace tres años a estudiar en _____ Campus. La primera clase que tomé fue una clase de baile. Y después tomé clases de inglés. La experiencia de estudiar como adulto ha sido para mí muy bonita. Porque la gente me motiva. Estudiar es muy importante para aprender el idioma de este país. Es muy importante que todo el mundo vaya a la escuela. Mi meta es aprender, pues, a leer y a escribir. He avanzado un poquito a leer, a conocer las letras. Y ya voy escribiendo un poquito. No mucho, pero allí voy.*
>
> It is important that one learn English. For me, what I want to learn is to read and write. This is what I need. I have no problem speaking! (Laughs) I started studying at _____ Campus three years ago. The first class I took was a dance class. And after that I took English classes. The experience of studying as an adult has been very nice. Because my classmates motivate me. Studying is very important to learn the language of this country. It is very important that everyone goes to school. My goal is to learn, well, to read and to write. I have advanced a little in reading and knowing the letters. And I am starting to write a little. Not much, but I am getting there.

All four participants mentioned that in addition to attending classes for academic reasons, they were also socially motivated to attend. They enjoyed spending time with other immigrants, many of whom had experienced some of the same things. Isabel and Maria loved to tell stories and jokes to entertain large groups of their classmates, while Adelina and Laura preferred having quiet conversations with those who sat next to them. Each participant in her own way enjoyed the social aspects of attending class.

Isabel wanted to learn to read and write English well so she could take responsibility for the budget and paying the bills in her family. She also wanted to take charge of all of the business related to the family's rental properties. Her husband was older and had already retired. Isabel explained why she wanted to improve her English literacy skills:

> *Yo quiero aprender a escribir y leer bien en inglés. Porque es importante para leer los papeles que le mandan a uno y hacer mis billes personales. Y para leer todas las cuentas de las propiedades. Me interesa aprender eso.*
>
> I want to learn to write and read well in English. Because it is important to read the papers that they send one and to pay my personal bills. And to read all the bills of the properties. I am interested in learning that.

Laura

Laura also expressed a desire to improve her English skills:

> *Yo tengo ese sentido de que sí he mejorado en el inglés y en la escritura porque antes yo no sabía nada de inglés. Pero ahorita ya entiendo más y comprendo más. Y en la escritura también he mejorado más. Pero quiero mejorar mucho, mucho más.*
>
> I have a feeling that I have improved in English and in writing because before I did not know any English. But now I understand more. And in writing I have also improved more. But I want to improve much, much more.

Laura spoke less than the other participants about wanting to improve her English skills for work-related reasons. She seemed to be mainly interested in improving her conversational skills in English for social reasons, sharing that she wanted to be able to have conversations with people from all over the world.

Similar to Maria, Laura wanted to improve her English even more so that she would be able to teach her grandchildren when she returned to Colombia. She believed that with English skills, they would have better opportunities and she was sure that they would enjoy learning from her. She also hoped to learn enough English to be able to get a different kind of job from the ones she had had. She really wanted to do something that she liked and something that she chose. She related:

> *Mis metas para mi propio aprendizaje son seguir estudiando para poder alcanzar alguna meta. Y estoy pidiéndole a Dios que ojalá pueda alcanzarla. Para hacer algo que yo quiero hacer. Ojalá que Dios me de ese poder, para poder hacer lo que yo deseo hacer. Y pues, aunque no lo pueda hacer, pues, aprender un poco de inglés porque mis nietos me están pidiendo que les enseñe. Entonces tengo*

> *que prepararme muy bien para llegar allá donde ellos y ser la profesora de inglés de ellos.*
>
> My goals for my own learning are to continue studying to be able to reach a goal. And I am asking God that hopefully I can reach it. To do something that I want to do. I hope that God will give me this power, to be able to do what I want to do. And well, even if I am not able to do it, well, to learn a little English because my grandchildren are asking me to teach them. So I must prepare myself very well in order to arrive where they are and be their English teacher.

Conclusion

Three of the four participants stated that the poverty they experienced as children brought them feelings of sadness, especially because it meant that they were not able to participate fully in formal schooling. Maria, Adelina, and Laura, who experienced poverty as children, grew up in different circumstances. Maria's parents both died, Adelina's mother did not work outside the home, and Laura's birth father abandoned her family. Although these circumstances were not the same, they all contributed to the poverty, which did not allow the participants to fulfill their dreams of studying. In contrast, Isabel's family owned farms, orchards, and coffee plantations. Isabel described her school as *bonita* (pretty), while Maria described her school as *muy pobre* (very poor), with only wooden chairs and benches, and without anywhere to write.

All of the participants came from large, Catholic families. Maria and Adelina both had seven siblings, while Laura had eight and Isabel twelve. At the time of the study, all of the participants continued to be practicing Catholics and were very devout. They were very active members of their church communities, participating in church choirs, church trips, and pilgrimages to celebrate the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Child labor distinguished Maria and Laura from Adelina and Isabel. At young ages, Maria and Laura both went to work on coffee plantations. Laura also worked in the gold mines and as a domestic servant before she was even a teenager. As a child, Maria made tamales and sold them at the market by herself. Both Maria and Laura mentioned that they worked to buy their own food as children.

All of the participants' opportunities for schooling and lives in general were interrupted by violence. Adelina and Isabel lived in areas that were heavily bombed. Maria and Laura both described the fear felt by the people in their villages. Although Maria and Isabel were both young children when they experienced the civil wars in their countries, while Adelina and Laura were already adults during the most violent periods in Nicaragua and Colombia, all four recalled the violence very clearly, as if it had occurred yesterday.

Maria was the only participant who was indigenous. In addition, she was the only participant whose people, the Kaqchikel, had been a target for genocide. Although all of the participants experienced war and/or violence, Maria was set apart by being a member of a group that experienced genocide. Her husband's people, the Q'eqchi', were also targeted for genocide. Maria and her husband were survivors of genocide, which was a part of her sons' family history. This fact distinguished Maria and her family from the other participants in this study.

Laura experienced intense frustration when her brothers were allowed to continue going to school while she was kept at home doing housework. She knew that she needed to go to school in order to make her dreams come true and she strongly resented being taken out of school. Adelina noted that even if her family had had enough money, her

father probably would not have allowed her to go to school because he believed that girls and women belonged in the home.

All of the participants noted that improving their English skills through participation in community college classes was an important goal. Adelina emphasized the point that learning to read and write in Spanish and English had changed her life. For her, being able to read about topics that interest her was a source of much joy. Three of the four participants mentioned family-related reasons for wanting to improve their English skills. However, Isabel exclaimed that this was finally "her time" and that she wanted to learn for herself. Two of the participants wanted to learn to read, write, and speak English so that they could teach others. Maria desired to teach English to new immigrants from Guatemala so they could get jobs. She noted that she remembered how much she struggled when she first arrived and at the time of the study she wanted to alleviate some of the suffering for new arrivals. Both Maria and Laura wanted to be able to use English with their grandchildren. Maria believed that her future grandchildren would be bilingual. Laura wanted to teach her grandchildren to speak, read, and write English when she returned to Colombia because she believed it would help them get better jobs.

Most importantly, all of the participants reported experiencing a greater feeling of independence and self-reliance as a result of improved English skills and a desire to become even more self-reliant and independent. Laura stated that her goal was to have a job that was something she liked and something she chose. Maria desired to depend less upon her sons for interpreting and translating in her everyday life. Isabel wanted to be in charge of taking care of her own bills and business documents. Finally, Adelina

described the happiness she felt about being able to arrive at different locations in the city by herself, without asking for help to read the addresses.

Research Question 2

What Are the Participants' Stories Describing the Educational and Schooling Trajectories of Their Children and Grandchildren?

Introduction

All of the participants emphasized the importance of communication with their children as a method of supporting education. Each participant spoke with her children and grandchildren each day or every other day about school and education. Maria and Isabel also communicated regularly with their sons' teachers and principals.

Maria and Laura frequently and skillfully used *consejos*, cultural narratives often used as critical tools in Latin@ families (Delgado Gaitan, 1994), to encourage their children (Maria) and grandchildren (Laura) to make the most of their educational opportunities. Maria and Adelina were especially creative in supporting their children's success in schooling. They never allowed their own limited access to formal schooling to discourage them from believing that their children could achieve whatever they wanted to, academically and beyond.

For Isabel and Maria, being present at their sons' schools was very important. Although both women were working, they always made time to go to their sons' schools for important events. All of the women were the primary financial supporters of their children's formal schooling. They worked to pay for clothing, books, and other school materials. Finally, all of the mothers believed that an education could lead to a higher quality of life for their children. They wanted their children to have more

fulfilling jobs than the ones they had had.

Supporting the Formal Education of Loved Ones in Their Own Ways

The themes I found in the data stimulated by this research question were not necessarily related to the educational outcomes achieved by the children and grandchildren of the participants. Their educational achievements varied widely. Maria and Adelina's children graduated from university, while Isabel and Laura's did not. The similarities I found were more directly related to each participant supporting the formal education of her children and grandchildren in her own unique way and to the best of her ability.

Children and Grandchildren in the U.S.

Maria and Isabel, whose children and grandchildren attended and continued to attend school in the U.S., supported the academic success of their loved ones differently than how the mainstream media typically perceives parental involvement. For example, neither joined the P.T.A. or felt confident helping her children and grandchildren do homework. However, each woman did a great deal to support the academic success of her children and grandchildren in her own way. Similarly to the Latin@ immigrant parents in Fuentes' (2011) study, Maria and Isabel contributed to the academic success of their children in ways which corresponded harmoniously with their own identities, needs, and beliefs, as discussed below.

Maria

Maria only had the opportunity to attend one year of elementary school. However, her older son graduated from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and her younger son graduated from the University of California, San Diego. Maria contributed a

great deal to the educational attainment of her sons at all levels, from elementary school all the way through university and beyond. After they graduated from university, both sons moved home to save money for graduate school. Maria supported their decisions and even continued to give them money for clothing and other necessities when she was able.

Maria's older son earned a degree in economics and was planning to become a certified public accountant with his own office. After he graduated, he worked part-time at a public library for a couple of years. At the time of this study, he had gotten a job as the accountant for a health clinic serving working-class Latin@ immigrants. Her youngest son also graduated with a degree in economics. Subsequently, he applied and was accepted to law school at a university in New York. However, at the time of the study he had decided not to go because of the cost and instead was working full-time as a manager in a department store. Maria hoped he would still pursue a law degree but that he would attend a school not too far away.

From the time that her sons started elementary school, Maria contributed to their academic success in many ways. She was the one who got them ready each morning, and she was usually the one who took them to school on the bus on her way to work and picked them up on the bus on her way home. Sometimes her husband took them in his truck but usually Maria did it using public transportation. Maria was also the one who made sure they had their lunches each day, *'Desde chiquito, yo siempre preparaba las loncheras de mis hijos. Y hasta que ya crecieron, yo les hacía sus sandwiches.'* "From the time they were little, I always prepared the lunch boxes of my sons. And until they had already grown, I made them their sandwiches."

Maria attended every meeting and conference at her sons' elementary and secondary schools. Since these school events often took place during her work hours, she always asked for time off to attend. She also volunteered to help whenever her sons' classes went on field trips. She enjoyed all of her involvement with her sons' schools and had good relationships with their teachers. Maria recalled:

> *Me regalaron un diploma que dice que yo nunca hacía falta a los meetings. Yo siempre quería saber como iban mis hijos. Yo les dije a los maestros, 'Cuando mis hijos se portan mal, quiero que me llamen.' Yo siempre le pedía permiso a mi patrona ir a los meetings en las escuelas. Yo también fui en los field trips porque quería saber como se portaban mis hijos en las caminatas. Yo me sentía feliz, yendo en los viajes. Los maestros fueron muy buenos con mis hijos en todas las escuelas. No se quejaban de ellos. Hablaron español también en los parent teacher conferences y las reuniones en la escuela.*
>
> They gave me a certificate that says that I never missed the meetings. I always wanted to know how my sons were doing. I told the teachers, "When my sons behave badly, I want you to call me." I always asked my boss for permission to go to the meetings at the schools. I also went on the field trips because I wanted to know how my sons behaved on the outings. I felt happy, going on the field trips. The teachers were very good with my sons at all of the schools. They did not complain about them. They spoke Spanish also at the parent-teacher conferences and the meetings at the school.

Maria did not feel that she had the knowledge base to be able to help her sons with much of their homework. However, she always made sure that they had a clean, bright, and quiet place to study. In addition, she required her sons to follow a routine for their homework time. Each night after dinner, Maria, her husband, and their sons would sit together at the kitchen table until all of the homework was finished. Unlike Maria, her husband had had the opportunity to graduate from high school in Guatemala. He was interested in economics and accounting as a student, which is how her sons also became interested in these subjects. When her sons needed to do special projects, her husband stayed up late to help them and Maria also remained awake to show her

support.

As Maria remembered:

> *Mi esposo se ocupó más de ayudarles a nuestros hijos con las tareas, porque como él estudió más, él les enseñaba matemáticas. Nos sentábamos los cuatro en la mesa en la casa por la noche, para estudiar, y para hablar de los días escolares de ellos. Mi esposo, como el estudió más, sabe más que yo. Mi esposo sabe mucho. Entonces, él sabe demasiado porque se graduó de la secundaria. Él les ayudó mucho con los trabajos que tenían que llevar a la escuela. Y en la high school, les pedían hacer trabajos, y mi esposo trataba de ver como arreglar los trabajos con ellos. Nos quedábamos despiertos hasta las doce, la una de la mañana, haciendo trabajos…proyectos…Sí, mi esposo trabajaba en los proyectos con ellos.*
>
> My husband helped our sons more with their homework, because he studied more, he taught them math. The four of us would sit at the table in the house at night, to study, and to talk about their school days. My husband knows more than I do, as he studied more. My husband knows a lot. So, he knows more because he graduated from high school. He helped them a lot with the projects they had to take to school. And at the high school, they asked them to do projects, and my husband tried to help them with their projects. We would stay awake until twelve, one in the morning, doing projects…Yes, my husband worked on the projects with them.

Although Maria's husband was able to help their sons more with actually doing their homework and school projects because he had had more formal schooling, Maria was always there with them, expressing interest in their school days and school work. Every night she cooked dinner so that they would have energy to stay up and study. She also cleaned off the table after dinner so they would have a place to study.

When her sons started elementary school, Maria's husband was working nights. However, she found a way for them to get help with their homework. At that time, childcare was provided during the evening Spanish and ESL Literacy classes. Maria would bring her sons, with their backpacks, and ask the childcare workers to help them with their assignments. Maria described their routine:

> *Yo empecé a estudiar en la clase de español, como yo no estudié mucho el español. Empecé yendo a la clase de español cuando…con la maestra Mary. Yo estudié con ella español como dos años. Antes había guardería para los niños, y allí los dejaba y me fui a las clases. Cuando salí a las 9:00, los agarré.*
>
> I began studying in the Spanish (Literacy) class, as I had not studied Spanish much. I began going to the Spanish class when…with the teacher Mary. I studied Spanish with her for about two years. There used to be childcare for the children, and I would leave them there and go to class. When I left at nine, I picked them up.

Throughout her sons' formal schooling, Maria used *consejos* to inspire her sons and guide them to do their best. She frequently talked to them about how she had not had the same opportunities and about how this lack of opportunity had led to a harder life:

> *Yo siempre les he aconsejado que luchen para seguir adelante, para que un día ellos no sufran, y que tengan unos trabajos que no les cuesten tanto. Y que estudien bastante para que no les pasen penas. Porque a veces cuando uno no ha estudiado, pasen muchas penas. Entonces, yo siempre los he dicho que siguan adelante. Que siguan sus carreras y todo.*
>
> I have always advised them to fight to get ahead, so that one day they will not suffer, and they will have jobs that do not take such a toll on them. And that they study a lot so that they will not experience hardships. Because sometimes when one has not studied, he or she experiences many hardships. So, I have always told them to keep achieving. To persist in their majors and everything.

Maria often talked to her sons about her life in Guatemala. She discussed the poverty and lack of educational opportunity that she experienced there. She sent them to Guatemala to spend summers with their grandparents. When they returned, they always talked to her about the poverty they had seen. Maria told me that one of her main goals in sharing *consejos* with her sons was to help them realize that the educational opportunities they enjoyed were not something that everyone had. She stated:

> *Mis hijos están nacidos acá, pero yo les dije, yo siempre les dije, 'Porque ustedes sean nacidos acá no significa que ustedes van a tirar su país al garbage. Tu país tienes que valorar, y salir adelante. ¡Porque les digo yo que no porque ustedes nacieron acá, ustedes van a hacer lo que quieren acá! No, así no es la cosa.'*
>
> My sons were born here, but I told them, I always told them, "Just because you were born here, it does not mean that you are going to throw your country in the garbage. You have to value your country and get ahead. Because I tell you that just because you were born here, you are not going to do whatever you want here! No, that is not what it is like."

Maria used narratives about some of her sons' cousins to teach her sons what she did not want them to do. Many of Maria's nieces and nephews were living nearby and some of them were really struggling. Several of her sisters' children had dropped out of school at the time of this study. Maria told her sons in detail about the hard jobs their cousins were working. She emphasized the heavy physical labor they were doing, working long days as janitors. Maria also told her sons that if they ever dropped out of school, the very next morning they would have to get up early and go stand on the corner waiting for *una chamba* (work) with the day laborers, *'Irán a la esquina para agarrar trabajo temprano cada mañana. Entonces, allí se van a parar, hijos, y yo les voy a levantar temprano.'* "You will go to the corner to get work early each morning. So, you will stand there, sons, and I will wake you up early." Finally, Maria reminded her sons many times, *'Yo, cuando me muero, no les voy a poder dejar herencia ni casa, pero ya luché por su educación y tienen que aprovechar.'* "When I die, I am not going to be able to leave you an inheritance or a house, but I fought for your education and you must take advantage."

Isabel

Like Maria's sons, Isabel's sons also attended school in the United States. Both of Maria's sons were born in Northern California. Isabel's older son had become a U.S.

citizen by the time of this study. He was born in El Salvador, and she brought him with her to California when he was one-year old. Her younger son was born in the U.S. Maria was a resident and hoped to become a citizen soon. She and her husband worked with a lawyer for ten years and paid him thousands of dollars before they were granted asylum and residency. Isabel and her husband became residents in the early 1980s, when the Reagan Administration granted residency to many Salvadorans. She became a citizen in 1995.

Because of her status, Isabel had experienced more job security than Maria. Isabel had worked for the same urban Catholic parish for more than 30 years, cleaning the church and rectory. She also decorated the church with flowers and helped take care of the retired priests at the rectory. Isabel wanted her sons to attend the Catholic K-8 school in the same parish, and she wanted to be close by. She stated:

> *Yo puse mis dos hijos en una escuela Católica. Y era muy buena la escuela. Era la escuela de St. _____. Y después fueron a la escuela San _____, en _____, que estuvo excelente. Mi hijo mayor estuvo en la high school en la _____ (secundaria Católica)…buena escuela.*
>
> I put my two sons in a Catholic school. And the school was very good. It was St. _____'s. And later they went to St. _____'s in _____ (other neighborhood), which was excellent. My older son went to _____ (Catholic high school)…good school.

Isabel was very proud of having been able to send her sons to private Catholic schools. She always wanted to be *muy pendiente de* (very aware of) all that was going on at school for her sons and her way of doing that was by working nearby so she could be very present at the school and in her sons' lives. Isabel went to elementary school through third grade and did not feel confident in helping her sons academically.

However, her sons knew that she valued formal schooling because she communicated that through her everyday actions:

> *Lo más importante es ser honrada la persona. Yo no fui a la universidad. Yo luché para tener mis hijos en el colegio. Yo tengo el derecho de educar bien a mis hijos. Y fueron a escuelas privadas, Católicas. Los llevaba a la escuela, los recogía, y estaba con ellos siempre.*
>
> The most important thing is to be an honorable person. I did not go to university. I fought to have my sons in school. I have the right to educate my sons well. And they went to private Catholic schools. I took them to school, I picked them up, and I was always with them.

For Isabel, being with her sons as much as possible was a very important way of supporting their education. She frequently expressed her belief in the importance of constant communication with children and young people. Several times, she criticized parents who seemed to value earning money more than spending time with their children and communicating with them. She pointed out that many highly educated parents do not spend much time with their children and often seem not to know much about what is happening at school and in their children's lives in general.

Isabel volunteered often at her sons' schools and frequently asked their teachers and principals how they were doing. She emphasized the importance of constant communication with her sons, their teachers, and administrators. When one of her sons once had a problem with a classmate, Isabel did not hesitate in discussing it with the principal:

> *Una vez, con mi hijo grande, tuve que hablar con la directora. Lo que pasó fue que había un niño que le dijo a mi hijo, 'Tienes que robarle a tu mamá, y yo le voy a robar a mi mamá'. Entonces, mi hijo me agarró una cosa y yo le dije todo a la directora porque mi hijo no me hubiera robado nada.*
>
> Once, with my older son, I had to talk to the principal. What happened was that there was a boy who said to my son, "You have to steal from your mom and I am

> going to steal from my mom." So, my son took something from me and I told the principal everything because my son would not have stolen anything from me.

Isabel always felt comfortable discussing any problems with her sons' teachers and administrators, like this time when a classmate dared her son to steal from her. She felt especially satisfied with the way the principal worked together with her to resolve this particular problem. She felt welcomed and respected at her sons' schools.

Her older son attended Catholic schools through high school. After high school, for one year he attended the same community college as the participants in this study. At the time of the study, he was a successful mechanic with three children. His daughters, eleven and sixteen, attended public schools. He also had a three-year old son. The sixteen-year old already knew that she wanted to attend university: '*Mi nieta grande en _____ (Northern California suburb), la que tiene dieciséis años, quiere seguir estudiando, y quiere ir a la universidad*.' "My oldest granddaughter, who lives in _____ (Northern California suburb), the one who is sixteen, wants to continue studying and go to university." Isabel encouraged her grandchildren to do well in school and to follow their dreams:

> *Mis nietos están en la escuela y espero que todo lo hagan bien. A mis nietos siempre les pregunto cómo van en la escuela. Y ellos me dicen que van bien, y yo les digo 'Adelante!' Y todos van a salir bien.*
>
> My grandchildren are in school and I hope that they do everything well. I always ask my grandchildren how they are doing in school. And they tell me they are doing well, and I tell them, "Keep it up!" And they are all going to do well.

At the time of the study, her younger son had two children who attended public school in the Central Valley, near the homes owned by Isabel and her husband. He attended Catholic school through eighth grade and then went to a public high school. After that he attended a state university in the capital city for two years. Isabel wished that both

sons would have finished their degrees for their own fulfillment and for economic reasons.

Isabel's older son had been successful as a mechanic but her younger son was struggling, together with his wife, to support their family. As Isabel noted, *'A mis hijos siempre les estoy diciendo que deben terminar sus carreras porque es muy importante.'* "I am always telling my sons that they should finish their degrees because it is very important." Isabel and her husband were assisting their youngest son and his family by allowing them to live rent-free in one of the houses they owned. Isabel did not mind helping her sons when they needed help but she was eager for her younger son to become independent. She was proud of the ways in which she supported her sons' opportunities in formal education and said it was time for them to support their own children in the same ways. Isabel was happy that she was now able to think about herself and her own education a little more:

> *Cuando mis hijos eran pequeños, yo estaba pendiente a ellos. Estaba con ellos. Ahora mis hijos están grandes. Ahora mi tiempo es para mí. Para ir a la escuela y aprender el idioma. Eso es muy importante.*
>
> When my sons were little, I was always attentive to them. I was with them. Now my sons are big. Now my time is for me. To go to school and learn the language. That is very important.

In addition to supporting her sons' formal educations, Isabel also played an important role in the education of one of her nieces. Her niece earned a full scholarship at the University of San Diego and began medical school at the University of California, San Francisco. Isabel helped her niece with living expenses while she was in school in San Diego. In addition, all of Isabel's family in Northern California went to San Diego for the graduation party, which Isabel helped fund. Isabel was extremely

proud of her niece's accomplishments:

> *Yo tengo mi sobrina, que se acaba de graduar de la Universidad de San Diego. Ella estudió la secundaria en _____ . Muchos de su clase fueron a San Diego para estudiar. Y mi sobrina era la única Latina. Todos los niños pueden sacar las metas que quieren. Yo estuve en la graduación de mi sobrina en San Diego. Porque nosotros, por parte de mi familia, apoyamos. Está estudiando ahora ella para ser pediátrica.*
>
> I have my niece, who just graduated from the University of San Diego. She went to high school in _____. Many from her class went to San Diego to study. And my niece was the only Latina. All children can reach their goals. I was at my niece's graduation in San Diego. Because we, my family, support her. Now she is studying to be a pediatrician.

Children and Grandchildren in the Country of Origin

Adelina

When Adelina left Nicaragua to come to the United States in 1996, her children were 10, 12, 13, and 14 years old. Adelina came on a tourist visa to take care of an older relative of her husband. Her husband's aunt was living in Northern California and was dying. Adelina wanted to help her husband's aunt, but her main goal in coming was to help her children economically. More specifically, she wanted to pay for her children to go to private schools. According to Adelina, there were serious problems in the public schools in Managua with gangs and she wanted to protect her children from exposure to them. When the older relative died, Adelina found other work cleaning houses and taking care of the elderly. At the time of the study, Adelina had been in the U.S. for nearly 20 years and was undocumented. She had never spent money on an immigration lawyer. She preferred to send most of her earnings to Nicaragua for her children and grandchildren.

Adelina described her goal in coming to the United States:

> *Yo quería mejorar un poco más la economía de nuestra casa y por eso me inmigré. Y ayudarles a mis hijos a educarlos. Yo quería que ellos estudiaran en la universidad y sacaran sus carreras. Esto era mi sueno y el sueno se cumplió.*
>
> I wanted to improve a little more the economic position of our household and for that reason I immigrated. And to help my children to get an education. I wanted them to go to university and get their degrees. This was my dream and it came true.

Adelina's children initially stayed with her sister and sister-in-law. Adelina sent money for all four of her children to attend private Catholic schools from elementary through university. Later on, she also helped pay for her granddaughter to attend private schools. Adelina worked hard in California and sent money for tuition, books, and uniforms. In addition to paying for all of the school-related expenses, Adelina sent money for a house to be built for her children in Managua. Finally, she paid for utility bills, medical bills, and more so that her children could focus on their studies. Adelina's husband, who had stayed behind in Nicaragua, went to meetings at the children's schools. However, Adelina was the principal economic supporter of her four children.

Adelina described her children's formal schooling and degrees:

> *Las mujeres estudiaron en una escuela con monjas y los barones en otra escuela con monjas. El colegio se llama Sagrado Corazón de Jesús. Allí hicieron la primaria. Y entonces fueron a la secundaria. Las mujeres se fueron a un colegio de monjas y recibieron su bachillerato. Y los barones fueron a otra escuela. Y después se fueron a la universidad. Ellos también se fueron a universidades que eran privadas. Fueron a escuelas privadas desde la primaria hasta la universidad. He pagado toda la educación de mis hijos. Una estudió ingeniería informática y el otro estudió diseño gráfico. Otro estudió arquitectura y ya está trabajando y la otra estudió para decoración y también estudió para ser maestra. Tiene su maestría. Tiene tres títulos ella, la mayor. Enseña la primaria. Y ha estudiado también belleza. Y también estudió para decorar casas.*
>
> The women studied in a school with nuns and the boys in another school with nuns. The school was called Sacred Heart of Jesus. There they went to primary school. And then they went to high school. The women went to a school with

> nuns and received their high school diplomas. And the boys went to another school. And later they went to university. They also went to private universities. They went to private schools from primary school through university. I have paid for all of the formal schooling of my children. One studied computer engineering and the other studied graphic design. Another studied architecture and is already working and the other studied decorating and also studied to be a teacher. She has her master's degree. She has three degrees, the oldest. She teaches primary school. And she has studied cosmetology also. And she also studied to decorate houses.

It was very important to Adelina that her children never must have the kinds of jobs that she had had to work because she lacked the opportunities to go to school when she was young. From the time she became pregnant with her first daughter, she was determined that her children would have the educational opportunities and career possibilities that she never had. She worked hard for them to be able to attend good schools, beginning in preschool.

Adelina wanted her children to advance as far as possible in their education. She was proud that they had all graduated from university but she encouraged them to do more:

> *Les digo a mis hijos que yo sería la madre más feliz si ellos estudiaran otro grado…un doctorado…sería feliz. Ahorita uno de ellos está estudiando idioma extranjera- el inglés. Y está preparándose más en la carrera que recibió- la arquitectura. Y también está estudiando como instalar los aire condicionados y la refrigeración.*
>
> I tell my children that I would be the happiest mother if they studied for an additional degree…a doctorate…I would be happy. Now one of them is studying foreign language- English. And he is preparing himself more in the subject that he studied- architecture. And he is also studying how to install air conditioners and refrigeration.

Adelina had two granddaughters. One of them was 12-years old and had been awarded scholarships to attend private schools. According to Adelina, she was a very good student.

Obviously, Adelina was not able to be physically present at her children's schools in Nicaragua the way Maria and Isabel were able to be present at their sons' schools in California. However, Adelina talked to her children almost every day on the phone about school and always stayed informed about their academic progress. She had very high expectations for their academic work; when she felt they were not doing their best, there were consequences:

> *Tenía que castigarlos de aquí también, cuando salían mal de los estudios. Siempre quería que mandaran una fotocopia de las notas. Y si miraba que estaban mal, iban los cuatro de castigos. Nunca les faltó la comida porque eso sería una madre muy absurda. El diario de ellos es lo que quitaba. Igualito ahora en la universidad tenían que mandar fotocopias de sus notas. Si no, entonces no hubiera creído porque soy mamá y sin papeles yo no puedo creer nada. (Se ríe.)*
>
> I had to punish them from here also, when they did not do well in school. I always wanted them to send photocopies of their grades. And if I saw that they were bad, the four of them would be punished. I never kept food from them because that would make me an absurd mother. What I took away from them was their daily allowance. Likewise, now when they were at university, they had to send photocopies of their grades. If not, then I would not have believed them because I am a mom and without papers I cannot believe anything. (Laughs.)

Laura

Just as Adelina made it possible for her four children and two granddaughters to pursue their education across the miles, Laura also struggled so that her five children and nine grandchildren could study in Colombia. Laura was a single mother of five in Cali, Colombia, when she began working for a wealthy family there. The family had one newborn son, and Laura took care of him and cleaned the family's house. After Laura had been working for the family for six months, they told her that they were moving to the U.S. and wanted her to come with them to continue taking care of their son. Laura explained why she decided to leave her five children with her sister and

come to the United States:

> *Por eso lo hice, para poder ayudar a mi familia. Porque ya no estaba el papá de mis hijos. Entonces yo he sido como papí y mamí. Porque su papí falleció. Entonces, sí trabajaba para poderles enviar dinero a mis hijos porque estaban estudiando y necesitaban el dinero para comer y para sus libros, su ropa, y la escuela. Para todo les enviaba yo su dinero. Entonces ahora, pues, ellos también están muy agradecidos conmigo porque pudieron estudiar y nunca pasaron hambre. Siempre tenían sus cositas que necesitaban. Y las tenían a tiempo. Yo siempre se les mandaba su dinero a tiempo.*
>
> That is why I did it, to be able to help my family. Because my children's father was no longer there. So I have been like dad and mom. Because their father passed away. So, I worked to be able to send money to my children because they were studying and needed the money to eat and for their books, their clothing, and school. I sent them money for everything. So now, well, they are also very grateful to me because they were able to study and they never experienced hunger. They always had the things they needed. And they had them on time. I always sent them their money on time.

Laura's five children and nine grandchildren attended public schools in Cali. She said that in Cali public school students wore uniforms and special shoes. They were also required to buy a special uniform and shoes for physical education. Laura had paid for all of this and continued to pay for it for her grandchildren who had not yet graduated. In addition, she single-handedly paid for all other schooling-related expenses, such as books and backpacks.

Laura worked for the family that brought her to the United States until their son turned 17. During that time, she lived with them, allowing her to save money on rent and to send more money to her family for schooling and housing expenses. Not only did Laura successfully pay for all schooling-related expenses for her family, but also she also paid for a two-story house to be built for them in Cali, so that they could all study without worrying about having a place to live:

> *Yo se los compré la casa para todos. Lo hice, gracias a Dios, con la familia que me trajo acá a este país. Logré comprar la casa con ese trabajo. Costó cinco mil*

> *dólares. Y ahorita, poco a poco fui construyendo porque era de una sola planta y ahorita ya tiene la segunda planta.*
>
> I bought the house for everyone. I did it, thank God, with the family that brought me here to this country. I was able to buy the house with that job. It cost five thousand dollars. And now, I built it little by little because it was only one floor and now it already has a second floor.

Laura's five children and most of her grandchildren were living in the house at the time of the study. Laura said that when she returns to Colombia, she will live there also.

After their son turned 17, the wealthy Colombian family asked Laura to move out. She began renting a room in a house with other Latin@ immigrants. She worked taking care of babies and the elderly and cleaned houses. When the family first came to the U.S., Laura flew back and forth to Colombia every three months to renew her tourist visa. Then the family went to Bogotá and arranged for her to have a work visa. While she was living with them, the family paid a lawyer to try to help Laura regularize her status. However, at the time of the study, she remained undocumented. Laura's status and having to pay rent after the Colombian family asked her to move out had negatively impacted the amount of money she was able to earn and send to her family.

Laura's five children and older grandchildren had all graduated from public high schools in Cali. According to Laura, there were problems with gangs in the Cali public schools. Despite this, no one in her family had dropped out. Laura talked to her children and grandchildren every other day on the phone and always asked how school was going. Once, one of her grandsons got into an argument with a girl in one of his classes. The argument became physical and she ended up stabbing him in the stomach with a pencil and drawing blood. Laura's grandson told her that the girl was

involved with a gang, and he was scared about what was going to happen. Laura gave him advice:

> *Yo le dije que siempre la mire a la niña seriamente, y que él no baje la cabeza, porque ella tiene amigos que son de pandilla. Entonces yo le dije a mi nieto que tuviera mucho cuidado y mi nieto ya se cambió de salón. Y el problema ya está solucionado porque el profesor y el director le ayudaron mucho. Le dijeron a ella que si ya seguía el problema entonces que no le iban a recibir más en el colegio o en ningún otro colegio. Ella era así- agresiva con las otras personas. Ella no se ha vuelto a meter con mi nieto y ya mi nieto está más tranquilo. Él fue al profesor y le pidió disculpas por haber peleado con la niña. Pero ella fue la de la culpa porque ella empezó el problema con él. Mi nieto tenía 17 años. Ya fue en el último año del colegio. Yo le dije que ya le faltaron poquitos meses para terminar. Y bueno, que terminara en esa escuela porque el estaba en esa escuela desde pequeño. Él fue a una escuela pública.*
>
> I told him to always look at the girl seriously and not to lower his head because she has friends who are in a gang. So I told my grandson to be very careful and he already changed classrooms. And the problem is already solved because the teacher and the principal helped him a lot. They told her that if the problem continued, she would not be able to continue attending that school or any other school. She was like that- aggressive with other people. Now she leaves him alone and he is calmer. He went to the teacher and apologized for having fought with the girl. But it was her fault because she started it. My grandson was 17. He was already in his last year of high school. I told him that he only had a few months left. And well, that he should finish at that school because he had been at that school since he was small. He went to a public school.

Laura's grandson stayed in school, graduated, and became a soccer coach. In addition to coaching, he was traveling to different cities in Colombia to try out for professional soccer teams. Laura helped pay for his travel expenses. Since playing professional soccer was his dream, she wanted to support him in pursuing it. She noted, *'Lo estoy apoyando lo más que pueda para que vaya todos los días a su entrenimiento.'* "I am supporting him as much as possible so that he can go to practice every day."

All five of Laura's children graduated from public high schools in Cali but they did not want to continue studying. She tried to encourage them to go to university. At

the time of the study, her four daughters were working as nannies and her son was a construction worker. She wished they had gone to college so that they could earn higher wages. Some of her grandchildren wanted to become nurses and lawyers and she encouraged them to follow their dreams. She was upset that her daughters were doing the same kind of work that she was, because they had graduated from high school and had the opportunity to go to college while she did not:

> *Sí terminaron la primaria, todos. Y mi hijo mayor ahora trabaja en construcción. Mi hija, la segunda, trabaja en casa de familia. Todas mis hijas cuidan niños. Eso es el trabajo de ellas, pero todos terminaron la primaria y el bachillerato. Todos lo terminaron. Y, pues, hasta allí llegaron. Ninguno quiso seguir más. Entonces, pues, eso ya es cosa de ellos, que no querían seguir estudiando. Yo sí los apoyé mucho para que siguieran estudiando, pero no quisieron estudiar, que ya estaban grandes y les daba mucha pereza ir. No quisieron ir. Y yo hubiera querido o quisiera que siguieran estudiando, que fueran a la universidad para que sean algo más en el día de mañana.*
>
> They did finish elementary school, all of them. And my oldest son now works in construction. My daughter, the second one, works for a family. All of my daughters take care of children. That is their job, but all of them finished elementary and secondary school. They all finished. And, well, that is as far as they got. None of them wanted to continue. So, well, that is on them, that they did not want to continue studying. I did support them a lot so they would continue studying but they did not want to study because they were already big and they did not feel like going. They did not want to go. And I would have liked or would like them to continue studying, to go to university so they could be more in the future.

Laura wanted her grandchildren to be able to follow their dreams. She wanted them to finish school and have careers they enjoyed. She hoped that she would remain healthy so she could continue to work and help her grandchildren until they had all graduated. She stated:

> *Y sería yo la abuela más feliz del mundo si mis nietos alcanzaran lograr estas metas que ellos quieren. Pues, yo los apoyo en todo lo que yo más pueda. Yo los voy a apoyar mientras que yo tenga salud. Los voy a apoyar. Entonces…a ver, como…, o hasta donde llegamos. Que Dios me de salud para ayudarles hasta que ellos terminen sus carreras.*

> And I would be the happiest grandmother in the world if my grandchildren are able to achieve the goals that they have chosen. Well, I support them in everything as much as I can. I am going to support them as long as I have my health. I am going to support them. So…we will see, how…, or how far we get. May God give me health to help them until they finish their degrees.

Laura was proud of all that she had done for her children and grandchildren but she pointed out that she was not the only mother who had sacrificed so that her children and grandchildren could have an education. She said, *'Muchas madres Latinas inmigrantes solteras toman toda la responsabilidad para todo por los hijos- por sus estudios y todo.'* "Many single Latina immigrant mothers take all of the responsibility for everything for their children- for their studies and everything."

Conclusion

All of the participants valued communicating with their children and grandchildren about schooling and education and had regular routines for doing so. For example, Maria and her husband spoke with their sons about school each evening during and after dinner. Maria and Laura specifically mentioned using *consejos* to encourage their sons (Maria) and grandson (Laura) to maximize their formal schooling opportunites. Laura helped prevent her grandson from dropping out of high school when he had a negative experience by giving him very specific advice about what to do. Maria told her sons in much detail what they would be doing if they ever chose not to go to school.

Maria and Adelina relied on their creativity to help them support their children's schooling. When Maria's husband's work schedule changed and he had to work nights, she found another way to get homework help for her sons. Adelina refused to let distance get in the way of monitoring her children's grades, requiring them to send copies to her

of all reports from their schools. Maria and Isabel prioritized being present at their sons' schools and in their lives. Both women dropped their sons off at school, picked them up, went to meetings and conferences, and volunteered.

Adelina and Laura's primary motivation for coming to the United States was to be able to pay for their children's formal schooling. Both mothers went beyond paying for schooling-related expenses, building homes for their children and paying for food, medicine, and other basics so that they would not have to worry about these things while they studied. Adelina and Isabel wanted their children to be able to attend private Catholic schools and they worked hard to be able to pay the tuition. All of the mothers believed that formal schooling would make it possible for their children to have a better quality of life. This is why Laura was so disappointed when her children decided not to go to university and her daughters took the same kind of work in Colombia that she had done. It was also the reason that Adelina was angry with the Nicaraguan government. Her four children had university degrees and were eager to work but no good jobs were available. She noted that she had done her job as a parent to make sure her children were well-prepared and that the Nicaraguan government needed to take action to stimulate the economy and job growth.

All of the participants were proud of their children and grandchildren's academic achievements. However, none of them was complacent. They all wanted more. Laura wanted her children and grandchildren to go to college; Isabel also wanted her sons to finish college and her grandchildren to graduate from college. Adelina wanted her children to pursue graduate degrees, while Maria hoped her sons could have better jobs and go to graduate school. In this way the participants were similar.

Research Question 3

What Are the Participants' Hopes Regarding the Future of Education and Schooling for Working-Class Latin@ Students in the United States?

Introduction

All of the participants emphasized the importance of bilingualism and biliteracy for themselves and for working-class Latin@ students. Three of the participants specifically noted the value of bilingual programs and bilingual teachers. The same three participants stated that bilingualism and biliteracy would lead to better careers and better pay.

Additionally, all of the participants mentioned that more financial assistance should be available for working-class Latin@ students to pursue higher education. According to Maria and Adelina, heavy student loan burdens from undergraduate education were preventing many Latin@ students from getting graduate degrees, and more student assistance needed to be made available to prevent this problem. Maria, Adelina, and Laura stressed that local, state, and national governments had to take action to assure that good jobs were available for working-class Latin@ graduates.

Affirm and Develop Bilingualism and Biliteracy

Maria

When Maria was a child in Guatemala, there were no bilingual schools or programs in her area. The Kaqchikel-speaking children, including Maria, studied at one school, while the Spanish-speaking children studied at another. Maria began learning to speak Spanish in Guatemala after she stopped going to school and continued learning the language after she came to the United States. She took the Spanish

Literacy and ESL Literacy classes at the community college.

Her husband spoke both Q'eqchi' and Spanish, and his parents (their sons' only living grandparents) were also fluent in both. Maria and her husband were both trilingual and their sons were bilingual. The total number of languages spoken in Maria's household was four, and this made her family special in this study. Maria felt very proud that two, or half, of the languages spoken and understood in her home were indigenous languages. Not only were Maria and her husband survivors of genocide, but also they were also proud speakers of threatened languages. They were linguistic survivors. This represented another way in which Maria was unique in this study.

Maria's sons did not speak Kaqchikel or Q'eqchi', but they knew a few greetings and many traditions of each culture. Both sons were fluent and literate in Spanish and English. They attended one public elementary school with a K-3 bilingual program; for fourth grade they both moved to a school that had a bilingual program for that grade. For Maria, it was very important that her sons become completely bilingual and biliterate:

> *Cuando metí a mis hijos en la escuela bilingüe, para que escribieran, yo les dije que tuvieran que escribir un papel en español porque tenían que escribir a su abuela. Y la abuela no iba a entender un papel en inglés. Entonces ellos aprendieron a escribir el español. Ellos estudiaron en una escuela bilingüe que se llama _____. Estudiaron tres o cuatro años en aquella escuela, hasta el tercer grado. Después estudiaron en la escuela _____. En la escuela _____ también estudiaron en la escuela bilingüe durante el cuarto grado. Quedó más cerca a mi casa. Yo escogí los programas bilingües porque para nosotros también era muy importante. Y para ellos. Ahora ellos escriben y leen español. Y lo hablan. En el Día de las Madres me hicieron una tarjetita en español. Escribieron, 'Te queremos mucho.' Como yo no entendía la letra en inglés, escribieron en español. Para mí, es importante que mis hijos escriban español.*
>
> When I put my children in a bilingual school, so that they would write, I told them that they had to write a paper in Spanish because they had to write to their

> grandmother. And their grandmother was not going to understand a paper in English. So they learned to write Spanish. They studied at a bilingual school called _____. They studied three or four years at that school, until third grade. Later they studied at _____. At _____ they also studied in the bilingual school during fourth grade. It was closer to my house. I chose the bilingual programs because for us also it was very important. And for them. Now they write and read Spanish. And they speak it. On Mother's Day they made me a little card in Spanish. They wrote, "We love you a lot." Because I could not read English, they wrote in Spanish. For me, it is important that my sons write in Spanish.

Maria believed that all students who speak Spanish as a heritage language should have opportunities similar to those offered her sons to develop bilingualism and biliteracy. She was also convinced that bilingual programs were crucial for newcomer students. She stated that it was important for all students to be able to communicate with their classmates. In addition, she felt that bilingualism and biliteracy were important for the future careers of all students. Maria pointed out that students should have opportunities to learn languages other than Spanish and English, like her older son. He studied French and Japanese at university and learned about French and Japanese cultures and Maria says that this enriched his education a great deal. In Maria's opinion, the schools needed more bilingual teachers:

> *Las escuelas necesitan buenos maestros y que sean bilingües. Y que sepan español para que los niños sean bilingües. Porque eso es lo más importante para los niños. Y para los que no saben inglés. Para comunicarse.*
>
> The schools need good teachers who are bilingual. And who know Spanish so that the children will be bilingual. Because that is the most important thing for the children. And for those who do not know English. To communicate.

Adelina

Adelina also thought that developing both languages was important. She believed that both English and Spanish were important for work and conversation and that children who spoke two languages would have better opportunities in the future,

be able to read documents and receipts, and overall be prepared to do many things.

Both writing and speaking were important:

> *Es importante saber su propio idioma. Saber escribir y leer los dos idiomas es muy importante porque también uno puede presentarse a alguna oficina o llenar una solicitud. Los jóvenes tienen que sentir orgullosos porque pueden hacerlo.*
>
> It is important to know your own language. Knowing how to write and read both languages is very important because one can also present oneself at an office or fill out an application. Young people should feel proud because they can do it.

Adelina mentioned that it was necessary to know more than one language in order to work in tourism or a consulate. Her children in Nicaragua were learning English because of the many employment opportunities in tourism there at the time of this study. Like Maria, Adelina believed that it was important to learn not only English and Spanish but also other languages:

> *Necesitamos maestros que hablen varios idiomas. ¡No sólo inglés, no sólo español, si no chino, francés, y todos los idiomas del mundo! ¡Porque es muy importante saber! Para los jóvenes del nuevo futuro, será importante hablar varios idiomas.*
>
> We need teachers who speak various languages. Not only English, not only Spanish, but also Chinese, French, and all the languages of the world! Because it is very important to know! For the young people of the new future, it will be important to speak various languages.

Isabel

Unlike Maria's sons, Isabel's sons did not study in bilingual programs. However, for Isabel it was very important for bilingual Latin@ students to have opportunities to develop both of their languages:

> *Ser bilingüe es algo muy bonito. Por ejemplo, yo, con mis hijos hablo en casa todo español. Escuchan música en español y ven la tele en español. Todo en español. Y así aprenden. Es muy importante para los niños poder comunicarse con sus padres que no hablan inglés. Poder escribir, entender, y hablar el inglés es muy importante. Pero también es muy importante que los hijos entiendan el español. Ellos son Latinos y necesitan aprender su idioma. Sí, es muy*

> *importante aprender el español también porque ahorita en este país están hablando bastante español y él que tiene dos idiomas gana más. Les pagan más. También es muy importante porque mucha gente no habla inglés.*
>
> To be bilingual is desirable. For example, I speak only Spanish with my sons at home. They listen to music in Spanish and watch television in Spanish. All in Spanish. And that is how they learn. It is very important for children to be able to communicate with their parents, who do not speak English. To be able to write, understand, and speak English is very important. But it is also very important for the children to to understand Spanish. They are Latinos and they need to learn their language. Yes, it is very important to learn Spanish also because right now in this country they are speaking a lot of Spanish and those who have two languages earn more. They pay them more. It is also very important because many people do not speak English.

An important person in Isabel's life who could not speak English was her mother, who traveled back and forth between El Salvador and California. Isabel said that she was very proud that her children and grandchildren were able to speak with her mother in Spanish. Like the other participants, Isabel believed that students should have opportunities to develop their English and Spanish abilities as much as possible and also study additional languages. She opined, *'Los niños deben estudiar dos o tres idiomas. Lo que ellos quieren.'* "Children should study two or three languages. What they want."

Laura

Laura wanted to become completely bilingual herself as well as for her grandchildren to become bilingual. She said that when she returned to Colombia, she was going to teach them English. When people had to translate for her, she felt very embarrassed and when she could not communicate she felt bad. She wanted to learn English well enough to be able to do everything by herself:

> *Ser bilingüe es algo muy bonito, muy bello, porque hay muchas cosas que uno quiere saber o quiere preguntar y no podiendo hacer, se siente uno triste. Y que otras personas le estén traduciendo por uno…no me siento bien cuando tengo que*

> *pedir que me traduzcan. Me siento mal. Y ser bilingüe es algo muy bonito. Cuando uno es bilingüe se siente muy feliz a poder expresar lo que uno siente y poderse comunicar con otras personas. Poderse comunicar con todas las personas es muy bonito. Para mí, es muy bello ser bilingüe.*
>
> To be bilingual is something very attractive, very beautiful, because there are many things that one wants to know or wants to ask and one feels sad not being able to do it. And having other people translate for you…I do not feel good when I have to ask them to translate for me. I feel bad. And to be bilingual is something very attractive. When one is bilingual one feels very happy to be able to express one's feelings and communicate with other people. Being able to communicate with all people is very attractive. For me, it is very beautiful to be bilingual.

Laura believed that being bilingual was a big advantage because one could communicate better, get around more easily, and do what he or she needed to do. For Laura, knowing more than one language and being able to communicate with more people without a problem was a matter of pride. Laura pointed out the value of biliteracy also, *'Poder escribir y leer el español y el inglés es muy importante en la vida. Es algo muy valioso.'* "To be able to write and read Spanish and English is very important in life. It is something very precious."

Economic Limitations in Education

Maria

Maria's sons both graduated from the University of California. They were born in the United States and, therefore qualified for and received student loans. However, they struggled to pay for books, rent, and clothing while they studied. Maria sent them money she earned at her cleaning jobs to cover these costs, but she said it was difficult. She encouraged her sons to find used books online. She said that many Latin@ youths wanted to continue studying but found the costs prohibitive:

> *Los muchachos sí quieren seguir estudiando pero no pueden. Para mis hijos, por ejemplo, les dieron préstamos para estudiar pero los libros son caros. Y por eso*

> *buscaron en Internet y los encontraron muy baratos. Muchos jóvenes no tienen para los libros y cosas así.*
>
> The young people want to continue studying but they are not able to. For my sons, for example, they gave them loans to study but the books are expensive. And that is why they searched on the Internet and they found cheap ones. Many young people do not have money for books and things like that.

Even though Maria's sons were able to find discounted books online, it was still necessary for her to send them money for books. Maria thought that there should be more assistance for working-class Latin@ students to pay for schooling-related expenses beyond tuition.

In addition, Maria believed that if students did well in their initial studies, they should be able to attain more assistance to help them continue studying. For example, her older son wanted to become a Certified Public Accountant but was unable to pay for additional classes at the time of the study because he was working hard to pay off his loans from UC Santa Cruz. Her younger son had recently graduated and had been admitted to law school in New York. However, he did not go because the tuition at the school in New York was very high and he had student loans to pay off from studying at UC San Diego.

According to Maria, her sons' monthly loan payments were so large that they were having trouble buying clothing. Once again, she was helping them with money to buy the basics, which she said made them feel very bad. Both of her sons were living at home again. She wished that there were more scholarships available for good students like her sons, so that they would not have to graduate with so much student debt and could continue studying. Maria pointed out since she was employed that she was able to help her sons with expenses but that parents who did not have jobs would

not be able to help their children:

> *Y hicieron la lucha de ver como siguieran adelante con los préstamos para tener una carrera. Entonces, yo los apoyé con los libros, y todo eso, y fue demasiado dinero. En la universidad donde estudió mi primer niño, en U.C. Santa Cruz, allí yo ayudaba con la renta. Los préstamos les dan, pero no les dan suficiente dinero. Pero si un padre tiene trabajo, entonces puede dar una ayuda. Y uno les da ayuda para que ellos salgan adelante. Hay muchos padres que no tienen trabajo pero nosotros podemos ayudar a nuestros hijos.*
>
> And they struggled to see how they could get ahead with the loans to have a degree. So, I supported them with the books, and all of that, and it was a lot of money. At the university where my first son studied, at U.C. Santa Cruz, there I helped with the rent. They give them loans, but they don't give them enough money. But if a parent has work, then he or she can help out. And one gives them help so they can get ahead. There are many parents who do not have work but we can help our sons.

In addition to providing more assistance for books and rent during school, Maria thought that the government needed to help create good jobs for Latin@ college graduates so that they would not have to struggle as much after they finished school. She gave the example of her older son. After he graduated from UC Santa Cruz, he worked for several years in a part-time position at a public library. It was very difficult for him to make his loan payments during that time but he had trouble finding a better job. Maria believed that the local, state, and national governments should become actively involved in creating good jobs for Latin@ college graduates and for young people in general.

Isabel

In Isabel's extended family, everyone joined together to financially support her niece, who was going to become a pediatrician. Although she had a full scholarship at the University of San Diego, all of her aunts and uncles, including Isabel, joined together to help her pay for living expenses:

> *Una sobrina se fue a la Universidad de San Diego y siempre estábamos con ella. Cuando alguien quiere estudiar, lo apoyamos todos. Para él que quiere seguir adelante, lo apoyamos, incluso económicamente. Y cuando se graduó, todos fuimos para allá con ella. Para que ella se sintiera apoyada.*
>
> One niece went to the University of San Diego and we were always with her. When someone wants to study, we all support her or him. For the one who wants to get ahead, we support her or him, including financially. And when she graduated, we all went there with her. So she would feel supported.

Although her niece received much financial support from her extended family, Isabel pointed out that this was not the case for many Latin@ students from working-class families. Although all of Isabel's brothers and sisters contributed what they could to supporting their niece while she went to school, Isabel and her husband were able to give more because of their properties and land. Isabel stressed that, especially during and after the recession, many Latin@ families she knew were not able to help their children financially so they could attend school. She recognized that many very promising young Latin@ students like her niece were not able to continue with their education.

Isabel believed that more assistance should be available to support Latin@ children from working-class families, not only in college but also all the way through their educational careers. She said that all parents could help collect money to buy clothes and food for students in need and also stated, '*Es importante que las escuelas ofrezcan el desayuno y también el almuerzo*.' "It is important that schools offer breakfast and also lunch."

Adelina

For Adelina, it was very important that undocumented students had opportunities to get a college education. She believed that Latin@ students who were

brought here as children and had always gone to school here should have access to the same state and federal student loans, grants, and scholarships as other students. She explained why many working-class Latin@ students, both documented and undocumented, who wanted to go to college did not go:

> *Yo pienso que muchos muchachos tienen la idea de estudiar una carrera pero lo que pasa es que no tienen la oportunidad económica. A veces hay padres que no tienen para mandarlos a la escuela. Terminan con la secundaria y quieren estudiar una carrera pero entonces allí quedan. Porque no tienen los medios económicos para seguir una carrera. Esto es lo que está pasando.*
>
> I think that many young people have the idea of getting a degree but what happens is that they do not have the economic opportunity. Sometimes there are parents who do not have money to send them to school. They finish high school and they want to get a degree but they remain without one. Because they do not have the economic means to pursue a degree. This is what is happening.

Adelina noted that some students left school to help support their families or just to support themselves. She had very strong feeling about the loans that many young Latin@s were taking out to pay for school, *'Los préstamos que hacen son demasiados caros para pagarlos después.'* "The loans they get are too expensive to pay back later." Like Maria, Adelina described the disappointment felt by working-class Latin@ students and their families when young people did graduate from college but encountered a lack of available jobs:

> *Lo más grave era que ellos recibieron sus diplomas universitarias y cuando llegó el momento de buscar trabajo, no encuentran porque no hay trabajo. No encuentran trabajo después de que ellos han estudiado tanto. Eso es lo más grave. ¡Tantos años y para ser un fracaso después porque no hay trabajo! Desde la recesión, no hay ninguna clase de trabajo. Están negando. ¡No! ¡No! ¡No!*
>
> The most serious problem is that they received their university degrees and when the moment arrived for getting a job, they do not find one because there is not any work. They do not find work after having studied so much. That is the most serious problem. So many years and to be a failure afterwards because there is no

> work! Since the recession, there is no work. They are denying them. No! No! No!

Laura

Laura was convinced that when young people had good jobs and money, they were able to do anything. She believed that young people could work after they graduated from high school, and then they would be able to go to college. However, she noted that this depended on whether or not any good jobs were available. She hoped that young working-class Latin@s would have opportunities to get degrees that prepared them for work that interested them. For Laura, it was important that young people got degrees that would lead to jobs that would allow them to help support their families and future children and grandchildren:

> *Sin dinero la gente no puede educarse. No puede hacer absolutamente nada. El dinero es el primer base. Porque si hay trabajo, puede uno lograr su meta que quiere lograr. Porque podría comprar todo lo necesario para sus estudios. Y no tendría que dejar sus estudios en la mitad por ciertas cosas. Por dinero o porque no tuvo con que comprar los libros o las otras cosas que necesita para terminar su carerra. Con suficientes trabajos, pudieran alcanzarlo perfectamente. Y pueden salir adelante, pueden lograrlo, y seguir y ayudarle a su familia, y a sus hijos, a sus nietos. Si hay trabajo, se puede lograr todo lo que uno quiere en la vida. Los Latinos estudian para realizar sus sueños y para tener un trabajo. Teniendo un trabajo, todo lo demás uno puede lograr. Si logran realizar sus estudios, y yendo a una universidad, yo pienso que todo lo demás uno puede lograr sin ningún problema.*
>
> Without money, people cannot become educated. They can do absolutely nothing. Money is the foundation. Because if there is work, one can achieve one's goal. Because one can buy everything necessary for one's studies. And he or she would not have to leave school in the middle because of certain things. Because of money or because he or she was not able to buy the books or the other things that he or she needs to finish the degree. With enough jobs, they can achieve it perfectly. And they can get ahead, they can achieve it, and go on and help their families, their children, their grandchildren. If there is work, one can achieve anything one wants in life. Latinos study to make their dreams come true and to have a job. With a job, one can achieve anything else. If they finish their studies and go to university, I think that they can achieve anything else without a problem.

Conclusion

Although Maria's son's were the only ones who attended bilingual programs, all of the participants stated that bilingualism and biliteracy were important for young Latin@s in the U.S. In addition, all of the participants indicated that a higher quality of life was possible when one was bilingual and biliterate. The participants described the pleasure of being able to communicate with older, monolingual Spanish-speaking relatives. Laura described bilingualism and biliteracy as something precious inside of her that no one could ever take away.

Although all of the participants believed that more financial assistance and good jobs should be available for working-class Latin@ students, Adelina was the only participant who advocated for the rights of undocumented students to have access to these same resources. Isabel stated that communities and classmates' parents should help elementary and secondary students in need of food and clothing. Maria and Isabel noted that students often received loans or scholarships for tuition but that other schooling-related expenses remained a burden for students and their families and additional assistance needed to be made available for these things.

Participants' Suggestions from Member Checking Interviews

I presented the transcriptions of the initial interviews to the participants during the member checking interviews on July 6th, 13th, 20th, and 27th of 2014 and discussed the themes I had noticed. Isabel and Laura stated that they felt I had interpreted what they had said accurately and that they did not want me to change or add anything. Maria and Adelina both stated that they agreed with the themes I had identified, but

they felt I had left out some important points that I detail below. I changed my analysis accordingly.

Maria

Maria felt that I had underemphasized the role her husband played in supporting their sons' educational achievements. She wanted me to recognize the way that she and her husband had worked as a team to help their sons attain their academic goals. Furthermore, she wanted me to include the information about her husband graduating from high school. As a result, I returned to the transcripts and searched for Maria's words about her husband's and dual participation in their sons' education and included those words in describing the findings in this chapter. I also added Maria's statements about how her husband had studied more than she had.

Adelina

Adelina pointed out that I had neglected to recognize the negative impact of the economic situation for university graduates in Nicaragua in general and in the United States during and after the recession. She reminded me that Latin@ immigrant mothers could do everything possible to support their children's education but that good employment opportunities needed to be available for young people when they graduated. I returned to the interview transcriptions, found the statements Adelina had made about the importance of economic opportunities for young people, and added them to the findings. I appreciated the honest feedback and suggestions provided by Adelina and Maria. Their advice improved this chapter, adding broader perspectives and making it more complete.

Summary of Findings

The participants had much in common in several aspects: (1) their own stories of formal schooling and education, (2) their stories of formal schooling and education of their children and grandchildren, and (3) their hopes for the future of formal schooling and education for working-class Latin@ students in the U.S. At the same time, their interviews also revealed important differences. For example, Isabel did not experience poverty as a child. She lived with financial security throughout her life, including during the Great Recession. In addition, she was the only participant who was a U.S. citizen at the time of the study. Isabel and her husband owned property in California and she supported not only her sons' education but also her niece's. Despite these differences, she had memories similar to Maria of hiding under a bed to stay alive during a civil war and to Adelina of hearing bombs falling all around her. Additionally, like the other participants, she worried constantly about the safety of her loved ones in her country of origin. Shortly before the beginning of the study, one of Isabel's brothers was killed in El Salvador by members of an organized crime group. During the study, Isabel and her siblings in Northern California brought their mother to the U.S. to stay with them because she had been a victim of attempted extortion by the same organized crime group.

Other important differences and similarities existed among the participants. For example, Maria's husband played an important role in supporting their sons' educations and she emphasized that they worked as a team. Adelina's husband attended meetings at their children's schools in Nicaragua, especially initially. However, Adelina separated from her husband not long after she came to the U.S. and then he became less

involved after their separation, eventually becoming completely uninvolved when they divorced. Isabel's husband was less involved in their sons' schooling, and Laura's husband was not involved at all.

In regard to their own learning as adults, Isabel's goals were less related to her family. She stated that she had always been there for her sons throughout their schooling, and that this was finally her opportunity to do something for herself. All of the participants were convinced that governments should do more to stimulate economies and ensure the availability of good jobs for graduates. However, Adelina's anger toward the Nicaraguan government concerning this issue seemed very intense. She had spent many years doing all the right things for her children, being the best parent she could be, only to see her children graduate in a struggling economy without good job prospects. She declared that she was tired of government corruption in Nicaragua and of the government's apathy towards Nicaraguan youth.

All of the participants expressed concern for young, working-class Latinos outside of their own families and pointed out how not all parents were able to help their children and grandchildren in the ways that the participants had. Maria expressed compassion for and a desire to help new immigrants from Guatemala. Adelina showed interest in equitable educational rights for the undocumented. Isabel gave examples of how communities could help students who needed clothes and food. Laura explained the importance of good jobs in allowing young people to pursue their academic dreams.

The participants expressed concern for the educational achievement of people beyond their own family members. In addition, they described how city, state, national, and international governments should help to maximize the educational and life

opportunities of working-class Latin@ youth. All of the participants cared about "the big picture" of education and schooling for working-class Latin@ students.

As small children, the participants had been very aware of the inequities and injustices in schooling systems and larger societies. Maria remembered the nicer school for the non-indigenous children. Adelina remembered the beautiful uniforms and books of the wealthy students and how their families sent them to larger cities and abroad to study. Laura remembered the devastating experience of being taken out of school because she was a girl. Isabel remembered the injustice of corporal punishment at school.

As adults, all of the participants remained keenly aware of how their personal experiences with inequity and injustice in schooling were related to broad systems of inequity and injustice in schooling, and all were passionate about changing these systems. Far from being consistent with deficit descriptions of Latin@, working-class, and immigrant parents as not caring about education, these mothers believed strongly in the the transformative potential of education and schooling for themselves, their children and grandchildren, and working-class Latin@ immigrant youths in general. All of the participants were passionate about improving the quality of and access to formal schooling at all levels and maximizing the overall benefits of formal schooling for all students.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Review of Themes

All of the participants experienced limited access to schooling due to violence and poverty. Two participants mentioned gender discrimination in access to schooling. The participants had a strong desire to participate in formal learning as adults. They shared the learning goals of speaking, reading, and writing English well. In addition, they had other formal learning goals. Adelina wanted to take nursing classes, while Maria and Laura wanted to be able to teach English to others. Isabel wanted to master the English needed to take care of all the literacy-related tasks associated with the management of her family's properties.

The participants supported the formal schooling of their loved ones in their own ways. Maria and Laura used *consejos* and Maria and Isabel were present physically at their children's schools as much as possible. Adelina and Laura came to the U.S. with the primary goal of supporting the educational achievement of their children. Maria and Adelina used creative methods of supporting their children's perserverance and academic achievement. All of the participants wanted their children to take their formal schooling as far as possible. They were never complacent, always believing that their children and grandchildren could achieve more in schooling and beyond.

The participants strongly valued bilingualism and biliteracy for themselves, their children and grandchildren, and for working-class Latin@ immigrant students in the U.S. in general. In addition, they believed that schools should affirm and develop bilingualism and biliteracy. They advocated for the preservation and development of language as a

part of culture. Maria and Isabel valued the abilities of young people like their sons to communicate verbally and in writing in Spanish with their grandparents.

Finally, the participants stressed economic limitations in education and emphasized the need for more financial support for working-class Latin@ immigrant students. Furthermore, they stated that governments must become involve in the creation of good jobs for graduates. The participants stressed that this needed to happen both in their countries of origin and the United States.

Valuing Bilingualism, Biliteracy, and Bilingual Education

The importance and desirability of bilingualism and biliteracy was a predominant theme throughout the study, appearing in every participant's responses to the research questions. All of the participants in this study desired to become fully bilingual and biliterate, as well as for their children and grandchildren to develop bilingualism and biliteracy. Furthermore, they strongly believed that bilingualism and biliteracy should be goals of education and schooling for working-class Latin@ immigrant students and that all students should learn more than one language. Maria, Adelina, and Isabel specifically mentioned that they valued bilingual education programs and schools. Although Laura did not discuss bilingual education, she did mention valuing bilingualism and biliteray. The participants stated that the development of bilingualism and biliteracy was important not only for language itself but also for the preservation and nurturing of culture and heritage. The literature on working-class Latin@ immigrant parents and bilingualism, biliteracy, and bilingual education supports these findings.

Worthy and Rodríguez-Galindo (2006) found that the 16 working-class immigrant parents in their study believed that bilingualism led to social and economic advancement

and facilitated ties to cultural and familial roots. The parents used strategies for supporting their children's bilingual development similar to those used by the participants in my study. For example, they encouraged their children to visit Spanish-speaking relatives and to communicate in Spanish. Both Maria and Isabel used this same strategy. Maria sent her sons to Guatemala during the summers, where they used Spanish to communicate with their grandparents. Isabel used Spanish to communicate with her sons at home and exclusively watched television in Spanish and listened to the radio in Spanish at home, which helped her sons develop their Spanish so that they could communicate better with their grandmother in Spanish. Like the participants in the Worthy and Rodríguez-Galindo (2006) study, my participants made a "commitment to a better life for their children" (p. 579), and they believed that "Bilingualism and biliteracy are powerful advantages in academic, linguistic, personal, occupational, and social arenas" (p. 598).

Morren López (2013) conducted a study of mothers' reasons for enrolling their children in a Spanish/English two-way immersion program at an elementary school in Central Texas. She found that all of the participants in her study believed that bilingualism and biliteracy would provide their children with more opportunities, cognitive benefits, and an increased ability to communicate. Similarly, the mothers in the study believed that the development and preservation of Spanish-language abilities was crucial in connecting their children with their roots. Maria and Isabel also believed that the Spanish language was instrumental in allowing their sons to learn about their heritages and histories.

Mothers in the Morren López (2013) study also stressed the importance for their children of learning to write in both Spanish and English. All of the mothers in my study highly valued biliteracy for themselves and for their children. Just as Laura expressed how badly she felt when she needed to ask someone to translate for her as she carried out daily tasks, mothers in the Morren López study also expressed the difficulty of not being able to communicate in public independently. One major difference between the findings of my study and those of the Morren López study is that the latter group stated that they wanted their children to become bilingual and biliterate in case their families decided to move back to Mexico. Neither Isabel nor Maria stated this as a reason for wanting their sons to become bilingual and biliterate, perhaps because my participants had been in the United States much longer and their families were settled and established here.

Farruggio (2010) conducted a study with Spanish-speaking immigrant parents in an urban district in California following the passage of Proposition 227 that severely restricted bilingual programs in schools. The study, which involved interviews with 58 parents, found that, "The overwhelming majority of Latino immigrant parents displayed an active agency in favor of L1 instruction" (p. 303). Likewise, three of the four participants in my study expressed support for bilingual education, and all of them expressed the importance of bilingualism and biliteracy. The participants in Farruggio's (2010) study represented many different educational backgrounds, including some with limited access to formal schooling like the participants in my study. Like my study, Farruggio's findings confirmed that working-class Latin@ immigrant parents who had had limited access to formal schooling valued bilingual education, bilingualism, and biliteracy as much as parents who had had more access to formal schooling.

According to Farruggio (2010), "Research on parental agency toward bilingual education has consistently shown Latino immigrants to support L1 teaching in school" (p. 295). One reason Farruggio's parents supported bilingual education and desired that their children become completely bilingual and biliterate was the factor of transnationalism. The school district where the study was conducted had a large number of transnational families. In my study, Isabel and Maria's families were also transnational in that they visited family members in their countries of origin regularly.

Recommendations

The rich data and detail provided by counterstories like these can be used as context for teaching important concepts, theories, and strategies in teacher and administrator preparation programs. It is easy to imagine how professors preparing educators and administrators could design lessons based on counterstories to teach social-justice related concepts in education such as funds of knowledge (González, Moll, and Amanti, 2005), Yosso's Cultural Wealth Model (2005), Culturally Relevant Teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1995), and *consejos* (Delgado Gaitan, 1994). Professors of classes for future bilingual educators and administrators of bilingual programs and schools can use counterstories like these to teach about the value, importance, and meaning of bilingualism, biliteracy, and bilingual education for working-class Latin@ immigrant parents. In addition, future bilingual educators can use counterstories to learn about specific speaking and literacy-related skills that parents would like their children to master, such as writing a letter in Spanish and communicating in Spanish with grandparents.

The mothers in this study emphasized the importance of having bilingual teachers

in the schools. According to Howe and Lisi (2013), 89% of public school teachers in the U.S. are white and most are monolingual English speakers. Although almost 90% of public school teachers are white and monolingual, 20% of students speak a language other than English at home. Most monolingual English-speaking teachers cannot help bilingual students maximize their life potential in the ways that bilingual teachers can. The United States has such rich linguistic resources in its public school students, but instead of nurturing and developing those resources, the nation is neglecting them.

Future research should be conducted on how to greatly increase the number of bilingual teachers. Researchers should examine why so few bilingual students are making it through the teacher-education pipeline. More specifically, what strategies have been the most successful in supporting bilingual teachers throughout their schooling trajectories and how can these strategies be implemented nation-wide? Researchers should interview highly-successful bilingual teachers about the factors that influenced and reinforced their decisions to become bilingual educators.

Furthermore, monolingual English-speaking individuals who desire to become educators should be required to learn at least one additional language. Whenever possible, it should be a language that corresponds to the linguistic resources already present in the school district where the teacher candidate would like to teach. Administrators should also be required to learn at least one additional language.

The participants in this study highly valued bilingualism and biliteracy for themselves, their children and grandchildren, and working-class Latin@ immigrant students in the U.S. They emphasized the importance of bilingual education, not only as a means of developing language skills but also for the preservation of culture and

heritage. If the majority of public school teachers in the U.S. are monolingual, the outcomes of schooling cannot possibly reflect the dreams of working-class Latin@ immigrant parents like the mothers in this study for bilingual students to optimize their bilingualism and biliteracy. The government, schools and colleges of education, and researchers must study the educational trajectories of successful bilingual teachers and make efforts to replicate and expand factors that have supported their career choices and effectiveness as bilingual teachers.

The counterstories of the participants provided rich data that can be used in preparing teachers and adminstrators to be educators in a diverse and multilingual society. The rich detail in counterstories like these makes it possible for professors of education to design assignments and classroom activities based on this material. The use of counterstories in teacher education programs has the potential to reduce deficit thinking in teacher candidates because counterstories allow the strength, power, resourcefulness, resiliency, and pride of working-class Latin@ immigrant mothers to shine through.

Conclusion

The mothers in this study cared deeply about education and believed in its transformative power. They had educational aspirations for themselves, their children, their grandchildren, and for working-class Latin@ immigrant students in the U.S. Adelina and Laura desired educational opportunities for their children so strongly that they came to the U.S. as immigrants with the primary goal of working so that their children could study. They valued education so highly that they were willing to uproot their lives and spend years far away from their families. They both achieved this goal,

demonstrating incredible strength and overcoming many obstacles along the way. Maria and Isabel's lives were also built around their children's educations. Isabel got a job that allowed her to work near her sons' school and Maria only accepted jobs that allowed her to go to her sons' schools whenever necessary. For all of the participants, education was a central value.

In addition to valuing education, the participants had strong opinions and beliefs about the characteristics of a good education. The principal characteristic of a good education, according to the participants, was that it supports the optimal development of bilingualism and biliteracy, allowing bilingual students to achieve their full potential in life. However, the participants believed that bilingualism and biliteracy had value beyond leading to the practical benefits of better careers and better pay. They all spoke of the ways in which bilingualism and biliteracy made their lives richer in non-monetary ways also. Adelina discussed the joy she felt when she was able to pick out a book at the library on a topic that interested her and read for her own pleasure. Isabel and Maria described the pride they felt that their sons were able to communicate with their grandparents in Spanish and use Spanish when they visited Central America. For Isabel and Maria, their sons' bilingualism and biliteracy meant that they were able to learn about their cultures, history, and heritage and stay connected to their extended families. Laura explained the lasting value of bilingualism in this way:

> *Los estudiantes Latinos sí son muy orgullosos de saber dos idiomas. Es algo muy bonito. Yo admiro mucho eso de saber dos idiomas. Eso es algo que nadie se lo puede robar porque es algo que está adentro de uno. Y nadie se lo puede quitar y nadie se lo puede robar.*
>
> Latin@ students are very proud of knowing two languages. It is something very attractive. I really admire the skill of knowing two languages. It is something

> that no one can steal from you because it is something inside of you. And no one can take it away and no one can steal it.

Bilingualism and biliteracy are lasting treasures inside of us that must be recognized, nurtured, developed, and cherished throughout life. As Laura stated, they are riches that cannot be taken away.

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