With an eye on we: a teacher research study of students using narrative inquiry to critique Mexican American history

Enrique Luna
WITH AN EYE ON “WE”: A TEACHER RESEARCH STUDY OF STUDENTS USING NARRATIVE INQUIRY TO CRITIQUE MEXICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

A Dissertation Presented
to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Enrique Luna
San Francisco
December 2010
Dissertation Abstract

With an Eye on “We”: A Teacher Research Study of Students Using Narrative Inquiry to Critique Mexican American History

The purpose of this teacher research study was to examine narrative inquiry as a method for student engagement with course material and the local community. This study sought to understand how students perceived themselves within Mexican American history. While a number of studies have used oral history and narrative effectively, these studies have largely focused on establishing a counter narrative to challenge the images in mainstream media. To date no studies have asked students to use narrative inquiry as a tool to critically examine history as written by Chicana/o and Mexican American scholars.

This study used a qualitative approach. Participants’ responses to research questions were based on four main data sources: (a) personal I.D. cards, (b) narrative essays, (c) culminating essays, and (d) dialogues with participants after the conclusion of the term.

The results of this study revealed that participants felt that narrative inquiry was very useful in clarifying their own ethnic identity. In addition, writing narratives early in the semester provided an important platform for student engagement with course material. Nevertheless, narrative inquiry did not strengthen their critique of the course textbook. Even though students were reticent to critique the textbook, narrative inquiry did help build a sense of caring and responsibility to each other and their community.
This study expands the body of knowledge related to narrative inquiry. Previously this methodology had not been used to gather social science data about a class, and having that same class use its self-generated data to analyze and critique historical sources. The results of this study indicate that the narrative inquiry process can be successfully employed to engage students in their own learning. Moreover, the process also provides an example of in-class practices that place students at the center of learning in a democratized setting.
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.

Enrique Luna

Candidate

December 2, 2010

Dissertation Committee

Dr. Susan R. Katz
Chairperson

December 12, 2010

Dr. Emma Fuentes

December 2, 2010

Dr. Patrick Camangian

December 2, 2010
To Debbie who putters around the house with me

To my parents who sacrificed and asked only that I try to be a good person

To our families, Debbie’s and mine, that continue to grow and grow, and have tolerated and encouraged me
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I want to express my dearest thanks to Dr. Susan Roberta Katz. She was the first person I met at USF, and the last I worked with in completing this dissertation process. I could not have completed this work without her patience, good spirits, and professionalism. I would also like to extend my thanks to the entire International and Multicultural Studies department, faculty and staff, who have constructed an educational environment where I, and many others, have prospered and grown. I am especially grateful to the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Susan Katz, Dr. Emma Fuentes, and Dr. Patrick Camangian who were generous with their time, as well as thoughtful and kind with their critiques. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge all my professors who inspired and challenged me, with special thanks to Dr. Katz, Dr. Fuentes, Dr. Galang, Dr. Koirala-Azad, and Dr. Baab.
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CHAPTER I
THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

What can a professional poker player, a florist, a 911 operator, a gang-banger, and a police cadet tell us about Mexican American history? First they can say that they all belong to it; secondly, each has a voice that can speak to it, question it, and expand our understanding of it. In short, they can define, critique, and expand history itself. The individuals referenced above comprise a partial list of students in a single Mexican American history class at Gavilan College, a community college at the southern tip of Santa Clara County. The categories were self-references; they were labels that students generated to identify themselves.

This research project started with a description of largely Latina/o students’ individual identities. Then it asked what type of community might develop if the classroom were structured in a way where students, and their instructor, intently spoke, wrote, and listened to each other’s stories? One reason for asking this question was to try to create a more inclusive class, and break the teacher centered approach to education. This study also sought to explore the extent that students felt that they were represented in Mexican American history texts. Lastly, this was a study of curriculum and instruction that sought to put into action the tenets of humanizing pedagogy. As described by Fránquiz and Salazar (2004), humanizing pedagogy seeks to actively promote “…a search for connections between teacher and students, between student and the community, and among students themselves” (p. 37).

A course in Mexican American history served as the platform to study the use
of narrative inquiry. This project asked students to use narrative inquiry to critically analyze themselves in the context of Mexican American history. Mexican American was the term used in the official course outline, and in turn, was used when referencing the course. Two complementary goals bound the project. One sought to use an alternate approach to engage students more fully in social science curriculum; a second sought to bridge the boundaries between academia and community. It was hoped that this project could provide an alternate logic of culture that challenged the argument that young people of Mexican origin need to break with their community in order to succeed in the dominant one (Flores & Benmayor, 1997).

While many people use the terms Chicana/o and Mexican American synonymously, others view them as politically charged (Gonzalez, 2009). My own personal experience working in urban schools of East Los Angeles and rural communities around Gilroy, California, demonstrated this difference. Some youth in the former group shared affinity to Chicana/o, while others in the latter group demonstrated reluctance to its use. The tone and perspective of history textbooks have shown similar tendencies. On one side we can look at a confrontational text such as Acuña’s (2007) *Occupied America*, that starts from a premise that the United States colonized an indigenous Chicana/o people. We can contrast it with Gonzalez’s *Mexicanos* that frames the Mexican American experience as a broad series of conflicts between groups who occupied what ultimately became the U.S. Southwest. Gonzalez addresses the term Chicana/o as a historical concept, rather than a central theme.

The choice of text, and the direction of a course using it, is the teacher’s. But
how do students perceive the history presented in the text? Is the history engaging? If, so why, if not, why not? Do students feel ownership over history? Do they feel that they are a part it? These are questions I explored in this study.

Statement of the Problem

Where globalization is often discussed in broad historic terms, it is important to recognize that certain regions have undergone more intense experiences than others. According to Mignolo (2000), globalization refers to increasing economic and political interconnection between various regions around the globe. In relation to U.S.-Mexican relations, academia and the media have paid special attention to struggles over control of the international border (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006), but most of these discussions do not recognize the historic flexibility of the border (Martinez, 1991). Political, military, and economic struggles in the region have had the effect of creating a colonial environment for various borderlands populations, especially for indigenous people and Mexican migrants; the effect has been social, political, and economic disenfranchisement (Acuña, 2007; Barrera, 1979). These populations have responded to the colonial experience with various forms of transborder and transmigrant community structures. According to Goldring (2002) the terms transborder and transmigrant refer to the flexibility of social and economic relations in the border region, and permeability of the border itself.

Where colonization has been a historical experience of many communities in the Southwest, decolonization is the goal of many who seek enfranchisement of these communities. Broadly defined, decolonization refers to a break with social, emotional, psychological, and physical systems of repression (Perez-Torres, 2006).
To help individuals and communities decolonize themselves Rosaldo (1997) and Ramirez (2002) have used narrative and oral history projects, as described by critical race theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In the field of education, the focus of many critical race studies has been to construct counter narratives that challenge negative stereotypes. These studies have had compelling results and have bridged the boundaries between the classroom and the community (Bernal, 2002; Yosso, 2006).

Fernández (2002) highlighted students’ resistance to inadequate schooling. In the process some individuals reported development of positive self-images. Benmayor (2002) used oral history to elicit the expertise of Mexican heritage students and broaden the picture of their local communities. While effective, these studies have largely focused on establishing a counter narrative to challenge the images in mainstream media (Yosso, 2006). But to date no studies have asked students to use narrative inquiry as a tool to critically examine the history as written by Chicana/o and Mexican American scholars.

Guided by the premise that educators should include students’ distinct abilities and knowledge in the educational process (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992), this study was an attempt to use narrative inquiry as a way to involve students in their own history (Flores & Benmayor, 1997), and at the same time, help redefine the terms Mexican American and Chicana/o for themselves and their community. Furthermore, students were asked to take an active role in critiquing, and in the process, broadening the scope of Mexican American and Chicana/o history. Students were asked to write their individual or family story, and then examine the extent to which their stories were reflected in the history they had been presented. The goal
was to have students interpret the meaning and significance of their family
experience. It was also hoped that narrative inquiry would enable them to theorize
how their background fit into historical and contemporary contexts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this Teacher Research study was to examine narrative inquiry as a
method for student engagement with course material and the local community. This study
derived from a didactic need to better understand the complexities of implementing
cultural citizenship curriculum in the classroom. A cultural citizenship approach was
selected for this study because it supports the theory underlying humanizing pedagogy by
fostering an ethic of care that endows educators with the responsibility to affirm ideas
and practices in which the whole person develops (Fránquiz & Salazar, 2004). Rosaldo
and Flores’ (1997) description of cultural citizenship asserts that people have the right to
be different in terms of race, ethnicity, or native language without compromising the right
to participate in the nation-state's democratic process.

While there have been calls for student-centered approaches in education (Basic
skills as a foundation for student success in California community colleges, 2007);
limited examples show how to move from theory to practice. A course in Mexican
American history served as a host for this study. This course was proposed because many
students who normally enroll in this class at Gavilan College have historically been
defined as under-performing (Gavilan College, 2010). Another reason for choosing this
course was that in recent years the media has focused on immigration from Mexico—
normally framed in terms of illegal immigration, crime, and burdening the educational
system—that places negative pressure on young people of Mexican descent. In turn,
students need to be afforded an opportunity to express their views and examine issues related to their history from their own lenses.

The intent of this study was to understand how students perceive themselves within Mexican American history. This study examined the use of narrative inquiry in order to discover what it means to be Mexican American and/or Chicana/o in a rural community. It also sought to create a dialogue among students about how their history had been presented in college texts.

Research Questions

As noted earlier, this was a teacher research study of students’ experience with narrative inquiry. Two sets of questions were addressed in this study. One set focused on questions to guide dialogues:

1. To what extent did narrative inquiry affect engagement with course material?
2. To what extent did narrative inquiry affect students’ perspective of Mexican American and Chicana/o identity?
3. To what extent was narrative inquiry, as a methodology, useful to students in critiquing Mexican American history textbooks?

A second set of questions guided the overall research:

1. To what extent did narrative inquiry affect a sense of caring and responsibility to each other?
2. How were students’ views of the broader community affected by the use of narrative inquiry?
Theoretical Framework

The overall framework of this study stressed transformative education, which is at the heart of humanizing pedagogy. Under this umbrella we can place Freire’s (1993) critical pedagogy, critical race theory as outlined by Delgado and Stefancic (2000), and cultural citizenship (Rosaldo and Flores, 1997). Freire developed his philosophy in Brazil from the 1950s onward, seeking to challenge injustice and inequity. Critical race theory emerged in the mid-1970s. It sought to expand the critique that critical legal studies had of the U.S. legal system and stressed that analysis of oppression needed to go beyond class division. Instead race needed to be placed at the forefront of analysis and be a core tenet of transformative education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Yosso, 2005). Cultural citizenship is part of the area of citizenship studies, which seeks to broaden the definition of citizenship beyond a narrow focus on voting rights. As outlined by Rosaldo and Flores (1997), cultural citizenship asserts that people do not have to give up their cultural traits in order to be considered full members of the nation.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical educators are committed to empower students and transform the conditions that perpetuate injustice and inequity. This purpose is inextricably linked to the fulfillment of what Freire (1993) defined as our "vocation" (p. 55) – to be truly humanized social agents in the world. According to Freire, teachers should practice a humanizing pedagogy where the method of instruction values students’ background, culture, life experiences, and creates learning contexts where power is shared by students and teachers. Hence, a major function of critical pedagogy is to critique,
expose, and challenge the manner in which schools impact the political and cultural life of students. Teachers must recognize that schools unite knowledge and power; through this function they can work to influence the formation of critically thinking and socially active individuals.

*Humanizing Pedagogy*

Humanizing pedagogy (Bartolome, 1994) grew out of Freire’s (1990) critical pedagogy. As described by Bartolome, the strength of curriculum methods depends on the degree to which educators embrace pedagogy that values students’ existing knowledge, culture, and life experiences. Teaching methods should be seen as a means to humanize education and promote academic success for students who have been historically underserved by schools. As with critical pedagogy, humanizing pedagogy contends that an uncritical focus on methods makes invisible the historical role that schools and their personnel have played in discriminating and dehumanizing students from subordinated groups. Humanizing pedagogy seeks to promote politically informed teachers who recognize that educational institutions are not neutral. Instead, they reflect both the positive and negative aspects of a society. Thus, they reproduce the power relations among various social and cultural.

Fránquiz and Salazar (2004) contend that the key to transforming education is the extent to which teachers and institutions hold the moral conviction that the educational experiences of students from subordinated populations must be humanized through eliminating the hostility that often confronts them. This requires reducing a dependence on methods as technical instruments and adopting a pedagogy that seeks to forge a cultural democracy where all students are treated with respect.
and dignity.

_Critical Race Theory_

Critical race theory (CRT) draws from critical theory in law, sociology, history, ethnic studies, and women’s studies, and builds on critical pedagogy’s interest in challenging inequity and injustice. Where Freire’s (1993) initial stress was on inequity resulting from class divisions, critical race theory’s analysis stresses racialized subordination (Yosso, 2005). Critical race scholars argue that people of color have had their histories, experiences, cultures, and languages devalued. CRT acknowledges the importance of property rights and class divisions, but stresses that race was used to deny certain groups’ access to property. Race in the United States has been used to ameliorate class divisions among the white population (Bell, 2000). Educational scholars applied CRT to promote race and gendered epistemologies where people of color are recognized as being holders and creators of knowledge (Bernal, 2002).

_Cultural Citizenship_

Cultural citizenship asserts that people have the right to be different in terms of race, ethnicity, or native language without compromising the right to participate in the nation-state's democratic process. Claiming cultural rights is central to gaining a sense of belonging and human dignity, and since a feeling of belonging strongly correlates to civic participation, acceptance is key to expanding democracy. As defined in cultural citizenship, democracy is more than voting rights; it refers to the acknowledgement and acceptance of cultural practices (Moreno, 2008). Social gatherings are the key to organized political activism (Rosaldo & Flores, 1997), in
turn, the cultural citizenship approach can be used to incorporate communities that have traditionally been marginalized and disenfranchised.

Significance of the Study

Mexican American history courses were instituted in the wake of the 1950s and 1960s Civil Rights Movement as a result of La Raza Movement. They have been important in broadening the scope of U.S. history. Most survey textbooks of Chicana/o history were written by scholars of the 1960s and 1970s generations. Harsh living and working conditions have been main themes stressed in these texts, forming legitimate foci, and many narratives produced by students in this study reflected them. Nevertheless, the potential for narrative inquiry is that it could bring to light a wider range of experiences than those stressed in these texts. The hope was that students would be able to use narrative inquiry to critically assess history as written by Chicana/o and Mexican American scholars. In addition, by valuing their stories, students could resist social pressures to break with the community and reciprocate with activism, supporting new waves of students.

In this study I explored the use of narrative inquiry as a mechanism for constructing a more encompassing cultural and historical identity. By critiquing Mexican American history, my hope was that students could engage more fully in academia. By having their voice acknowledged, it was hoped that students would see that they had authority over how history is presented. The underlying hope was that narratives could be constructed in a fashion where groups did not need to compete for identity turf, but instead could create connections among the multiple identities that every person negotiates regularly. Hopefully, this project can serve to create social
space for the Mexican American-Chicana/o community to fight for a common cause. Through these actions social actors may emerge to redefine rights, entitlements, and the meaning of community membership.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this teacher research study was to critically examine narrative inquiry as a method for student engagement with course material and the local community. The intent of this study was to understand how students perceive themselves within Mexican American history. This study examined the use of narrative inquiry in the process of discovering what it means to be Mexican American and/or Chicana/o in a rural community. It also sought to create a dialogue among students about how their history had been presented in college texts, and whether this presentation was authentic for their lives.

This literature review consists of four sections. The first describes a historical context, beginning with a broad historiographic outline of Chicana/o studies, and then moves to a discussion of Spanish and U.S. colonization of the Southwest. The discussion is then narrowed to an overview of California, and finishes with a focus on the Silicon Valley, which is the location of the proposed study.

The second section outlines Critical Theory, focusing on two variations, Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit). The third section reviews Chicana/o narratives, which includes a discussion of the narrative tradition in Chicana/o literature, as well as counter narratives as described by CRT and LatCrit. This is followed by an introduction of narrative inquiry as a method for including individual stories in order to broaden social analysis. Discussion of counter narrative is used to justify my proposed teacher research study.
The last section outlines cultural citizenship as a curriculum approach that seeks to claim physical space for the promotion and maintenance of cultural identity. Narrative inquiry is discussed as a method to reach the goals of the cultural citizenship approach: helping students build a sense of agency and self-identity, and build linkages that help them cross boundaries and promote inclusiveness.

*Chicano Historical Context*

This section outlines a select number of elements of Chicano historiography since the late 1960s. Although notable examples of scholarship exist prior to the 1960s, Chicano Studies as a field developed along with the civil rights activism of the 1960s (Sanchez, 1993). Historiographic developments are important for this study in narrative inquiry because they provide a picture of the intellectual framework that likely influence teachers of ethnic studies classes.

In current academic practice, a gender specific form of Chicana or Chicano, also written in a combined manner Chicana/o or Chican@, is used when discussing Mexican descent communities in the United States. The term Chicano is used most often in this historical overview because it was the term used in the majority of sources. *Mexicano* is used to refer to people born in Mexico who either emigrated to, or sojourned in, the United States after U.S.-Mexican War, 1846-1848. Other terms such as *Hispano, Tejano,* and *Californio* refer to specific Chicano communities in New Mexico, Texas, and California respectively. These terms go back to the Spanish and Mexican periods, and in many areas continue to be used by community members. The term Anglo American is used in reference to European American populations of the United States. It is recognized that Anglo references people from England, but the
vast majority of sources use it broadly to mean white, non-Hispanic, members of the United States.

Rios (2008) distinguishes two major eras of Chicano studies: “old school” and “la nueva onda” (p. 2). The earlier period corresponds to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, while the later is rooted 21st Century transnational era. According to Rios, old school Chicanos and their organizations were rooted in the local community, and operated outside of institutional systems. As a result, their theoretical perspective took an oppositional approach to institutions and the dominant society. Cultural nationalism was the core of old school ideology. Its explicit rhetoric spoke to the desire to retake the southwestern part of the United States, what was referred to as Atzlan.

As described by Rios (2008), la nueva onda refers to the contemporary era where Chicanos find themselves both inside and outside of institutional systems. In this era Chicanos “seek to recognize the multidimensional and intersecting nature of identities. Gender, class, and sexual orientation are recognized as salient differences that must be understood, addressed and affirmed” (p. 12). A broader vision of social justice and human rights corresponds with this era. Multiculturalism, alliance, justice, and coalition building are guiding principles that characterize this era.

An important goal in presenting this historiography is to show that alliance building and coalitions are not new, but can be found in many historical eras. Individuals and communities crossing cultural barriers also are not new, but instead can be seen as human responses, especially in trying times. Historical events are connected directly with the overall goal of humanizing pedagogy: to search for
connections between people. In this case the connection is between people in current and historical eras.

**Historiographical Outline**

Saragoza (1988-1990) argued that initial Chicano histories were flawed. Nevertheless, he felt that their shortcomings were probably unavoidable and perhaps necessary. He pointed out that the conceptual origins of earlier Chicano histories relied on an us-versus-them perspective. An identifiable community was needed in order for this framework to succeed. Thus Chicano historians constructed generalized images of cultural practices, geographic terrain, and historical experiences in relation to dominant Anglo American communities. In short, they depicted the Chicano community as a unified whole. The picture developed by Chicano scholars of this era was of a community that predated colonizing U.S. communities. Historians writing about this period took an activist stance. They sought to help create a sense of community identity and describe the reasons for the community’s subordination in order to challenge inequities.

Sanchez (1993) adds to Saragoza’s (1988-1990) analysis and points out that writings by Chicano scholars from this early period were influenced by social history that stressed labor, urban, and family issues. Stimulated by a revisionist tendency that was critical of previous treatment of minorities, workers, and women, Chicano academics were antagonistic toward an assimilationist perspective in U.S. history. According to Sanchez, the result was that early Chicano scholarship was characterized by a strong sense of ethnic nationalism. Racial conflict was a central premise of these writings, which prompted a generalized acceptance of a dichotomy
between the Chicano and Anglo American communities. As a result of this perspective an emphasis was placed on the separation and conflict between communities. However, it minimized the internal stratification and gender differences within the Chicano community. It also exaggerated continuities, and obscured the intra-group variation of Chicano and Mexicano cultures.

Montoya (2000) concurs with the analysis of Saragoza (1988-1990) and Sanchez (1993), and points to a need for continual self-critical examination of Chicano history. She points to the internal colonial framework, as outlined by Barrera (1979), to make her case. Barrera argued that as U.S. capitalism penetrated the Southwest, business leaders in league with local officials bracketed the Mexicano community into racial colonies. They did this through a system of occupational stratification, dual wages, and labor repression. A particularly pernicious aspect of internal colonialism was that it magnified racial tensions between Anglo American and Mexicano workers.

Saragoza (1988-1990), Sanchez (1993), and Montoya (2000) do not deny the rapacious actions of capitalism as it entered the Southwest. Instead, they argue that much more was going on. Additionally, Saragoza contends that while not being their intention, Chicano historians that stressed internal colonialism denied agency among Chicanos and Mexicanos. Internal colonialism left little room for examining how class or race affected the unity of these groups. Early scholarship in the field focused primarily on the working-class, and tended to dismiss those persons and experiences that did not fit into the internal colony framework. By omitting crosscurrents of class and race within the community, early scholars misinterpreted the complex process of
accommodation and resistance by Chicano and Mexicano communities. Historical examples of accommodation and resistance are important to recognize because they provide examples of individuals and communities crossing barriers.

An additional criticism that both Montoya (2000) and Sanchez (1993) have of internal colonialism is that it generally omits the Spanish conquest of the New World, and more specifically, what became the U.S. Southwest. Montoya recognizes that to some degree this was a periodization choice, as most Chicano histories began with the U.S. conquest of Mexican territory in 1848. Nevertheless, inclusion of the Spanish conquest requires an analysis that sees Spanish-speaking communities as both colonizers and colonized people. As stressed by Montoya, inclusion of the Spanish period can also open up a gender analysis. Montoya reminds us that in addition to economic, military, and religious subordination, Europeans sought to impose patriarchal gender ideals on native peoples. Including this history opens the door to a complex discussion of *mestizaje*, the mixed racial and cultural offspring of Spanish-speaking people. At times they were the colonized, other times they were the colonizers. In Montoya’s view, “by picking up the story in 1848, internal colonialism avoids the problem and can simply label all the inhabitants of the recently conquered territory as Mexicans” (187).

This critique of internal colonialism does not deny that Chicanos faced racism and inequality. Instead it discredits the tendency to simplify their historical experience into a simple us-versus-them dichotomy. Sanchez (1993) argues that scholarship since the 1980s continues to document the sources of Chicano oppression, but also show nuances in the larger context of inequality between Anglo American
and Chicano communities. He points out two distinct, but interrelated, dimensions that developed over time and space. The first deals with the inter-group inequities between these communities. The second is the difference in intra-group relations among the Chicano community. Where race and class form an appropriate axis of analysis for Anglo American-Chicano relations, they also need to be considered when analyzing relations within Chicano communities.

Gonzalez (2009) maintains that community response to subordination varied widely depending on geographic location and historical era. New Mexico, Texas, and California had very different colonial experiences during the Spanish and Mexican periods. Likewise, they had different experiences as U.S. capitalism entered the region. Class and race divisions were present throughout the Spanish colonial era. They did not disappear when the United States infiltrated the region; instead they intermingled with U.S. practices. In contrast to generalized interpretations, these interrelated dimensions need to be understood differently dependent on the region and historical period being studied. Specific outcomes of capitalist penetration depended on local economic structures, geographic location, proximity to the U.S.-Mexican border, and ethnic composition. The critique of earlier Chicano history provides salient historical examples of the multidimensional and intersecting aspects of identity. These are valuable insights for those promoting humanizing pedagogies that stress multiculturalism and coalition building.

Colonization: Spain

New Spain’s far north consisted of three finger-like projections extending in what was to become the U.S. Southwest. The oldest and most extensive settlements
were in what is today New Mexico. Although there were preliminary incursions into the area in the 16th century, a consistent Spanish presence started at the end of the 17th century (Meier & Ribera, 1993). By 1821, the year Mexico won its independence from Spain, census numbers showed approximately 40,000 inhabitants along the upper Rio Grande. About one quarter of the population was from various Pueblo groups. Pueblo Indian was a term used to indicate native people who had resided in sedentary communities at the time of Spanish contact. That the Spanish counted Pueblo people in their census indicates a level of accommodation between the two groups. Although it would be inaccurate to say that the Pueblo had equal standing in eyes of the law, they technically had full citizenship rights. The Pueblo were distinguished from nomadic people, referred to derogatively by the Spanish as *indios barbaros*, barbaric Indians, who also populated the region (Gutiérrez, 1991).

A second collection of settlements was along the Pacific Coast, in what was referred to as Alta California. Permanent Spanish settlement began with a military outpost in San Francisco in 1776, followed by others in what would become Monterey, Santa Barbara, and San Diego. Los Angeles and San Jose were the major towns of the era, but the predominate feature of this early period was the Franciscan mission system. Missions were built along the overland trail called *El Camino Real*, the King’s Highway (Beebe & Senkewicz, 2001). Texas was the third colonial extension, which was made up of scattered settlements, with San Antonio as the biggest community. The mission system was also an important feature in Texas, but its presence was much less pronounced than in California (De la Teja, 1988).
Webber (1984) provides a broad overview of exploration and colonization of Spain’s northern territorial claims. He points to distinct demographics in New Mexico, Texas, and California. Webber also introduces a picture of native people’s agency in the face of aggressive colonization by Spain. The extent of native resistance differed for many reasons, but the most compelling being population density. Both Texas and California had relatively small native populations, thus the most effective form of resistance was escape from the mission system. New Mexico had much larger populations that ultimately were able to hold onto much of their territory and cultural practices. Gutiérrez (1991) expands many of the issues covered by Webber. Aside from demonstrating native agency in the face of Spanish colonization, Gutiérrez points out economic and political divisions between the sedentary Pueblo communities and various nomadic peoples, such as the Apache, Navajo, and Comache.

According to Pohl (2001), Pueblo communities were descendents of agriculturalist peoples dating back to at least to 1000 B.C.E. These communities had a long history of trading gemstones with major cities of central Mexico. Where the Spanish saw the Pueblo as a single group of people, these communites were separated by significant variation in customs and languages. Nomadic people were recent arrivals to the area, preceding the Spanish by only a few generations. A point stressed by Gutiérrez (1991) was that sedentary and nomadic people were competitors. At times differences between them were settled diplomatically, but they often were in a state of violent conflict. From a military perspective, these cleavages provided the Spanish an opportunity to divide and conquer.
Spanish entrance into the region was helped by internal cleavages among native communities, but also by the long history of trade that the Pueblo had with central Mexico. Pueblo people were accustomed to outsiders offering goods for trade, as well as living in proximity to their communities (Pohl, 2001). There was a long standing process of welcome, exchange, integration, and at times, assimilation of outsiders. These factors helped open the door for Spanish entrance into New Mexico (Gutiérrez, 1991).

Early on the Spanish sought to bully their way into Pueblo communities. The encomienda system is an example of a particularly harsh Spanish practice. To entice soldiers to serve in the northern frontier, the government gave them rights to the labor of native people in return for protecting and civilizing them. In practice the encomienda resembled slavery (Gonzalez, 2009). But when natives demonstrated their strength with the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, the Spanish realized that a level of diplomacy would be required. The communities that developed over the next 140 years were a mixture of mutual defense against nomadic people, religious syncretism, moderate economic growth, as well as cultural and biological mestizaje (Meier & Ribera, 1993).

The colonial policy that the Spanish developed in the aftermath of the Pueblo Revolt limited trade goods with nomadic people, especially in regards to weapons. They also instituted legal practices that allowed Pueblo people to litigate their grievances against Spaniards (Webber, 1984). The Catholic Church continued to spread, but allowed native practices so long as Catholic practices were not denied. Religious syncretism expanded; the matachina dance being an example. Matachín
literally means to kill kachinas; figurines that in Pueblo beliefs hold ancestral spirit forces. The Church’s original goal was to replace native beliefs with Catholic practices. The dance sought to demonstrate the domination of the Pueblo by the Spanish. Native people were made to dance as a way of understanding and accepting their domination, but Pueblo people danced with their own costumes and to their traditional cadence. In areas where the dance continued the outcome was not the domination of kachinas, but the amalgamation of Christ into the pantheon of spirit forces (Gutiérrez, 1991).

Mestizaje traditionally refers to race-mixing, but it is also a form of cultural blending. Pérez-Torres (2006) refers to it as a highly textured process of hybridization. This contrasts with the pejorative manner that the term miscegenation has historically been used in the United States. Mestizaje was a constant theme in the Spanish colonies (Webber, 1984). Considering that Spanish entrance in their northern colonies came relatively late, Gonzalez (2009) asserts that we should consider that mestizaje had been in process for generations. Many of the soldiers and settlers going north came from different indigenous people, among them were Tlaxcalan from central Mexico, Tarascan from areas north of Mexico City, and Opatas from the Sonora desert area. These colonists had already experienced a level of mestizaje, with each group’s indigenous background coloring the mixture differently. Each of these groups shared a loss of distinct indigenous identity, and also suffered from a Spanish form of racism that placed mestizos on a social scale related to their physical appearance and cultural practice. The outcome was a social spectrum that included race and class in its calculation. As outlined by Gutiérrez (1991), the Spanish viewed
nomadic people as outsiders. People who held tightly to their Pueblo ways were
insiders with citizenship rights, but occupied the lower rungs of the social ladder.
Mestizos who intermarried with Pueblo people held a position above the Pueblo, but
lower than Mestizos that segregated themselves from the Pueblo. At the top were
those that claimed direct heritage as Spanish. Claims along the racial spectrum were
closely related to class. Economic opportunities tended to correspond with racial
calculations.

As with race, gender ideals and practices had many nuances. Gutiérrez’s
(1991), analysis of Pueblo communities demonstrates varying degrees of authority that
women held. Women had direct authority over their body and their homes. They gave
sex as a gift, not as a requirement, and they had the right to divorce and re-marry.
When they were married, men moved into women’s homes. When there was divorce,
men left the home. To a great extent bloodlines were matrilineal, with women holding
great social and political sway.

In terms of gender roles the Spanish patriarchal system was the polar opposite
of the Pueblo. But in practice gender roles blurred on the northern frontier. Mestizaje
with native communities is one reason for the blurring. Settlers intermarrying with
Pueblo took on some of the social norms of native communities. But even when there
was not intermarrage, Pueblo women served as mid-wives and curanderas (medicine
women) to the whole community (Gutiérrez, 2001). There was an absense of clear-cut
division of labor among the Spanish settlers of the frontier. Women worked clearing
land and building houses. They fought alongside men in defending their homes
against hostile outsiders. Due to the large number of widows on the frontier, many
women were heads of households. Women were property and business owners, and often defended their claims in court. Women’s rights were not a result of a political movement, but out of practical necessity of the frontier. This theme would reappear in the areas that would become the U.S. Southwest (Gonzalez, 2009).

Wide variation existed among native peoples in New Mexico. The same can be said of the Spanish. Colonists, missionaries, and soldiers were rarely in agreement on how to interact with native communities. Attitudes and behaviors changed over time, and depended on a wide range of factors. At times change came due to political factors in Mexico City, but more often it was due to local economic, environmental, political, and social factors (MacLachlan & Beezy, 1994). In addition, Flores (1999) reminds us that environmental factors also affected history in the Southwest. In times of drought and disease there was additional stress on local economies; which led to more intensified conflict among, and between communities. The manifestation of conflict varied widely depending on the particular history of the community in question.

As noted earlier, the settlement of California and Texas occurred much later than New Mexico. The indigenous populations of both of these regions were smaller and less diverse than those of New Mexico. In turn the mestizaje of settlers with native populations was much less pronounced. Conversely, the colonists themselves were much more likely to be mestizos themselves. One consequence was that Spanish bloodlines were protected more vigorously and Indian identity was denigrated more fiercely (de la Teja, 1988; Monroy, 1990). This overview of Spanish colonization
should remind the reader of wide variation and complexity of class, gender, and race issues that existed prior to the entrance of the United States.

Colonization: United States

Texas and California were settled in a very convoluted era. A succession of events led to rapid transition of these regions. They went from being Spanish colonies, to states of Mexico, and finally to states of the United States. Settlement of Texas and California coincided with independence of the United States. Moreover, the Spanish empire was on the verge of collapse. Mexico declared itself independent in 1810, and Spain conceded defeat in 1821. In 1835 a wave of secession movements hit Mexico, with California, Texas, and the Yucatan Peninsula all declaring themselves independent. All but Texas reconciled their grievances. Conflicts in Texas ultimately led to the U.S.-Mexican War that lasted from 1846-1848. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, concluding the war, ceded Mexico’s north to the United States. And while California and Texas entered the U.S. as states, New Mexico entered as a territory (MacLachlan & Beezy, 1994).

The United States entered Mexican territory as colonizers. Flores (1999) shows that as early as 1815 demographers from the U.S. military were in the areas that they would ultimately capture through war. Mexico had declared itself independent in 1810, and the U.S. was strategically positioning itself for the potential consequences of fragmentation of the Spanish colonial empire. In the wake of Mexican independence in 1821, settlers formally entered Texas as immigrants and recipients of landgrants. But in practice they were colonists who imported their economic, political, religious, and social systems.
Texas

Texas had the most intense pre-war pressure from the United States, with the Alamo serving as the key public justification for war (Griswold del Castillo, 1990). During both the Spanish colonial period and the Mexican national period, U.S. settlers were given land grants with the hopes that they would help to develop the economy of the region. In addition to economic interests, U.S. settlers were sought because they were of European stock. Immigration from the United States was rapid. By 1830 the non-Indian population was listed at 30,000. But officials in Mexico City were disturbed by the fact that 26,000 of the settlers were immigrants from the United States. They became increasingly distraught with each new immigrant wave (MacLachlan & Beezy, 1994). Land grants given by the Mexican government required a level of economic activity, but recipients also had to become Mexican citizens, learn Spanish, and accept Catholicism. With exception of accepting Catholicism, the first wave of immigrants met governmental requirements. But successive waves ignored them. By the early 1830s an ever increasing number of U.S. immigrants spurned land grants altogether and simply squatted on open land (Griswold del Castillo, 1990).

De la Teja’s (1998) analysis emphasized that the Tejano upper-class welcomed relations with the Anglo Americans. There were indicators that business and class interests were more important than religious, cultural, or racial barriers. But tensions rose when the Mexican federal government sought to stop immigration from the United States. Friction escalated further when the government sought to regulate the economy. Both groups of elites resisted the Mexican government’s attempts to intensify authority over the region, and both fought against the government at the
Alamo in 1836. From 1836 to 1846 tensions rose. In 1836 landowning Tejanos saw their struggle in class terms. MacLachlan and Beezy (1994) stress that Tejanos were fighting for liberal ideals of local control and limited government interference in business activities. They saw their interests overlapping with those of U.S. business interests. But, as de la Teja indicates, by 1846 Tejanos had become racialized by jingoistic propaganda that justified war with Mexico. The Tejano upper-class was caricatured. Being Mexican and Catholic they were depicted in terms of miscegenation, and in turn illegitimate. In the aftermath of war class interests between Tejano and Anglo American upper-class gave way to racial prejudice.

In the aftermath of the war, Tejano communities were displaced territorially and bracketed into barrios. The largest Tejano community was in San Antonio, the site of the Alamo, with small communities scattered southward to the new U.S.-Mexico border (Meier & Ribera, 1993). Vigilantism targeting Tejano communities was rampant. Its intensity and outcomes were different depending on spread of U.S. settlers and the size and resources of the existing Tejano communities. In San Antonio there was a wave of postwar immigration from the United States which led to battles for land and business. Squatters, knowing that Texas judges would rule in their favor, occupied land and challenged Tejanos to defend themselves in court (De León & Stewart, 1983).

Tejano businesses were assailed in a number of other ways. The most famous example was the Cart Wars of 1859. Prior to the war Tejanos had controlled wagon trade between San Antonio and the Gulf region. In the aftermath of the war, they continued to dominate the trade because of their resources and connections. As Anglo
American business leaders became increasingly frustrated by their inability to compete with Tejanos, they resorted to physical attacks on the teamsters. As with squatters, Anlgo American business counted on the allegiance of the legal system to ignore their actions (de la Teja, 1988).

Tejano’s response to violence varied. Some of the wealthy tried to use their personal connections from the prewar period to negotiate with the new wave of Anglo Americans. Some moved away from San Antonio. But there was little direct action available to the working class Tejano (De León & Stewart, 1983). They had been serverely outnumbered before the war and more so afterwards. In this environment a level of social banditry appeared. Hobsbawm (1965) defines social banditry as individuals or groups who take criminal actions, as defined by those in power, to resist or punish their oppressor. Paredes (1970) notes that it was unclear that the intent of Tejano bandidos like Gregorio Cortez, Juan Cortina, or Catarino Garza could be categorized strictly in terms of social banditry. What was apparent was that working class Tejanos cheered their actions; ultimately leading to the cult hero status of bandidos.

The postwar era witnessed Tejanos being pushed into barrios, ethnic communities. While social and class hierarchies continued within these localities, the barrio also offered affirmation and protection to its members. Vélez-Ibáñez (1996) has argued that the importance of barrios among Chicano-Mexicano communities of the Southwest lies in confianza. This refers to a sense of confidence and comfort that comes from living in a community that accepts and protects its members. Inclusion in the community derived from acceptance and defense of cultural background;
language, social costumes, and religion all played a role. Chavez (1984) maintains that a sense of mutual aid developed in these ethnic barrios. Most often aid was informal. Nevertheless, as outside pressure increased formalized mutualista, mutual aid societies, tended to develop. Still, de la Teja (1988) reminds us that living in a community of confianza did not mean that barrios were egalitarian. Social and class differences existed. Nevertheless, those with more wealth and social standing had a responsibility to help others. At times aid came in a monetary form, but also came from connections that wealthier individuals had with the outside community.

The research of de la Teja (1988) shows that as opportunities were increasingly limited in the larger Anglo American business community, Tejano business leaders used their experience to service the needs of the barrio. Shops and services of various kinds found a captive and lively market in the barrio. These business leaders also served as conduits. Since some maintained contacts with the Anglo American business and political community, they served as channels of information and work opportunities for members of the barrio. Many of the jobs that the Tejano working class found were through these connections. A mutually supporting cycle existed between Tejano business leaders and workers. Business leaders used their contact to locate work, and workers acquired outside currency that would be cycled within the barrio. As with events during the Spanish period, circumstances in the U.S. colonizing period should remind the reader that individuals and communities cross boundaries and build alliances in the hardest of times.
The California experience was more varied than that in Texas (Monroy, 1990). During the Mexican period landgrants were given to a wide-ranging population. Among others, U.S. colonists competed with English, Italian, and Russian interests. The Californio upper-class moved in the social circle of landgrantees from other countries. In addition, there was a significant number of marriages among the wealthy of different nationalities. Casas (2007) demonstrates that the practice of intermingling among the upper-class was affected by the U.S-Mexican war, and the discovery of gold. In the pre-war era intermarriage between the Californio upper-class and other nationals had economic, political, and racial elements. From the point of view of European and U.S. immigrants, it was a way to gain landgrants. From the Californio perspective, it was a way to improve their bloodlines. In the aftermath of the war, U.S. settlers saw little need to use marriage as an access point to wealth. The Californio upper-class, like the Tejano, was stung by being racialized into a single group of Mexicans.

In the post-war era, the Gold Rush led to intense national and international immigration into northern California. San Francisco grew quickly because it served as a supply center and entrance point for miners. In the interior of California the mining region along the Sierra Nevadas and the northern San Joaquin Valley was greatly affected (Pitt, 1999). And as in Texas, Californio communities were racialized, displaced, and disenfranchised (Gonzalez, 2009).

Aside from violence and intimidation, Californios were the target of legislation meant to disenfranchise them. The Foreign Miners License Tax of 1850 required that
foreign nationals pay a $20 monthly fee for the right to prospect. However, the law was selectively applied. European miners were not taxed, while Chinese miners were. Although Californios had received full citizenship rights under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the treaty formally concluding the war, the tax was applied to them. Another example of disenfranchising legislation was the Land Act of 1851. This law required that holders of landgrants received under Mexican and Spanish sovereignty prove their claims in court. While more than two thirds of grant holders were able to prove the legitimacy of their land titles, many still lost their land due to exorbitant legal fees (Monroy, 1990).

In California, as in Texas, a form of social banditry appeared. The most famous of Californio bandidos were Joaquin Murieta, Three-Finger Jack, and Tiburcio Vásquez. Pitt (1999) has argued that the cult hero, Joaquin Murieta, was likely a compilation of various individuals reacting to oppression throughout the state. The intent of each individual varied, but the Californio community constructed them into a heroic myth. So while there may not have been a single Joaquin, the conditions that fostered the rise of rebels were real. Gonzalez (2009) argues that bandido legends served a psychic need by providing a marginalized Californio population with a symbol of resistance against subjugation.

While Northern California was besieged by miners, the Californio upper-class in the south held sway until the mid 1870s (Casas, 2007). Early on Southern California appeared to have little to offer populations flooding to the state. The land looked barren and had a small supply of water. Nevertheless, ranches in the south
expanded production and profits due to increased consumption needs in the north (Camarillo, 2005).

For a short period after the U.S.-Mexican War, the landowning Californios in the north and the south held onto some political clout. This was evidenced in the first California Constitution, written in 1849. One of the provision required that all public documents be written in English and Spanish (Casas, 2007). But Californio influence was to wain in direct relationship to capitalist investment in the state. The economy of Northern California diversified after the Gold Rush. Timber, shipping, ranching, and railroad industries all grew rapidly (Monroy, 1990). The economy of Southern California initially grew more slowly, but railroad construction ultimately led to Los Angeles being a transport hub. Lines were built connecting San Francisco and Los Angeles. Los Angeles was also connected to a series of lines that essentially created a second transcontinental railway, connecting the Southwest to Chicago (Camarillo, 2005). These lines extended from Los Angeles to the mining regions of Arizona and New Mexico, as well as the cattle ranches of Texas, but they also were linked to railways in the Mexican states of Chihuahua, Sonora, and points southward (Martinez, 1991).

Intense capital investment followed the railroad lines, by the mid-1870s the landowning southern Californio had largely been displaced. As they lost their wealth and influence, the working class Californio was disenfranchised (Camarillo, 2005). The economic, political, and cultural system of Mexican era California had been tightly intertwined. Small ranchers normally leased land from large landowners. They also worked as laborers on large estates. Their connection to local and state
government was funneled through the large land owner. Large landowners also sponsored cultural affairs to which the entire community was invited. As the large landowners were displaced, the small rancher and farmer were left with little but wage labor (Casas, 2007).

As in Texas, Californio communities were pushed into barrios. Some of these were in San Francisco and Los Angeles, and many more were in small rural areas spread across the state. Some of these barrios were located in areas that later became large cities like Sacramento, San Jose, and San Diego. Others were in areas that would continue to have small populations, but would produce high value agricultural products (Pitt, 1999).

**New Mexico Territory**

Displacement of Mexicano communities in all of the Southwest was related to the penetration of capitalism and immigration from the eastern sections of United States (Gonzalez, 2009). But the U.S. federal government also played an important role. This can be seen by comparing government actions in Texas and California with those in New Mexico. Texas and California entered the nation as states, which gave them States’ Rights under the U.S. Constitution. Meier and Ribera (1993) contend that this occurred because the Mexicano communities in California and Texas had been quickly overwhelmed by capital and settlers from the United States. In Texas it had occurred prior to the war, in California it came with the Gold Rush that coincided with the end of the war. Conversely, New Mexico entered the United States as a territory. Status as territory denied local authority. As a territory it was administered by the federal government. Deutsch’s (1989) analysis is in line with Meier and
Ribera, and notes that at the conclusion of the war, New Mexico had the largest population in the Southwest, but with a very small Anglo American population.

In the direct aftermath of the war, New Mexico had not drawn capital investment nor a large U.S. population. This was largely due to its isolation and limited resources. In turn, Hispano communities had not been disenfranchised. Local politics and economic activity continued to be influenced by Hispanics. As mining companies began exploration in the western sector of New Mexico, the territory was reorganized in 1863. The western half was sectioned off into the Arizona territory, which removed it from Hispano political influence. Arizona and New Mexico were the last territories in the continental U.S. to gain statehood, which occurred in 1912. By that time both capital investment and U.S. settlers had grown to the extent that they wielded dominant economic and political power (Griswold del Castillo, 1990).

**U.S.-Mexico Regional Economy**

Martinez (1991) has shown a strong correlation between migration and capital flows from the eastern parts of United States and the disenfranchisement of Tejano, Californio, and Hispano communities. This process lasted from the time the United States acquired the land in 1848 until approximately 1890. Where the first phase of the post-war era was characterized by disenfranchisement of existing communities, a second phase, beginning in the 1890s, was characterized by the recruitment of Mexicano labor into regions where economic activity was energized by an intense influx of capital.

Vélez-Ibañez (1996), argues that economic activity and social interaction should consider the regions on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border. A brief review
of the history of borderlands shows that this area developed in a convoluted process of capital penetration and economic amalgamation. Immigrant labor was an important part of the story. Portes and Rumbaut (2006), discussing 21st century Mexican immigration, point to the late 19th century to describe its origins. They argue that in the 19th century economic development in the Southwest was related to economic remodeling in Mexico. The economies of the U.S. Southwest and Mexican north became increasingly integrated beginning in the late 1870s. President Porfirio Diaz sought to develop Mexico by giving economic incentives to corporations from Germany, England and the United States.

Ultimately, it was U.S. companies that were the most successful at developing the region. One big advantage for U.S. companies was geographic proximity to Mexico. These companies gained land in many ways. Some were in the form of 100-year leases with rights to subsoil resources; others were in the form of land grants to railroad companies. President Diaz’s goal was to have these companies develop mining and petroleum resources, and build extensive railways. In the process they would provide jobs for the rapidly growing Mexican population.

Nevertheless, as Martinez (1991) indicates, many U.S. companies were the same ones that had been developing mining and railroads in the U.S. Southwest. Moreover, the railways in Mexico ran in a north south direction and connected with railroads in the U.S. Southwest. These in turn were connected to Los Angeles in the West and Chicago in the Midwest. The result was that by the early 1890s Mexico’s north became a de facto colony of the United States.
Dependable labor was required for economic development on both sides of the border. Mexican labor appeared as a natural solution, it was close and it was abundant (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Additionally, Ruiz (1992) points to the importance of factoring in the effects of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The federal government had written legislation closing the door to Chinese labor in response to xenophobia in Western states. While the legislation appeased community groups, business was expanding their labor needs. In turn, the labor vacuum drew workers from central and southern Mexico. Companies started an active recruitment program where paid agents were sent to the interior of Mexico to contract laborers. They offered free rail passes and cash advances as incentives for workers to go north.

Martinez (1991) reminds us that U.S. industries had expanded on both sides of the border, so the draw of labor was to serve business needs of the whole region. As the national border between Mexico and the United States was scarcely enforced, Mexicano populations moved easily between jobs in both nations. For the worker both sides of the border were similar. The vast number of jobs were in mining, ranching, and farming. There were also Mexicano oriented host communities. Due to these factors the Mexicano population, on both sides of the border, expanded more rapidly than at any previous time.

The U.S. federal government was an important actor in the development of the Southwest. It passed a series of government bills to develop the infrastructure of the Southwest. One of the most important was the Reclamation Act of 1902 that led to the construction of a wide range of irrigation projects. With the expansion of water
resources large-scale farming was added to the mining and ranching industries of the Southwest (Chavez, 1984).

Large-scale mining, ranching, and farming expanded the need for labor. But the size and nature of the companies’ action led to what Barrera (1979) described as an internal colonial system. The most extreme examples of the system appeared in mining industries. Since these industries operated in areas that were isolated from large cities, they wielded tremendous power. Business leaders in league with local officials bracketed the Mexicano community into racial colonies, housing them in company towns. In these towns the corporation owned all housing, stores, and services. In turn, they had tremendous control over the worker. Companies built their colonies through a system of occupational stratification, dual wages, and labor repression. Occupational stratification denied Mexicano workers the ability to move up the job ladder regardless of their skill or experience. Dual wages referred to paying Mexicano workers a lower wage for the same job as an Anglo American worker.

Labor repression had many faces. In part, companies recruited immigrants desperate for work in order to provide a reserve labor force. Company stores allowed workers to buy goods on credit. Once indebted workers could not leave their jobs until they paid off what they owed. Workers who left their work without paying off their debt were jailed and then paroled back to the company. Designated as criminals, these workers were not paid. A pernicious aspect of internal colonialism was that it magnified racial tensions between Anglo American and Mexicano workers (Barrera, 1979).
Various historians writing since the 1980s (Saragoza, 1988-1990; Sanchez, 1993; Montoya, 2000) acknowledge Barrera’s (1979) analysis. But they argue that the stories of Southwestern communities are more complex than the construction of the internal colony allows. Vélez-Ibañez (1996) argues that two key factors complicated the story of the Southwest. One was the unstable nature of the market economy. A second was the presence of Chicano communities that predated the arrival of large companies. Chicanos constituted the Mexican heritage communities that had been bracketed into the barrios by the onslaught of Anglo American migration. By the end of the 19th century these communities had been under U.S. jurisdiction for 50 years, and had at least two generations of U.S. born children.

The unstable nature of the market economy meant that industries did not always need the same level of workers. One effect was that wages changed depending on the market value of the product being produced (Vélez-Ibañez, 1996). The mining industry was greatly influenced by the quick changing value of their commodity. When prices dropped, wages were lowered, which at times led to strikes. Company responses to work stoppages were often brutal. They used local and state law enforcement agencies to break strikes. Companies often fired workers wholesale, but at the same time released workers from debt that they had acquired through the company stores, removing a key component of labor repression (Martinez, 1994).

An unintended consequence of releasing workers was that it tended to strengthen nearby Chicano communities. Chicano communities in the mining region of Arizona and New Mexico predated the arrival of mining industries, and grew as the mines drew workers from Mexico. They provided services that mining towns did
not offer (Martinez, 1994). Shops carrying Mexican products and Catholic parishes were among the biggest draws. When companies released their workers, some workers made their way back to Mexico, but many moved toward Chicano communities. Although resources were spread thin, they were kept within the community. Those resources were replenished and expanded when the market turned, and the mines again sought workers. This process became a cycle, with each revolution Chicano communities grew, and with growth came opportunity for the Chicano business owning class (Ceballos-Ramírez & Martínez, 1997). These events once again should be considered as part of the complex process of accommodation, alliance, and coalition building that communities have employed in particularly harsh historical periods.

An example of the complexity of Chicano communities can be seen in an analysis of what Gordon (1999) referred to as the “great orphan abduction.” In 1904 Chicano families in the mining region of Arizona adopted orphaned White children from Northeastern urban areas. The Catholic hierarchy, which was White, ignored racial definitions in deference to the adoptive parents’ standing in the church. This episode indicates mid-level economic resources among Chicano families. These families used their resources to adopt children, but they also formed mutualistas, mutual support clubs, to promote the interests of their community. They referred to themselves as los educados, meaning a well-mannered class. Ultimately Anglo American families in the area reacted against what they saw as unnatural adoption of White children, and with the help of local courts abducted the children from their adoptive parents.
This episode points to the nuanced nature of events. We see a Chicano community with economic and social capital. We also see a mixed picture of race. The Catholic Church looked beyond it, while the local Anglo American community fixated on it. But there was another important factor at play: women led the struggle for orphaned children. Chicano women organized to adopt the children, and White women pressured officials to remove the children from adoptive parents (Gordon, 1999).

Montoya’s (2000) analysis of Chicano history stresses the role women played in mitigating the coarseness of life in the borderlands. Deutsch (1989) addressed this issue with her analysis of the regional community. A regional economy contrasted with a regional community. In the former goods and services tied an area together, in the latter people were the bonds. An extension of social links bound an entire region. People made use of their economic opportunities throughout the region for the benefit of their home community. They also tied their own village to other villages as they worked away from home. Workers lived in other villages temporarily, spending some of their earnings there, and sending as much as possible back home. Martinez (1994) concurs with Deutsch’s analysis, adding that this process helped create an intercultural frontier on the borderlands. The use of Spanish and Mexican social practices were continually re-enforced by Mexicanos who stayed in Chicano communities. But Chicanos also affected Mexicanos practices and perspectives, which were in turn taken back to home communities.

As initially practiced, the regional community had a division of labor. For the most part men sojourned looking for work. Because they were more visible,
historians traditionally focused their attention on them. Deutsch (1989) stresses the fact that since women tended to stay in their home community, their contributions were seldom documented. Nevertheless, in the absence of men, women were primarily responsible for holding their home communities together.

*California and Immigration*

The previous section focused on mining regions of Arizona and New Mexico. At the turn of the century mining was also important in California, although the scale never reached the levels of the Gold Rush. Growth in California came from many economic sectors. Large-scale farming expanded in numerous valleys throughout the state. But the largest growth at the beginning of the century was found in and around Los Angeles. The city’s transformation began with boosterism of the late 1880s and 1890s. Civic leaders and real estate developers expanded the infrastructure and began a publicity campaign to draw people to the city (Sanchez, 1993).

The economy of Los Angeles was diverse and widespread. An agricultural industry, focusing on high profit fruits and nuts, developed in the valleys around the city. Oil was discovered, and was then followed by intense drilling and refining activities. Small and large-scale manufacturing expanded rapidly. And the city became a transportation hub with new railway stations and seaports (Pagán, 2003).

With economic development came intense demographic and social change. Up to the outbreak of World War I (WWI) most new residents were from the U.S. Midwest and Northeast, as well as Canada, England, and Germany. Mexican immigrants also appeared, but their numbers were smaller, similar in size to Italian, Russian and Swedish immigrants. Nevertheless, the Mexican Revolution of 1910, and
the outbreak of WWI in 1914, led to dramatic change in the immigrant make-up of
the city (Sanchez, 1993). Reisler (1996) estimates that from 1870 to 1910, 30,000
Mexicans migrated to the United States. But from 1910 to 1930 the number jumped
to 1.2 million, with Los Angeles receiving 10% of the total.

The increase in Mexican immigration was due to a variety of factors. Labor
contracting was one. By 1910 U.S. companies had been recruiting labor Mexico for
over 20 years. They continued the practice, even though labor unions had successfully
pushed federal legislation making it illegal to hire labor outside of the country. A
second important factor was the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution in 1910 (Portes
& Rumbaut, 2006). Ruiz (1992) estimates that over a million people died in the
conflict; tens of thousands of refugees fled to the Southwest generally and Los
Angeles specifically.

The last major factor leading to the spike in Mexican immigration was the
outbreak of WWI. On one hand, the war intensified the economic growth that had
already been developing. On the other hand, it virtually stopped the flow of
immigrants from Europe. By the end of the war Los Angeles had the second biggest
population of Mexican people. Only Mexico City had a bigger population (Ruiz,

Both Sanchez (1993), and Pagán (2003), observe a convoluted environment in
1920s Los Angeles. On one hand, there was intensification of nativism partly due to a
general antagonism toward immigrants, but also because the U.S. social system had
tenuous roots in the quickly evolving metropolis. In the 1920s the majority of people
residing in the city were born outside of the United States. The combination of rapid
population growth, and national diversity led civil leaders to promote an Americanization campaign. Schools, local clubs, and Protestant church groups undertook most actions, with assimilation as the ultimate goal.

As nativism was growing, business leaders found themselves increasingly dependent on the Mexican community. Mexicanos represented an important labor pool, as well as a consumer market. Business found that Mexicanos were loyal costumers to brand named products (Pagán, 2003). Advertisements in Spanish language newspapers, magazines and radio programs expanded as business people sought increased market shares for their brands. Spanish language radio stations boasted the highest listenership in the area, and charged commensurate rates for adds on the most popular programs (Fowler & Crawford, 2002).

Pagán (2003) observes that tourism added to the complex relationship that the city had with Mexicanos. Entrepreneurs promoted tourism and sought to create a romantic image of the city’s Mexican past. In novels, popular histories, tourist literature, and pageants, boosters promoted the virtues of a bygone era of pastoral simplicity. Entrepreneurs needed enough exoticism to sell the myth of Old Mexico to tourists who wished to sample a bit of Mexico but stay north of the border. At key locations the city reworked historic sites to play on the romanticized image of Old Mexico, hiring Mexicanos and Chicanos to play appropriate parts and even hosting a number of Mexican civic celebrations there. City boosters, politicians, and planners then redesigned the city plan of Los Angeles. Union Station delivered incoming railway passengers onto Olvera Street, which hosted Mexican restaurants and shops, as the welcoming site of Los Angeles. They also encouraged the use of Spanish and
Mexican architectural styles in new building projects. This sanitized depiction of Old Mexico lent the rapidly expanding metropolis a sense of history and tradition, as well as providing the city with an exotic flair that was good for tourism.

The end of the 1920s brought dramatic change to the city. With the onset of the Great Depression the economic rationale that led to a certain level of tolerance of the Mexicano community gave way to the Repatriation Movement. Baldarama and Rodriguez (2006) contend that racial tensions leading to repatriation of Mexicanos in the 1930s were an extension of the anti-Mexican sentiments ubiquitous in the Southwest. Nevertheless, the economic collapse of the economy intensified xenophobic attitudes. More importantly, large agriculturalists that had lobbied their Congressional representatives for easy access to Mexican farm labor abandoned those efforts as their business declined.

The pattern that appeared in the 1920s was to continue throughout the rest of the century. When the economy was in need, business lobbied government officials at the local, state, and federal levels to ease restriction on access to Mexican labor. When the economy soured, nativist groups intensified their efforts to remove undocumented Mexicans. Gonzalez (2009) described this oscillation as a form of economic and social schizophrenia in which Mexicanos were caught. The swing of the social and political pendulum against Mexican immigrants can be viewed in aggressive programs such as Repatriation Movement of the 1930s, Operation Wetback of the 1950s, and Proposition 187 of the 1990s (Gonzalez, 2006). In 2010 we see this again with passage of SB 1070 in Arizona. The new Arizona law seeks to commandeer authority from the Federal government for enforcement of immigration
law. But more importantly, it appears to justify the actions along the U.S.-Mexico border of vigilante groups such as the Minute Men (Barr, 2010).

According to Bigelow (2006), where the public reacted aggressively to Mexican immigrants when the economy declined, it has largely ignored the intensifying economic ties that developed over the twentieth century. Immigration flows from Mexico to the United States increased in direct relationship to population and economic growth in both countries. While this has been the general trend, economic integration and immigration flows have oscillated, often dramatically. This has included declines during the Great Depression and dramatic growth during WWII. More specific to current affairs, a new level of U.S. economic dominance started with the presidential administrations of George Bush, senior, of the United States, and Carlos Salinas de Gortari of Mexico.

In the late 1980s increasing pressure from President Bush and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with the support of Salinas de Gortari, led to the dismantling of state owned business in Mexico, and the removal of many social welfare programs. The culmination of these efforts was the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), signed by the United States, Canada and Mexico in 1994 (Acuna, 2007). NAFTA integrated the economies of North America more intensely than at any historical period. But where the trade agreement facilitated the movement of manufactured goods and capital, it did not address the movement of human capital. The omission was done with political expedience in mind. Governmental officials in the U.S. acknowledged that a trade agreement would not be ratified if immigration issues were included. As governments on both sides of the border attended to large
economic issues, they have skirted the thorny issues of migration flows (Bigelow, 2006).

**Mexican Migration to the Santa Clara Valley**

NAFTA represents the broad integration of North American economies. Those forces can also be seen in the development of the Santa Clara Valley, which is located at southern end of the San Francisco Bay Area. Zlopniski (2006) demonstrated the important role that Mexican migrants played in the economic development of the Santa Clara Valley through its different historical stages. In his view, the migration of Mexican workers, and their settlement patterns, have historically responded to changes in the region’s political economy. In the 1930s, when the Santa Clara Valley’s position was as a leading agricultural processing center, Mexican workers, both native and foreign born, became the backbone of the labor force employed in agriculture-related jobs. This led to the formation of a large Mexican working class. In the 1940s and 1950s the valley’s canneries employed more than thirty thousand people during the peak season from mid-May to early September.

According to Alarcón (2000), in the early 1950s the Santa Clara Valley started its rapid economic transformation from agricultural to microelectronics production, this had a dramatic affect on the nature of labor demands in the region. The new high-tech economy attracted thousands of college-educated professionals, such as engineers, technicians, and managers, many of them immigrants from China, Japan, Korea, India, and Taiwan. But as Benner (1998) pointed out, this new industry generated thousands of unskilled jobs. Low-wage occupations in electronics assembly and the service sector became a new magnet for Mexican immigrants.
Benner (1998) contends that the demand for low-skilled labor in manufacturing and service occupations fueled further immigration from Mexico and contributed to the rapid growth of the Latino population in the region. This growth was particularly pronounced in San Jose, where the Latino population went from 14 percent to 22 percent of the total city population between 1960 and 1980. Zlopniski (2006) argues that there are two distinguishable stages in the modern history of Mexican migration to the Santa Clara Valley. The first one took place between the early 1960s and the late 1970s, fueled by the booming electronics industry and the demand for immigrants to work in semiconductor processing and assembly jobs. The second wave of Mexican immigrants arrived in the 1980s and 1990s, who were attracted by the supply of unskilled jobs in various service industries. Mexican immigrants, many of them undocumented, became the bulk of those employed as janitors, gardeners, hotel housekeepers, fast food and restaurant workers, maids, house cleaners, babysitters, and elder-care providers. By the mid-1990s, for example, there were as many janitorial workers—most of them Mexican immigrants—as computer engineers employed in Santa Clara County. This revealed a bifurcated labor demand fueled by the high-technology industries in the region.

Accommodation and Resistance: LULAC and MEChA

As the North American economies became increasingly integrated, many groups organized to resist aggressive reactions aimed at people of Mexican descent. Márques (1993) contends that two organizations have been particularly important in defending educational and cultural rights: the League of Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and el Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán, (MEChA), the Chinano
Student Movement of Aztlán. These organizations are noteworthy because they represent different social classes and generational groups. LULAC historically has been a middle class organization of professionals, and MEChA has been a school-based organization made up mostly of working class students. Moreover, at times these groups had strong conflicts and saw each other as opponents; but at other times they worked together, and their policy positions expanded to include views of the other.

In 1929 LULAC was established in Corpus Christi, Texas. As a consolidation of smaller civil rights groups already in existence, it had the aim of combating discrimination that Mexican Americans faced in the U.S. Southwest. Since its inception it has grown as an organization, and has active chapter in many states, a professional staff, and a national headquarters (Gómez-Quiñones, 1990).

Nevertheless, Acuña (2007) contends that LULAC has a checkered past. On one hand, it started a preschool program for Mexican Americans called The Little School of 400. This program was a precursor of federal programs such as Head Start. LULAC was also one of key organizations supporting Mendez v. Westminster, in 1945, and other similar suites in the 1950s, that fought against segregation of Mexican American children in public schools. On the other hand, LULAC has historically taken assimilationist and anti-immigrant stances. It fought against the Bracero Program because it feared increased immigration form Mexico. Additionally, Acuña argues that LULAC’s focus on education was a result of an assimilation ideology that defended children of Mexican heritage from being categorized as “Indian” (p. 123).
Marquez (1993) asserts that LULAC’s “assimilation ideology emerged among Mexican American groups during the Great Depression. During this time, the population of Mexican descendants in the United States experienced a democratic shift” (p. 143). Because a greater number of the Mexican heritage population was born in the United States, they were awarded U.S. citizenship. Gómez-Quiñones (1990) argued that as a result of the repatriation of an estimated 400,000 Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans during the Great Depression, Mexican Americans sought to defend their rights as U.S. citizens. Marquez notes that LULAC was unlike earlier organizations, such as mutualistas (mutual aid societies), and labor-based groups. Those groups focused on cooperation between Mexican Americans, and recent Mexican immigrants, in order to defend themselves against economic, cultural and political. Conversely, non-U.S. citizens were excluded from becoming members if LULAC (Marquez, 1993).

According to Acuña (2007), while rhetorically praising its Mexican cultural heritage, LULAC promoted the full adaptation of its members into the dominant U.S. culture. As a method of increasing assimilation, LULAC “asserted that Mexican Americans should disavow any allegiance to Mexico, remain permanently in the United States, and commit fully to the ideals of the United States” (p. 233). Because the league was ultimately concerned with the status of Mexican American citizens, it feared that the dominant U.S. society would not distinguish between Americans of Mexican descent and Mexican nationals. The league also shared the fears of many working-class Americans that the immigrants who were willing to work for low wages presented unfair competition for U.S. workers.
As described by Alaniz and Cornish (2008), MEChA began during the 1960s. It sought empowerment through the political movements of the time, especially the Civil Rights and Chicano Movement. The group coalesced out of several organizations that had formed in the 1960s, and came together at a Crusade for Justice conference in Denver, Colorado. Crusade for Justice was a civil rights and educational organization founded in the mid-1960s that concerned itself with the problems of the city's Chicano youth. In 1969, a nationwide conference was held at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) by Chicano college students. This conference was an outgrowth of the First National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference hosted by Crusade for Justice. The principle contribution of the Santa Barbara conference was to extend the Chicano Youth Movement higher education.

Gómez-Quiñones (1990) pointed out that the name *Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán* was adopted by the conference attendees because of the importance of each of the words, and as a means of transcending the regional nature of the multiple campus-based groups. Conference attendees also set the national agenda and drafted the Plan de Santa Barbara, a pedagogic platform that promoted Chicano Studies programs and departments. MEChA chapters first took root on California college campuses then expanded to California high schools, and then schools in other states. MEChA soon became one of the primary Mexican-American organizations, hosting functions, developing community leaders, and politically pressuring educational institutions.

As an organization, MEChA sought to promote Chicano unity and empowerment through education and political action. MEChA differed dramatically
from LULAC. First, it was originated as a youth movement, where LULAC was largely a middle-class organization of Mexican American professionals. Secondly, MEChA promoted a Chicano identity (more recently the term has been changed to Chican@, or Chicana/o, acknowledging gender differences). Chicano historically was a derogatory term used to refer to a person who was poor, and had lower class status. In the 1960s the meaning was reconstructed, and used to identify working class pride, especially championing the indigenous ancestry (Gómez-Quiñones, 1990).

Alaniz and Cornish (2008) point out that the choice to promote a Chicana/o identity represented more than a name, but instead a fundamental change in orientation. MEChA strongly opposed assimilation as a social goal. It argued that the United States was fundamentally a racist nation that would never accept people of color as equals. In turn, Chicanos and Chicanas, like other ethnic groups, needed to look out for each other. Education through Chicano Studies programs would provide the prism through which students could deconstruct their colonial experience and build an inclusive future.

Márques (1993) has argued that since the 1980s, LULAC and MEChA have developed closer relations. Both organizations continue to have a strong following, and many young people who originally became politically aware through MEChA have become members of LULAC. A look at LULAC’s most recent position on immigration supports Márques’ point:

Our common experience has demonstrated that immigration is good for America, whether your ancestors arrived before the Declaration of Independence or just a generation ago. LULAC calls upon Congress and the President to embrace and uphold America's tradition as a nation of immigrants.
and pass comprehensive immigration reform that allows hard working immigrants and their families to become permanent legal residents of the United States. (LULAC.org).

Critical Theory

As described by Bohman (2008), Critical Theory has a narrow and a broad meaning in philosophy and in the history of the social sciences. “Critical Theory” in the narrow sense designates several generations of German philosophers and social theorists in the Western European Marxist tradition known as the Frankfurt School. Western European Marxism moved beyond material production and class conflict as the chief explanatory constructs, and toward broad cultural explanations of power relations and conflict. In a broad sense a “critical” theory may be distinguished from a “traditional” theory. A theory is critical to the extent that it seeks human emancipation. Many critical theories have emerged to describe various forms of domination of human beings in modern societies. In both the broad and narrow senses, however, a critical theory provides the basis for social inquiry aimed at decreasing domination and increasing freedom in all their forms.

Humanizing Pedagogy

Humanizing pedagogy evolved from Freire’s (1993) critical pedagogy. As described by Bartolome (1994), humanizing pedagogy contends that specific teaching methods are not the most significant factor to consider in improving learning among students from historically subordinated groups. The strength of methods depend on the degree that educators embrace pedagogy that values students' existing knowledge, culture, and life experiences; pedagogy that creates learning environments where power is shared by students and teachers. Teaching methods should be seen as a
means to humanize education, and promote academic success for students that have been historically underserved by schools.

Bartolome (1994) goes on to argue that humanizing pedagogy questions common assumptions about education. One is that teachers do not need to identify, interrogate, and change their biased beliefs and fragmented views about subordinated students. A second assumption is that schools are basically fair and democratic sites where all students are provided with similar treatment and learning conditions. These types of assumptions lead teachers and schools to focus on curriculum and ignore social and cultural realities where the curriculum is implemented. The result is that educators look for solutions in new and promising curriculum. But this intense focus on methodology often hides the deeper questions. Teachers and institutions instead should ask why in our society students from subordinated groups do not generally succeed academically in schools? Additionally they need to acknowledge that schools often reproduce the existing asymmetrical power relations among cultural groups.

Bartolome’s (1994) views overlap with Freire’s (1993). Both contend that by engaging in this critical sociohistorical analysis of subordinated students' academic performance, teachers will be better situated to reinterpret and reframe educational concerns in order to develop pedagogical structures that speak to struggles, concerns, and dreams of students. By understanding the historical specificities of marginalized students, teachers can come to realize that an uncritical focus on methods makes invisible the historical role that schools and their personnel have played, not only in discriminating against many culturally different groups, but also in denying their humanity. Similarly, Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) remind educators that it is
important that teachers keep in mind that methods are only social constructions emerging from and reflecting ideologies that often prevent teachers from understanding the pedagogical implications of asymmetrical power relations among different cultural groups.

Humanizing pedagogy seeks to promote politically informed teachers that recognize that educational institutions are not neutral. Price and Osborne (2000) claim that teachers should understand that educational institutions are socializing institutions that mirror the greater society's culture, values, and norms. Schools reflect both the positive and negative aspects of a society. Thus, the unequal power relations among various social and cultural groups at the societal level are usually reproduced at the school and classroom level, unless concerted efforts are made to prevent their reproduction. Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) state the issue more bluntly: “If urban schools have been decried for decades as ‘factories of failure,’ then their reproduction of failures means that they are in fact successful at producing the results they are designed to produce” (p. 5).

Bartolome (1994) contends that, in addition to possessing content area knowledge, teachers must possess political clarity so that they can effectively create, adopt, and modify teaching strategies which both respect and challenge students from diverse cultural groups in a variety of learning environments. Political refers to acknowledgement that purposeful action is needed in order to create a more democratic learning environment. Fránquiz and Salazar (2004) demonstrate that when teachers create learning conditions where students, especially those perceived as low status, can demonstrate their possession of knowledge and expertise, they then are
able to see themselves, and be seen by others, as capable and competent. As a result, contexts are created in which peers can learn from each other as well.

Rios (2008) argues that politically informed teachers should promote conditions that enable students from subordinated groups to move from their usual passive position to active and critical engagement. Creating pedagogical spaces that enable students to move from object to subject position can produce more positive effects than the implementation of any particular teaching methodology, regardless of how technically advanced and promising it may be.

In the view of Fránquiz and Salazar (2004), an important step in increasing teacher political clarity is recognizing that students that come from ethnic minorities and communities with low socioeconomic status have historically been perceived as deficient. Most pedagogical strategies have been ineffective because many educators implicitly or explicitly believe that ethnic, racial, and linguistic minority students are culturally disadvantaged and in need of fixing. Rios (2008) shows that Latino students were not that long ago referred to as mentally retarded, linguistically handicapped, culturally and linguistically deprived, and semilingual.

Bartolome (1994) argues that most educators are unable to consciously acknowledge their deficit orientation. Historically, teachers from all ethnic groups have been unaware of the active role they have played in the differential and unequal treatment of their students. Lack of awareness has led to uncritical application of curriculum, which in turn, has often produced negative results. Conversely, critical application of approaches and strategies can contribute to discarding deficit views of students from subordinated groups, so that they are treated with respect and viewed as
active and capable subjects in their own learning. This is at the core of humanizing pedagogy.

Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez (1992), referring to students’ funds of knowledge, show that tapping students' existing knowledge and language base is the key to successful learning. New information is understood and integrated in a framework of prior knowledge. Bartolome (1994) contend that using existing student language and knowledge makes good pedagogical sense, but more importantly it is fundamental to a humanizing experience for students who have traditionally been disempowered in the schools. Bartolome states: “[that] teachers who work with subordinated populations have the responsibility to assist them in appropriating knowledge bases and discourse styles deemed desirable by the greater society. However, this process of appropriation must be additive… new concepts and discourse skills must be added to, not subtracted from, the students' existing background knowledge” (p. 183).

Price and Osborne (2000) state that by nature teaching and learning involves social interaction. The interaction may be seen as an apprenticeship that includes acquisition of content matter, ways of organizing content, and using language. Teachers play a central role in this apprenticeship. They need to create learning contexts in which students are able to empower themselves. Teachers must introduce students to the culture of the classroom, to subjects, and to discourse styles. This process takes an additive approach, where teachers assist students in appropriating the skills for themselves and enable them to behave as insiders.
Critical Race Theory

As described by Delgado and Stefancic (2000), Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged in the mid-1970s with the early work of Derrick Bell and Alann Freeman, who were both distressed over the slow pace of racial reform in the United States. CRT emerged from criticisms of the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) movement. The first wave of CLS scholars entered the field having been profoundly influenced by the civil rights and anti-war movements of the late 1960s. What started as a critique of U.S. domestic politics became a critical stance against the dominant ideology of the legal system that legitimized oppressive social structures. Critical race theorists expanded their analysis beyond the critical legal framework initiated by CLS.

CRT drew from critical theory in law, sociology, history, ethnic studies, and women’s studies. As outlined in Gutiérrez-Jones (1995), CRT argued that the 1960s Civil Rights movement had stalled, and that many of its gains were being rolled back. This led to deep discontent with modern liberalism, from which civil rights legislation and activism sprang. Greene (1988) has argued that modern liberalism was an outgrowth of 19th century social activism with the reform movements of the 1890s, 1910s and 1930s. A cornerstone of modern liberalism was the defense of the U.S. political and social system against the growing threat of socialism. It sought to reform, not overturn, traditional laissez-faire liberalism. Gutiérrez-Jones asserted that in the view of CRT theorists, liberal principles that were characterized by incrementalism, faith in the legal system, and overall belief that the U.S. system was just, were fundamentally unsound.

Delgado and Stefancic (2000) outlined a number of basic reasons for denying
the legitimacy of liberalism. One was that racism is unjust, and since it has been ingrained in the U.S. social, economic and political systems, those institutions were also unjust. Because racism was part of the normal state of affairs in U.S. society, it looked ordinary and natural to persons in the culture. Bell (2000) traces racist structures to the very inception of the nation. He asserts that “…slavery provided the wealth that made independence possible but [it] also afforded an ideological basis to resolve conflict between propertied and unpropertied whites” (p. 74). A key point stressed by Bell was that class divisions among the white population were ameliorated by race. Moreover, white skin color should be considered as a form of property. And since the U.S. government was structured to protect property rights, maintaining the values of whiteness has been a social, political and legal priority. Considering the history of race, Delgado and Stefancic argued that new approaches were needed to understand and come to grips with the subtle varieties of racism. Liberal legislative solutions that mandated that all people must be treated alike could only remedy the most extreme and shocking forms of injustice, but did little about the business-as-usual forms of racism.

Bell (2000) argued that race and property rights should be used as an analytical tool for understanding inequity. In addition he stressed that liberal analyses of the United States have tended to conflate democracy and capitalism. Discussing the two ideologies as if they were one masked the benefits of capitalism to the middle and upper classes, and the harmful effects on those relegated to the lowest ranks. In a society based on property ownership, the legal system could not be considered blind. On the contrary, Bell contended that the system was purposely structured to defend
the individuals’ property rights, thus those with property have had superior protection. In this type of society basic human needs have not been seen as rights. In turn, when progressive liberals developed social policies to ameliorate inequitable conditions, they were viewed as gifts bestowed on those in need.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) adapted CRT to the field of education. Using Bell’s (2000) analysis of race and property rights, they argued that communities which have structurally been blocked from gaining property have also been denied access to educational resources. Solorzano and Bernal (2001) joined Ladson-Billing and Tate (1995), and used CRT to challenge White privilege and refute the claims that educational institutions make toward objectivity, meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity. CRT disputes notions of neutral or objective researcher, and argues that these traditional claims acted to camouflage the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in U.S. society.

CRT recognizes that the experiential knowledge of People of Color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing and teaching about racial subordination. CRT draws explicitly on the lived experiences of People of Color by including such methods as counter storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, cuentos, testimonios, chronicles and narratives (Delgado-Bernal, 2001).

In the classroom, one of the methods that CRT uses to challenge racial oppression and the status quo is counter storytelling (Bernal, 2002). Writers analyze myths, presuppositions, and received wisdoms that make up the common culture about race. Starting from the premise that cultures construct their own reality, these scholars
set out to construct a reality that countered the master narrative, which had invariably rendered People of Color to lower social rungs. CRT argues that when the ideology of racism is examined through counter stories, those injured by various forms of oppression discover that they are not alone. Instead they can see that there is a legacy of resistance to oppression. Hearing their own stories, and the stories of others, they can become empowered participants (Yosso, 2005).

Latina/o Critical Race Theory

Since CRT scholarship initially focused on the slow pace and unrealized promise of civil rights legislation, many of the critiques were articulated in Black vs. White terms. While acknowledging that African Americans experienced a unique and horrendous history of racism and other forms of subordination in the United States, other People of Color have argued that their histories had also been shaped by racism and intersecting forms of subordination (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006). Latina/o critical race (LatCrit) theory extends critical race discussions to address the layers of racialized subordination that comprise Chicana/o and Latina/o experiences. LatCrit scholars assert that racism, sexism and classism are experienced along with other layers of subordination based on immigration status, sexuality, culture, language, phenotype, accent and surname (Bernal, 2002).

Yosso (2005) concluded that the experiential knowledge of Latina/os is critical in understanding their position in society. While race is a central factor, its definition and use varies for Latina/os of different backgrounds. Racial categories in the United States are not the same as those in Latin America. Additionally, many Latin American nations construct racial distinctions in gradations. *Blanco* is often used for
those with a strong European phenotype, *indio* for those with strong indigenous appearance or cultural practice, *mestizo* for those with mixed blood, and *mulato* for those with have a strong African appearance. Some immigrants and Latina/os born in the United States have been able to escape the harshest sting of racism because of they are lighter in skin tone, others because they did not have a distinctly Latin surname.

Language is another factor that plays into the experience of Latina/os in the United States. Bernal (2002) stressed the importance of life stories in valuing the experiences of marginalized people. Benmayor (2002) argued that these stories provide a picture of the historical construction of racism in Chicano communities, as well as the experience of immigrants who become newly racialized as they enter the United States.

**Chicana/o Narrative**

Saldívar’s (1990) analysis of Chicana/o narrative literature overlaps with Said’s (1979) understanding of imaginary and symbolic production. Both argued that an oppressed group’s control over their stories have served as a unifying and communal function, as well as an oppositional and differentiating end. The use of narrative has been a way for unrepresented or misrepresented groups to speak for themselves in political and intellectual domains that normally excluded them. Saldívar argued that the narratives found in Chicana/o literature constructed contrastive images that form an integral part of their history. In the absence of history written by and for the Chicana/o community, literature provided a meditated truth of the real world that Chicana/os experienced. Saldívar’s position concurs with Rosaldo
(1993), who argued that without other data, the novel can serve as a source of evidence for thinking conceptually about how race works among certain Chicana/os.

In discussing the place of narrative in the Chicana/o community, Saldívar (1990) outlined a history of the Southwest that is in keeping with Martinez (1991), Vélez-Ibañez (1996), and Casas (2007). These authors agree that despite its long-standing cultural presence, Mexicana/o heritage has either been excluded from, or relegated to, the margins of American political, social, and literary history. Moreover, the dominant Anglo American culture did not simply alter the material conditions of the Southwest after 1848. It also distorted and disfigured the story of people of Mexican descent as it re-wrote history. In distorting history it measured Mexicana/o families based on an idealized version of Anglo American social and family structures. The imagined nuclear family structure used gender ideals that provided for an image of dominant male figures and submissive women. While it is unclear that Anglo American families in the Southwest measured up to their own patriarchal ideals, it is clear that many women in Mexicana/o families actively participated in the workforce. Saldívar, like Gordon (1999), pointed to economic family needs to explain women’s participation in the workplace. But as described by Webber (1984), Gutierrez (1991), and Montoya (2000), strict patriarchal values had not been followed from the earliest Spanish colonies.

Saldívar (1990) demonstrated that mid 20th century Chicana/o narratives used the the epic hero *corrido* of the late 19th century as the model of self-consciense acts of social resistence. Among the best examples of this are Américo Parades’ *With his Pistol in Hand* (1958), and José Antonio Villarreal’s *Pocho* (1959). These narratives
depicted the fragmentation of life under U.S. domination. They also marked the end of the colonizing period, and the beginning of the Southwestern industrial era. This was a period of economic transition from ranch-based economy to large-scale mining operations and mechanized farming. These highly capitalized endeavors concentrated on finding cheap and dependable labor force tied to the land through violence, coercion, and the law. Beyond outlining historical events, Paredes depicted traditional culture in communities on the U.S. side of the border, in positive and productive terms. Family and community interaction, as well as individual identity formation, was used to show the Mexicana/o community with a clear sense of self. The community persevered in the face of oppressive forces. In addition, defense of traditional culture was itself a form of resistance.

Saldivar (1990) contended that Villarreal’s *Pocho* (1959) depicted an epic hero of Greater Mexico. Looking at the region in terms of Greater Mexico anticipated a borderlands analysis. Juan Rubio, the protagonist, was born on the Mexican side of the border, but the violence of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, and the oppressive actions of the post-Revolutionary government, pushed Rubio to the U.S. side of the border. There he found himself under multiple layers of exclusion and oppression. He was an ex-patriot, and in turn derogatorily defined as *pocho* spoiled fruit by Mexican nationals. He was also a *greaser*, a demeaning term used by Anglo Americans, meaning oily and unclean. In an environment where the symbols of social justice, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, had been killed by U.S. and Mexican forces, Rubio used dignity as his ultimate form of resistance.
These stories of resistance fit well with what Arteaga (1994) referred to as “ethnic nationalism” (p. 17). Arteaga used Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia to analyze historical, interlingual, and interdiscursive factors in Chicana/o literature. Arteaga argued that in response to colonialism, several general reactions are available for the colonized other. (The other refers to people who are physically present, but not seen as legitimate members of the community.) Reaction to colonization can be described in terms of ethnic nationalism, autocolonialism, or hybridization. Ethnic nationalism opposes the authority of the colonial discourse with the authority of an alternate discourse. It rejects the externally imposed systems of representation, and instead, advances an indigenous one. The alien world is rejected in favor of the native. The ethnic nationalist approach is monologic, placing native elements into a privileged position, and discounting the voice of the colonizer.

In Arteaga’s (1994) model, autocolonialism refers to a situation where the colonized other seeks to assimilate, and effaces or denigrates his or her original culture, in an attempt to gain access to mainstream society. “In the endeavor to mimic monologue of power, the other harmonizes with it and suppresses difference. Autocolonialism discourages dialogue. It is monologic” (p. 18). This requires the removal of an alternate form of discourse, and pressures build to eliminate anything but the language of the colonizer. It promotes monolingualism. The autocolonial also accepts an authorized, hegemonic version of reality, history, and truth.

Arteaga (1994) argued that in the battle of cultures there is a clash of monologues, each refusing to recognize any legitimacy in the other. In contrast, hybridization, or cultural mestizaje, differs from both ethnic nationalism and
autocolonialism in that it is inherently polyglot. Hybridized discourse rejects the principle of monologue and composes itself by selecting from competing discourses. It is dialogic because it is multi-voiced.

Saldívar’s (1990) discussion of Richard Rodriguez’s *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodríguez* (1982), and Ernesto Galarza’s *Barrio Boy: The Story of a Boy’s Acculturation* (1980) provided good examples of Arteaga’s (1994) autocolonial and hybrid reactions. Saldívar contrasted these stories of assimilation and acculturation. In addition, these autobiographic narratives point to the nature of public and private roles of individuals.

As described by Saldívar (1990), Rodriguez’s *Hunger of Memory* (1982) told an autobiographical story of transition from a point of social and economic disadvantage, to social acceptance, and economic well being. It also was a depiction of a person breaking from a social group’s alienation, to individual integration, and from working class Mexican American values to middle-class white society. Rodriguez presented a broad range of emotional struggles as he progressively moved toward a break with his parents’ culture.

Saldívar’s (1990) interpretation corresponds with Sedore (1999) who noted that a prominent aspect of Rodriguez’s cultural break was a focus on English. It was the language of integration, of economic resources, and ultimately of acceptance in mainstream society. Spanish had been a private language of the home, and English a public language. But a transition occurred when Rodriguez accepted English into his private world. Using Arteaga’s (1994) analysis, Rodriguez is an example of autocolonialism. In his story we see that education provided a means of connecting
to the world outside his cultural enclave, but also created a distance between him and his cultural roots. As he assimilated, he accepted the hegemonic view of reality, truth and history.

Associated with a break from the familial language was a movement from group membership to individual identity. As described by Sedore (1999), an important aspect of this was strong reaction against Affirmative Action programs. To Rodriguez (1982), those programs denigrated his personal accomplishments. Affirmative Action denied public recognition of individuals from minority groups, and in turn, was detrimental to their upward mobility.

Sedore (1999) commented on the irony of the situation. As Rodriguez (1982) railed against Affirmative Action, and succeeded academically and professionally, in the eyes of mainstream society, he remained a minority. He became a Latino model minority, and was relegated by mainstream society as the spokesman for the same minorities that he sought to distance himself from. On the other hand, because his goal was assimilation, he became the lightening rod for Chicano animus.

Saldívar (1990) contrasted Rodríguez’s *Hunger of Memory* (1982), with the story of acculturation that appeared in Galarza’s *Barrio Boy* (1971). Galarza’s story opened with the turmoil of the Mexican Revolution, and proceeded through migration and life in the United States. In the journey Galarza met people from all social classes, religions, ages and nationalities. He encountered both attractive and repulsive aspects of American culture. He accepted the generosity of many, and survived the brutality of others. Saldívar indicated that Galarzar’s journey was not that of an individual, but of a whole family. The interaction with others was meant to provide a
picture of the nuanced nature of culture. But it also promoted connection with familial culture as it sought acceptance in the dominant culture.

In Saldívar’s (1990) reading, Sandra Cisneros’ *House on Mango Street* (1984) overlapped with Galarza’s (1971) interest in maintaining familial culture. Cisneros stressed the internal workings of her Chicago community, with limited reference to broader U.S. culture. Through her narrator Esperanza, which means hope, Cisneros presented a feminist plea for a place of her own. This would be a site of self-creation that was not dominated by men, whether they were sexual partners or parental figures. But unlike Rodriguez, Cisneros was not calling for an exclusive private refuge. Instead, she outlined the struggles of working class poor as a way of empathizing and recognizing the human actors of the community.

In Jago’s (2002) analysis, Cisneros presented a world view from a female perspective. Jago indicated that the first view was of a child buffeted by a world that she did not control, and then as an adolescent witnessing the difficult choices of her peers. Finally we get a glimpse of the adult who made a physical escape, but recognized that her poetic voice and personal strength were tied to the honorable, though flawed, characters of her hardscrabble life in a Chicago barrio.

Jago’s (2002) analysis overlapped with Saldívar (1990). These authors indicated that the first phase of self-creation showed Esperanza in a variety of settings, each opening a window to a different floor of the character’s heart. The underlining trail takes the reader deeper into the creation of the author. The “I” that was played out in Esperanza’s voice was looking for a home, but the child Esperanza had limited language, and described that home in material terms. The material image
that she described looked nothing like the deteriorating house on Mango Street. A home should function as refuge, but the houses she saw others construct functioned more as monasteries where women were controlled, put to work, and, perhaps most tiring of all, watched over and judged.

In the second phase of Mango Street, the reader was presented with an analysis of Esperanza’s world. It was populated by distinct characters, lovable because of their flaws, but tinged with melancholy. In these pensive images Cisneros showed Esperanza questioning escape strategies. Sally, a girl a few years older than Esperanza, appeared in various stories. Both beautiful and tragic, she amplified her natural beauty with cosmetics, but was trapped in a patriarchal society. She sought a lover to escape her father, but simply replaced one male authority for another. Esperanza’s strength was in recognizing the dangers of the quick escape. Instead, she hunkered down, held on, and resisted the social whirlwind that entraps women (Saldívar, 1990).

The last phase appeared in the final story, “Mango Says Goodbye Sometimes.” In this story Cisneros, the author, appeared. The reader was presented with an author who was in the process of accepting her past. The voice was still defiant, but she realized that she could not create her home until she recognized the value of her past. Mango Street in many ways was really a home; events left scars, but her identity and her artistic voice were shaped by the humor, melancholy, and injuries of the experience in the neighborhood (Saldívar, 1990).

overtly stated her interest in hybridization of culture. In this sense her work overlapped with Villarreal (1959), Galarza (1971), and Cisneros (1984). It was similar to Villarreal and Galarza in that it discussed the polyglot nature of acculturation. It concurred with Cisneros in that it focused mostly on the internal (Saldívar, 1990). It recognized the influence of Anglo American culture, but its main interest was on how the Chicana/o community responded. It showed internal competition and criticism that were largely derived from the hegemonic economic and cultural messages of the colonizing Anglo American culture (Staten, 1998).

Anzaldúa (1987) related her message by interchanging various languages; mostly using Standard English, then intermixing Spanish fragments, interpreted into English, and periodically simply switching codes without providing a correlated translation. In the process the reader was exposed to the author’s argument: Chicano Spanish is not an incorrect language; it is a living language that is a common form of discourse in border regions. As a communication system it developed naturally in the border region from centuries’ long contact between Anglo and Spanish economic, political, and cultural systems. In many cases the language change occurred due to a continual flow of Spanish language populations to the borderlands. But ironically there were also some archaisms from early Spanish colonists. In turn, Chicano Spanish usage contains words, and pronunciation patterns, form Medieval Spain. Martinez (1994) asserts that at least some aspects of Chicana/o Spanish is more traditional then the standard Spanish that recent Mexican immigrants bring with them.

Anzaldúa’s (1987) interest was in the contemporary social position of Chicana/o Spanish. She noted that the people were neither Spanish, nor was Spanish
the dominant language. The people lived in an English dominant society, but were not
Anglo. They were literally a people on the border of two nations and languages. The
evolved language of the region was one that could connect to identity, and was
capable of communicating the realities and values that were true to the members of
the community. The language was a border language; words were distorted and
reconstructed in polyglot combinations. At times the terms were English, other times
Spanish, and still other times a mixture of both.

Anzaldúa (1987) presented a list of the language forms of Mexican descent
population of the Southwest. Among them were a North Mexican Spanish dialect; a
Chicana/o Spanish with Texan, New Mexican, Arizonian, and Californian regional
variations; and Caló. The language forms listed here have often been referred to as
pocho, and have been a source of criticism. Pocho refers to an anglicized Mexican or
American of Mexican origin that speaks Spanish with an accent characterized as
North America. Pocho has traditionally been a pejorative term, used both in the
United States and Mexico to refer to people in the Chicana/o community who were
lost to economic and cultural poverty. Chicano was a term whose usage, prior to the
1960s Civil Rights movement, referenced something similar to Hillbilly or Oakie. In
turn, the polyglot language of Chicana/o was criticized as the illegitimate dialect of an
impoverished and ill-mannered people. Moreover, criticisms came alternatively from
those seeking to defend the English and Spanish language. Up to the 1960’s Civil
Rights Era, these external criticisms were internalized, and were a source of self-
loathing.
The narratives presented above outline historical stresses on the Chicana/o community and various methods of resistance, assimilation and accommodation. They are depictions of the Chicana/o experience presented by published scholars. In this sense some Chicanas/os speak for others. So while Chicana/o narratives have served to counter the dominant images their community, the voices of the individuals in the community are still missing. The use of personal narrative may fill this gap.

Maynes, Pierce and Laslett (2008), indicate that one motivation for studying personal narrative is the desire to examine varieties of selfhood and agency as constructed by the individual. Analyses of personal narratives can serve to introduce marginalized voices and provide counter narratives from the individual’s perspective. Analysis of these narratives can demonstrate that human agency and individual social action are best understood through historically specific relationships with institutions. These analyses not only reveal the dynamics of agency in practice, but also can document its construction.

As demonstrated by Andrews, Sclater, Squire and Treacher (2000), personal narratives can be seen as empirical data that provide access to individuals’ claims about their motivations, emotions, and imaginations. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) use narrative inquiry as a method to extend the analysis from the personal to the social level. Narrative inquiry focuses on the interconnectedness of the individual and the social, and argues that stories are not solely individual, instead they are infused with temporal causality that link an individual life with stories about the collective. Historical time contextualizes a person’s life story; at the same time the narrator’s
moment in time affects how he or she experiences, remembers, and interprets historical events. Both temporalities inform the narrative.

As described by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), narrative inquiry examines how people frame their stories in relation to the dominant cultural storylines. Counter narratives are of particular interest; these are stories that either implicitly or explicitly resist the dominant culture’s narratives. As with other narratives, counter narratives should not be seen as simply individual. They should be considered as personal stories that purposely go against the social grain; this is done with a consciousness of being a member of an outside group. While individuals might position their stories as being on the margin, they do not necessarily consider them to be unique. In this sense, counter narratives, like the dominant cultural narratives they challenge, might be experienced and articulated individually, but nonetheless have common meanings. Even the most individualized and emotionally charged narratives belong to specific communities. All counter narratives are socially and historically located.

Riessman (1993) reminds us that for narratives to flourish, there must be a community to hear them. For communities to hear, there must be stories that weave together their history, their identity, their politics. Story telling is a relational activity that gathers others to listen and empathize. It is a collaborative practice, and assumes tellers and listeners interact in particular cultural milieu; in turn, historical context is essential to interpretation. Analysis in narrative studies opens up forms of telling about experience, not simply the content of the story. Analysis includes what is told, but also how the story was told. Personal narratives can illuminate individual and
collective action and meanings, as well as the social processes by which social life and human relationships are made and changed.

*Cultural Citizenship*

Moreno (2008) contended that the culture citizenship approach is supportive of Chicana/o writers that call for affirmation and cultural acceptance in the U.S. hegemonic social order. Cultural affirmation is seen as a tool to break the destructive cycle of negative images of the Chicana/o. In this sense it can be seen as part of LatCrit. In addition, researchers and educators using a cultural citizenship approach seek an avenue for participants to speak for themselves. Narrative inquiry appears to fit well with the interests of cultural citizenship.

Rosaldo and Flores (1997) argued that cultural citizenship can be used to combat the corrosive environment that many marginalized and disenfranchised people live in. Cultural citizenship asserts that people have the right to be different in terms of race, ethnicity, or native language without compromising the right to participate in the nation-state's democratic process.

In United States participation in the democratic system has focused on civic rights, and while many laws have been written to protect voting rights, social acceptance by the dominant society cannot be legislated (Seif, 2004). Rosaldo and Flores (1997) argued that to expand civic participation, cultural participation needs broadening. Claiming cultural rights is central to gaining a sense of belonging and human dignity, and since there is a strong correlation between a feeling of belonging and civic participation, acceptance is key to expanding democracy.

Social gatherings play a central role in the construction of collective identity
and a sense of belonging. In turn, physical spaces are necessary in order to maintain cultural practices that create a sense of community. Identifying areas that have historically been part of the community, and organizing to feel justified and entitled to those physical spaces, is an important part of cultural citizenship (Rosaldo & Flores 1997).

Rosaldo and Flores (1997) argued that that ardent claiming of space and culture are important initial steps to build a sense of agency and self-identity. They are also important in recapturing dignity in a society that has a long history of disenfranchisement and dehumanization. But initial steps need to be followed by linkages that help people cross boundaries and promote inclusiveness. These authors present an open question: where can linkages occur without losing a sense of community?

Benmayor, Torruellas and Juabe (1997) contended that using a cultural citizenship approach in the educational system may provide the physical space for linkages that allow students to cross boundaries and promote inclusion. In their view, cultural citizenship is in keeping with the tenets of Freire’s (1993) critical pedagogy. Freire advocated a democratic process of instruction that aimed to achieve collective knowledge among all participants. The goal of critical pedagogy was to develop an educational process where the curriculum was built around students’ interests and perspectives.

In Freire’s (1993) perspective, education should democratize the means in which students construct their knowledge about the world. The goal should be to help students use their own knowledge to develop deeper understanding of the social
hierarchies that restrict the free exchange of ideas in the wider society. Freire’s overriding political objective was to overturn those institutions that restricted communication between individuals; that treated some people as knowers and others as receptacles. Leveling of inequalities based on race, class, and gender did not reflect ends in themselves, but steps toward establishing situations where true dialogue could occur.

We can see an example of the precepts of critical pedagogy in the cultural citizen curriculum of Benmayor (2002). Benmayor structured a research project that directed students to conduct oral histories in and around California State University, Monterey Bay. Students were then asked to critically analyze the implicit meaning of respondents’ narratives.

According to Benmayor (2002), conducting oral histories was important, but the principle goal was to find an alternate approach for integrating students into the university environment. To promote this outcome, Benmayor developed a process that had students, primarily from the same ethnic background as those being interviewed, organize and conduct the oral history project. This was a purposeful choice that sought to challenge the argument that young people of Mexican origin need to break with their culture in order succeed in the dominant one. It was also an example of a university professor claiming institutional space to promote community construction.

Coll’s (2004) research also focused on developing space for community building. Coll conducted research with African American, Asian, and Latina immigrant women, with an interest in re-contextualization citizenship. The
researcher’s goal was not to study a “view from the margins” (p.190), but rather to re-center the thinking about citizenship. In order to do this new terms of citizenship were developed. Among Latinas the term *conviviencia* was the most important concept. As defined by the researcher it meant getting to know one another by spending time, talking, and doing things together.

In addition to spending time together, these women were presented with a history of the United States that corresponded with Critical Race Theory. It demonstrated that racism in the United States was the norm, not the exception. The historical context allowed these women to locate themselves in the national history of the United States. As participants narrated their stories, they added their own analysis of race, indicating that it was not exclusively a *white* issue. Each group described various forms of discrimination within their ethnic group. Discussion of race opened the door to various internal contradictions. One important conclusion was that promoting equality needed to address broader economic and cultural issues. Racism in the United States was important, but it was also important to recognize that each group brought its own conflicts and stereotypes with them (Coll, 2004).

As described by Coll (2004), the participants placed themselves in, and between, other groups that had historically been marginalized. These women developed a self-consciousness that allowed them to understand the interconnection between different marginalized groups. Their view was nuanced, thus breaking the intellectual boundaries that usually promoted stereotypical generalizations of other ethnic groups. This was an important step for those that participated. But as noted by the author, crossing boundaries was limited to the structured environment created by
the researcher. These were described as *contact zones* where women were able to cross cultural boundaries and take important steps toward creating a multi-cultural community. In these zones people met, and saw their common humanity.

In this study Coll (2004) provided an example of where, when, and how boundaries can be crossed. It also offered a tentative answer to the question that Rosaldo and Flores (1997) asked: what type of physical and social spaces promotes cultural citizenship? This Teacher Research study also was seeking to address Rosaldo and Flores’ (1997) question. Its goal was to provide students in a Mexican American history course with a method to critically engage class material and the local community. Guided by the premise that educators should include students’ distinct abilities and knowledge in the educational process (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Freire, 1993), this study was an attempt to use narrative inquiry as a way to involve students in their own history (Flores & Benmayor, 1997). At the same time it helped students redefine the terms Mexican American and Chicana/o for themselves and their community. Moreover, students took an active role in critiquing, and in the process, broadening the scope of Mexican American and Chicana/o history.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study used teacher research methods to examine narrative inquiry as a technique for student engagement. Narrative inquiry was used in a Mexican American history course at Gavilan College, in Gilroy California, as a way to involve students in their own history (Flores & Benmayor, 1997), and at the same time help redefine the terms Mexican American and Chicana/o for themselves and their community. Moreover, students took an active role in critiquing, and in the process, broadening the scope of Mexican American and Chicana/o history.

This study derived from a pedagogical problem: a need to understand the complexities of implementing a cultural citizenship approach employing narrative inquiry as a research tool. Using teacher research methods, this study sought to describe the story of my own learning as I work to unravel and examine this pedagogical problem, devise solutions, and examine the effectiveness of these solutions. Moreover, it sought to interpret the meaning and significance of the experiences. It was hoped that this process would take on the characteristics of theorizing, as I saw the experiences in new ways, leading to further insights and understandings. Additionally, I hoped that the narrative project would enable my students to examine the significance and value of their personal experience; and theorize about how their experiences fit into historical and contemporary contexts.

My personal goal was to make my intuitive thinking more explicit. The pedagogical goal was to demonstrate the process a teacher can use to bridge the gaps
between intuition, practice, and theory. My professional goal was to make my experience public in the hope that it might expand the knowledge base on teaching.

Research Design

As defined by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) teacher research is a “systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers about their own school and classroom work” (p. 22). Mohr, Rogers, Sanford, Nocerino, MacLean, and Clawson (2004) add to this, and indicate that teacher research is also public, voluntary, ethical and contextual. They explain that teachers are subjective insiders involved in classroom instruction as they go about their daily routines of instructing students, grading papers, evaluating performance, and assessing curriculum. But when teachers become teacher-researchers, they raise questions concerning what they think and observe about their teaching and their students' learning. They still collect student work in order to evaluate performance, but they also see student work as data to analyze in order to examine the teaching and learning that produced it. In order to accomplish this, they develop questions based on their own curiosity about their students' learning and their teaching. They also investigate their questions with their students, systematically documenting what happens. Teachers collect and analyze data from their classes, including their own observations and reflections. This is done in order to examine their assumptions and beliefs, articulate their theories, and present findings to others through presentations and publication.

Teacher research focuses on the intricacies and complexities of teaching practices that are grounded in specific contexts (Mohr et al., 2004). This is in keeping with CRT that argues that researchers in the field of education can use narrative
inquiry to capture complexities and avoid generalizations that overlook uniqueness of educational settings and experiences (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005).

Using narrative inquiry within the larger framework of teacher research also allowed me to consider more carefully the role of participants in my study. My intention was that the study would work to disrupt some of the power disparities between the researcher and the researched. In positioning the researcher in the study, researchers must recognize their own existence and belief system. The researcher should not separate themselves from the participants (Tuwiwai Smith, 1999). While traditional research seeks to describe the phenomena in question, this study sought to create agency for the benefit of the people who contributed to it.

**Research Setting**

Gavilan College, located in the Santa Clara Valley in Central California, is one of 72 California community college districts. Its main campus in Gilroy and two satellite centers constitute a federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution that services 5,000 students. The satellite centers are in Morgan Hill and Hollister.

Demographic data of the college shows that 44% of the students are designated as Latino, an equal portion as white, and the balance a mixture of African American, Asian, Pacific Islanders, and others. Ages range from 18 to 60 years, with a gender mix that is approximately 60% female and 40% male (Gavilan College, 2010). Gavilan College students live in relatively isolated communities that mix rural and agricultural sectors with new suburban subdivisions. Family income is similarly mixed. Those from the agricultural sector often have family incomes below the poverty level. Those from subdivisions are often commuters to Silicon Valley
technology centers with commensurate incomes. Hollister is a rural community, with many families in the area working in the agricultural sector. Morgan Hill is only 20 miles from the technology centers of the Silicon Valley. A substantial number of technology companies are located in Morgan Hill. Gilroy is situated physically and economically between Hollister and Morgan Hill (Gavilan College, 2010).

Research Participants

At the time of the study, the class that participated in this research project was the only ethnic history class offered by the college. It was scheduled every semester and regularly had between 40 and 50 students. Age and gender mix of the class were similar to the overall college population (Gavilan College, 2010). The ethnic make up of the class that participated in this study was approximately 90% Latino, with the largest segment being of Mexican descent. Students in the class were asked if they wished to participate in dialogues to discuss their experience in the class. The dialogues were conducted after the end of the semester. The goal was to have between seven and ten participants, with an age and gender mix that was similar to the class.

Classroom Narrative Inquiry Project

In order to effectively outline the design of this teacher research study, a description of the classroom narrative project being studied is appropriate. Since the fall of 2006 I had students use narratives as a way of redefining socially constructed identity. The class project asked students to write their personal story as a way of locating themselves in Mexican American history. As initially designed, students were directed to use a three-step process to write their narrative. These steps were (a)
creating a personal I.D. card as a visual preview, (b) identifying a theme and writing a brief overview of a cultural and/or historical issue, and (c) completing the narrative.

Students who participated in the project reported that they were engaged, and I as the instructor found the narratives enlightening. But after conducting the project for several semesters, I realized its limited effects. The narratives did not have an impact beyond the students writing and my reading them. To more fully reflect the tenets of critical theory, the approach needed broadening by situating students as members of a community of learners.

To address this issue I redesigned the project to incorporate the narrative inquiry methodology outlined by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). These researchers argue that narrative inquirers need to focus on experience as lived and told in stories. It is particularly important to begin with an exploration of the phenomena of experience. These experiences should be considered in terms of a three-dimensional inquiry space: along a temporal dimension, a personal-social dimension, and a physical location dimension. Having students examine themselves as historical actors addressed the temporal dimension. Having students read, discuss, and assess other students’ narratives addressed the personal-social dimension. And having students understand that narratives come from within the community addressed the physical dimension.

What follows are examples of student work representing the phases of the narrative project as it was conducted prior to the addition of narrative inquiry methodology. Instructions that incorporate the tenets of the narrative inquiry methodology discussed above follow these examples.
Figure 1 shows an example of a personal I.D. card. This card indicates a bi-national identity represented in the currency of each nation. The student placed his picture in the window found on the Mexican twenty-peso bill. Interestingly the motif of the window follows the patterns of the ancient cultures of Mexico, thus indicating a reference to ancient indigenous identity.

Below are two excerpts of student themes focusing on the Gilroy tomato processing plant. These excerpts show an analysis of local activism as well as the role that work plays in family history.

Theme: Seasonal Life

The cannery industry differs from other manufacturing industries in raw materials, but is similar in the way that they try to minimize their costs. Cannery history shows us that owners have power because they control who gets jobs. But it also shows that workers can find ways to resist, and in the case of the Gilroy tomato plant, since women made up 70% of the workforce, the struggle for worker’s rights was led by women, women like my Mom. This is the story of working Mexican women. Their role as breadwinners, organizers, while all the time being mom.

Theme: Gilroy Cannery Families

My parents both have worked too many jobs to remember. It seems that my father always has a new story about a job I never heard of. A lot of the stories are about coming across the border, for a while it was illegally, but then he got his papers. The stories that always come back are the ones of the Gilroy tomato cannery. Both of my parents, and most of their families, were seasonal cannery workers. That’s where they met and fell in love. As hard as the work was, they both felt really bad when the factory finally closed. They say that I
was losing an uncle they hated--you may hate family, but you never want to see them die.

These excerpts show themes that overlap with histories about the community that traditionally appear in Mexican American history texts. They focus on blue-collar work and workers’ struggles, but they also highlight issues that have not been prominent in traditional history of the community. The first excerpt shows the lead role that women often play in workers’ resistance movements. The second indicates that the workplace, even in low paying and harsh jobs, is a location with a lot of family interaction.

Other narratives broaden the picture of the community even further. The two narrative excerpts below show additional images of the community. The first provides an image of a person who feels assimilated into the larger American society, but has been categorized otherwise. The second addresses physical disabilities, and points out that they have been omitted in the broader history.

Theme: Ascribed Identity

I have lived in Morgan Hill my whole life; both of my parents are Mexican American born in America just like my Grandparents. I guess technically I’m Mexican American, but I just consider myself American. I suppose I grew up with just as many prejudices and hardships as any other Mexican American student, however, if I did it was rarely for being Mexican. For most of my life people who met me just assumed I was Asian. “Your Chinese right” is a phrase I heard a lot growing up, many other people thought I was Filipino. Then one day, out of the blue, everyone knew I was Mexican, thanks to Napoleon Dynamite. Since that movie I have had people say “Dude, can I tell you something, you look just like Pedro from Napoleon Dynamite.” I have been “Chinese” for most of my life, and now, thanks to a movie, I’m occasionally Mexican. I don’t know what to make of it, because I am pretty sure I am just American.

Theme: Disabilities and Invisibility

I was born with a disability called cerebral palsy. Through life I have grown up with different types of discrimination; most recently, a disbelief that I can
succeed in college. I am of Mexican descent. I know frijoles and tortillas as well as anyone, and while I feel *muy Mexicano* I think that people look at me and see me as simply disabled. Some students in class have said that they don’t like it when Mexican people assume that they speak Spanish because of their appearance. Others say that they don’t like it when they are not accepted as Mexican, even though they speak Spanish. But no one ever has said a word about disabilities. This includes the history books and our class lectures. So I think it is time that people recognize that we are part of the community too.

As we can see from these last two narratives, the Mexican American community, like any other, is highly nuanced. But traditional histories, even when they focus on ethnic groups, seldom show a broad range of experiences. Mexican American history texts have tended to stress the harsh working conditions of the community. This is a legitimate focus, which have been reflected by many narratives produced by students. Nevertheless, a particularly important aspect of this project is that narrative history can potentially bring to light a wider range of experiences.

As noted earlier, the initial design of the narrative project did not provide an avenue for students to critically engage the narrative of others. To correct this limitation a process for codification, analysis, assessment, and reflection was added. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) indicate a need for sorting out experience, requiring that narratives be separated into component parts. In the first phase of the project, students were asked to participate in a dialogue using their I.D. cards. They were placed in pairs, asked to exchange I.D. cards, and decode them for each other. After a period of discussion with their partner, they provided ideas for topics to be used in narratives. Students documented all of these steps.

The narratives that students wrote were organized into four sections: theme, key topics, abstract, and the full text. A theme was defined as an overall subject of the
narrative. Topics referred to a list of key issues. An abstract was defined as a brief
description of key issues that were founds in the full narrative. Full text referred to the
complete narrative. The reason for organizing narratives in this manner was to
separate stories into component parts, thus making it easier for others to effectively
analyze them.

Working with the ideas developed in discussions of the I.D. cards, students
selected the theme, and wrote their narrative. The theme was entirely up to each
student; it could be autobiographical, based on a family member, or a person that was
close to them. The key was that the story was real, and that it came directly from the
experience of the student or a person being interviewed. Students were reminded that
others would use their narratives in order to analyze the formation of identity and
history. Since these narratives were meant to be shared with others, students were
reminded that they should avoid using proper names.

After writing the narratives, students were placed in groups of four, asked to
review topics, and group them. Instructions for group were:

1. Share individual topics with others in the group.
2. Discuss topics from different narratives that appear similar, and decide
   whether they refer to similar issues. If so, agree on terms to used for those
topics.
3. Create a list indicating a full range of topics from the group.
4. Tally the number of times that any particular topic is repeated in the collection
   of the group’s narratives.
5. Identify primary and secondary topics. (One way to do this is to see if a topic from the list appears in a number of narratives. A second way is for individuals to state that a particular topic is of primary or secondary importance in their narrative.)

The final aspect of the narrative inquiry asked students to write a culminating essay in response to the material covered in class. They were asked to summarize key issues that they found noteworthy and reflect on these based on the collected themes derived from individual narratives. Students had access to every other student’s narrative via a class webpage. Students were asked to keep in mind the following issues while writing their culminating essay:

1. The extent that narrative histories conformed to, contradicted, or enhanced material covered in class.

2. The extent that their perspectives of Mexican American history were affected by writing their own narrative.

3. A description of their experience of reading and discussing other students’ narratives.

4. The manner that narratives may be used for the benefit of the local community.

5. The extent that their definition of Mexican American and Chicana/o was affected by this project.

Narratives and culminating essays produced by students served as primary sources of data for this study.
Questions to Guide Initial Dialogues

As noted earlier, this study was a teacher research study of students’ experience with narrative inquiry in a Mexican American history course. The questions noted below overlap with those that were asked of students while doing their narrative work. The broad questions addressed in this research project focus on the extent to which students understood narrative inquiry as a methodology, in what manner it was used, and its helpfulness in critiquing Mexican American history. The following questions were used to guide the initial dialogues:

1. To what extent did the use of narrative inquiry affect your interest in course material?
2. To what degree did narrative histories conform, contradict, or enhance material covered in Mexican American history text?
3. How would you assess the affect narrative inquiry on your definitions of Mexican American and Chicana/o?
4. In what manner were your views of the community affected by the use of narrative inquiry?
5. To what extent did narrative inquiry affect a sense of belonging and entitlement?

Data Collection

Material described in this section refers to the data collected from the narrative inquiry project. Observing, interviewing, and gathering documents are the primary modes of data collection for ethnographic studies. Cross-referencing observations through passive as well as thick description, field notes, interviews, personal notes,
and other relevant data were integral in the discovery of themes throughout the study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In keeping with suggested data collection methods outlined by Clandinin and Connelly, interviews were audio recorded. This allowed for accuracy of data and aided the researcher in maintaining full attention during interviews and discussions.

Field Notes

Both passive and thick descriptions were used when taking field notes. Passive observation and note taking are best at the beginning of observations to minimize the researcher’s presence. The purpose of thick description is to ensure accuracy. Thick description provides detailed notes such as: description of physical setting, reconstruction of dialogue, portraits of the participants, accounts of events, depiction of activities, and records of the observer’s behavior (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Rosaldo, 1993).

Dialogues

Both structured and unstructured dialogues were employed. Research questions were used to initiate dialogues; additional questions were generated from dialogue exchange. Dialogues lasted approximately an hour to an hour and a half, with follow-up discussions of half an hour to an hour. Qualitative interviews varied in the degree of structured even though an interview guide was employed. Qualitative interviews offered the interviewer considerable latitude to pursue a range of issues. The semi-structured technique is in keeping with the strategies proposed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). This approach was used in order to open up the research to include important facts not recognized when the research began.
As noted in the research design section above, student work served as an important body of empirical data. Material associated with the narrative inquiry project was collected and analyzed. Analysis looked for evidence of students’ use of tenets of narrative inquiry presented in the class.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with transcription of field notes. These were studied with an eye to the initial research questions, in anticipation that more questions would arise during the dialogues. Analysis of the data followed the practice outlined by Riessman (1993). It began by transcribing audio-recorded discussions, and then continued with a line-by-line coding to begin conceptualizing topics. This permitted the researcher to separate, sort, and synthesize large amounts of data. Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (2007) concur with Reissman, but also advise that modes of analysis remain flexible and adjust to the generated data. Following their structure triangulation, distilling, and conferring with students were included as modes of analysis.

According to Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (2007), triangulation refers to studying the research question from at least three separate pieces of data and three points of view. In this study the three types of data were the teacher researcher’s observations in the research log, recorded comments of student dialogues, and examples of student work. By triangulating the data the researcher looked to see if the research question still fit the data that is emerging from the study.

Continuing with Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen’s (2007) model, distilling was used. Distilling refers to stating the essence of findings so they can be explained in 50
words or less. In this study the researcher used the abstracts of created by students as the prime source of distilling data. Conferring occurred throughout the study. The teacher researcher regularly asked students what they thought about what had been observed. In this way the students become co-researchers. Observations made by students were written in the researcher’s log. This information offered new ideas helped direct the findings.

Protection of Human Subjects

The researcher consistently sought to be respectful of the students and the institution while conducting this project. As part of the process permission was sought from the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) of the University of San Francisco. Secondly, permission and continued discussions with the gatekeeper of the host institution was sought. Written documentation of the project plan was provided to the host institution. The participants of the study were informed about the nature of the study and were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality if they choose to participate. They were informed that they had the right to refuse participation and the right to back out at any time. All contact with the gatekeepers and participants use unbiased language and were free of confusing jargon.

Background of the Researcher

At the time of this study I was in my 15th year of teaching history at Gavilan College. As a student, my academic path was scattered. I swung between success and failure in coursework, but always liked the school environment. It took me nine years to receive a B.A. in psychology, and another six for my M.A. in history. While I had
always felt that individual teachers wanted me to succeed, I was unwilling or afraid to take advantage of institutional programs set up to help struggling students like me. One reason I was reluctant to use support services is because I felt they labeled me as dumb. A second reason was that I did not connect the classroom with the outside world. I took classes because they interested me, and ended up with a degree almost as an afterthought. To this day I feel a little odd around many history teachers. They seem so attached to the discipline; they see themselves as historians. I like the content, but I do not consider myself a historian. I am just as interested in sociology, anthropology, political science, and psychology. In the end I do see myself as a teacher; I like the sound and feel of the word, and it is my goal to fully grow into the profession.

As with most community college instructors, I had little formal teacher training prior to working in the field. Since being hired as a teacher I sought out workshops and coursework to fill the pedagogical gap. I always felt that I had a knack for teaching, but wits can only take a person so far. I look forward to exploring and formalizing my “knack” for teaching with clearly thought out pedagogical theory and practice.

As noted earlier I had been implementing a narrative project for several semesters, but came to realize that it had limited affects. Many students reported that they found the process fulfilling; some expressed relief to finally conduct a personal examination of their lives, and others welcomed the opportunity to interview elder family members. Nevertheless, I realized that the narratives were not getting very far beyond the individuals writing the narratives and my reading them, commenting back
to students and giving a grade. In response I took the step of getting permission from students, and writing a qualitative analysis of their narratives.

While I felt this was a legitimate process, I sensed an ethical dilemma. The process seemed to fall too closely into what Fine (1994) described as the Master Narrative. This refers to a formally recognized scholar interpreting and writing for others, and in the process objectifying them. Perhaps more unsettling was the fact that my qualitative analysis was to serve as partial fulfillment of requirements for a degree at the University of San Francisco. So the question of who benefitted became even more poignant. Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) warns well meaning scholars to think through the benefits of their work. Too often the scholar is the primary beneficiary; for research to be authentic it must also benefit those that are the source of the knowledge.

Considering these issues I sought a method that allowed students to access the narratives of others. Narrative inquiry, as described by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), appeared to be potentially effective. The system of analysis asks the individual to write, discuss, and reflect on the outcome. Still, the process outlined by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) is an exchange between two individuals. My goal, as described in the research design section above, is to adjust the method to allow groups to assess the process. Hopefully the outcome will help create a more effective connection between the coursework in the classroom and the community it is meant to serve.

Background of Participants

The names used in this study are pseudonyms; most were chosen by me, but
some students chose their own. Many of the participants in this study were students in other classes I teach at Gavilan College. Those students with whom I had a prior relationship said that they took Mexican American history at least partly because they knew how I taught classes and felt that they could successfully complete the course. One participant was retaking the class because he did not receive a passing grade. Several students indicated that they did not have a clear idea what the course was about before the class started. The main reason for this was that they chose the class based on the college requirement that it met, and less for the specific content. This course meets the non-western cultural requirement for students seeking to transfer to the California State University or the University of California systems.

Participants’ personal backgrounds varied broadly. Some had family who lived in the U.S. Southwest dating back to the Mexican era. On the other end of the spectrum were families that arrived in the United States within the last 20 years. Some were U.S. citizens by birth, some were naturalized citizens, and at the time of this study, one had an illegal resident status. Five out of the eight participants reported that at some point at least one family member had been in the United States illegally. A number of students had mixed ethnicities.

Alex

Alex was 32 years old at the time of this study. He had been in my Mexican American history class the previous semester, but withdrew because he was incarcerated due to a parole violation. Prior to leaving class, he borrowed several books from me, which he read during his confinement, and returned after his release. Alex was an exemplary student before and after his incarceration. He was always
ready for class, and eager to discuss issues with other students. Alex was friendly, respectful, and supportive of me, and others in class.

Conversely, Alex’s family history was anything but supportive. His family emigrated from Mexico shortly before his birth. For a time his mother was in the country illegally, but regularized her status when Alex was a toddler. Both of his parents worked low paying jobs with long hours. As a result Alex, eldest of three children, was given a lot of responsibility over his siblings. The only adult figure that he felt gave him unconditional love was his aunt. She was a parental figure that was consistently present, and provided guidance instead of punishment. Unfortunately, his aunt was not in the country legally and left in 1994 in the wake of legislation aimed at curtailing rights for undocumented immigrants. This was an emotional blow from which Alex never completely recovered.

Corporal punishment was practiced in his household, with Alex, as the eldest, receiving most of it. Violence has been a recurring theme in Alex’s life. He was on the receiving end from his parents, but also other school children. As Alex grew in size he turned the table on violence. In our dialogue he analyzed his use of violence, saying that he paid back the blows he received as a child. At times his targets were people who threw racial slurs at him; other targets were people who taunted his friends, and still others were the police. Along with violence came alcohol and drug abuse. These factors combined in a fashion that led to the criminal justice system. As he put it in our dialogue “…when I was high I was violent. I usually didn’t start the violence, but it always ended with me.”

Alex’s recent experience as a student had been very positive. In his view, the
class provided the supportive environment that he missed most of his life. In our dialogue he listed several instructors who wrote letters of support to the judge in his recent court proceedings. He felt that he was recognized and valued for his abilities. Still, home life continued to be a struggle. He wanted to be a positive role model for his two children, and continued to try and reconcile a relationship with his mother.

Elisa

At time of this study Elisa was 22 years old. She had been in one of my U.S. history courses the semester prior to taking the Mexican American history class. She was a classmate of Luis, another participant in this study who encouraged her to take the class. When our Mexican American history class began, I was unaware that Elisa worked as an afterschool teacher with Hollister Youth Alliance, a community group in Hollister, California, for which I serve as a Board member. Coincidently, Elisa did not know I served on the Board until the end of the semester when I encouraged students to apply for paid summer internships.

Elisa identified herself as Mexican. Nevertheless, she was not completely sure about how far back her family had immigrated to the United States. Different family members gave her contradictory stories, but she was sure that she was at least the fifth generation of U.S. citizens. Her strong identity as a Mexican person was a result of a concerted family effort. Even though she did not have a large extended family in the area, her mother made it a point to enroll Elisa in cultural programs that promoted Mexican heritage. The most influential was Mexican folkloric dance. She danced with local groups from preschool through high school. Although she did not know it at the time, the folkloric dance tradition that she was taught drew heavily form
European descent. Growing up she simply thought of the dance as Mexican. Since then she came to differentiate between danzantes who draw their influence from the ancient Aztecs, and danza folklorica from the Mexican state of Jalisco. Culturally, she respected indigenous practices, but identified most closely with the Hispanic heritage of Mexico.

Helen

I did not know Helen before our Mexican American history class. At the time of the study she was 19 years old and was completing her first year of college. She said that she enjoyed college much more than high school. The most important difference between the two school systems was a sense of control. As a college student, Helen felt that she was in charge of charting the course of her life. Part of this was academic, but another was personal.

Helen’s academic goals were to graduate from Gavilan College with multiple majors, move to one of the California State universities, and likewise graduate with multiple majors. Her grade point average at Gavilan College was 3.3 at the end of her first year. She reported feeling excited about the range of issues covered in the different disciplines. Helen agreed to participate in my study largely to see the type of work she might encounter as a graduate student.

On the personal level, Helen said that college gave her a sense of liberty. Ethnically, she was of Mexican descent. Nevertheless, she did not feel comfortable being labeled as Mexican or Mexican American. On one hand, she wanted to distance herself from many negative connotations related to Mexican identity. Some of these images had to do with crime, but for her the one she fought most strongly was the
negative image of teen pregnancy. On the other hand, she felt that ethnicity was not at the core of her identity. Helen identified most strongly as a transgender person. In this sense her college experience lessened gender tension. The biggest reason for this was that there was a wide array of students with varying ages and goals. Students did not gather in cliques; there were no “cool kids.” In turn, the only people that had an interest in her sexual orientation were those that she chose to include in her circle of friends.

Jaime

Prior to our class, I did not know Jaime, who was 22 at the time of our study. Before attending Gavilan College, he had spent two years at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly). Jaime withdrew from the university, because in his words “I enjoyed it too much. I spent most of my time with friends at parties. That was not a formula for success.” Since attending Gavilan College, his grades improved dramatically. One reason was that he had purposely avoided socializing. A second reason was that the academic pace was slower in the semester system. Cal Poly was on the quarter system, and many students were intensely competitive. Jaime said that one of the reasons he felt comfortable in our class was that I had conveyed my scattered academic history. For him it was encouraging to hear that academic success did not necessarily follow a straight line.

Jaime identified himself very strongly as Mexican. He said that he never used the terms American, Mexican American, or Chicano in reference to himself. Jaime’s sense of identity derived from the model established by his grandfather. Jaime’s story began with his grandfather who came to the United States in the 1940s through the
Bracero Program. Although his grandfather spent most of his life in the United States, he never considered himself an immigrant. Even though he gained permanent residency status, acquired property, and raised a family in the United States, his life goal was to retire in Mexico. In Jaime’s view, his grandfather has been successful in all of his major endeavors. He took his family in Mexico out of poverty by working in the United States; he raised children in the United States who had all been economically successful, and he returned to Mexico with enough savings to live comfortably for the rest of his life.

Although Jaime measured his grandfather’s success in economic terms, he felt that at the core this represented an ethic of hard work and dedication to family. When Jaime saw negative images of Mexican people, he replaced them with the image of his grandfather. Although Jaime did not see himself living in Mexico, he felt that the efforts of his grandfather gave him the tools to succeed in the United States. One of the privileges he had as a U.S. citizen was the choice to maintain his family’s heritage.

Kate

At the time of this study, Kate was 22 years old. Prior to the class in Mexican American history, she was in two of my other history classes. Kate did well, though not great, in both classes. She said she took the class in Mexican American history mostly because she passed my earlier classes and felt comfortable with my classroom approach. An additional element drew Kate to my Mexican American history class. At some point in one of the earlier classes I had communicated that I grew up in Mountain View, California. Both of Kate’s parents went to the high school I attended, and she was curious if I had known either of them. I did not have any memory of her
parents, but the geographic connection created a friendly relation between Kate and I.

While the theme of the class was not her first consideration in taking the class, it nevertheless was directly connected with her family history. Kate identified herself as American with Japanese and Mexican ancestry. She called herself American because she did not feel that she looked either Japanese or Mexican. Both of her parents broke with family traditions that promoted marrying within their own ethnic group. In turn, she was not brought up with close relations to either ethnicity. Nevertheless, she had a clearer picture of her Japanese ancestry than her Mexican background. Her maternal grandmother was Nisei, U.S. born Japanese, who as a child was in an internment camp. Although the topic was not discussed in the family, it had been an area of special interest. Kate’s knowledge of her Mexican heritage was minimal. The little that was communicated to her was that her paternal great grandmother came from Texas, where the family had been going back to the Mexican era. Aside from that, she did not recall any family discussion of her Mexican heritage. Our class in Mexican American history was an opportunity to delve into her missing heritage.

**Luis**

Luis was 27 years old at the time of the study. He returned to school in 2008 to pursue an interest in graphic design. His academic plan was to transfer to California State University, Fullerton, in the spring of 2011. The semester before our course in Mexican American history, Luis was in my U.S. history class. He received top marks in the class and demonstrated mature skills as a writer. His essays were analytical, insightful, and elegant. Luis engaged in class dialogue in a manner that
demonstrated nuanced understanding of the course text, *A People’s History of the United States*, by Howard Zinn. The counter hegemonic approach evident in Zinn’s writing provided a good transition to the material presented in the Mexican American history class. Luis said that he signed up for the Mexican American history class expecting a historical analysis in keeping with Zinn’s approach.

Luis referred to himself as Mexican. His grandfather immigrated to the United States in the 1950s due to financial hardship in Mexico. Luis stressed strong family ties. He said that long lasting marriages were common in his extended family and that they regularly gathered to celebrate holidays and birthdays. These connections provided him with a strong cultural heritage. He considered himself bilingual and was a strong supporter of Spanish language usage as a way to maintain heritage.

Work was a big part of his family’s ethic. Luis said that he had worked continuously since he was 10 years old. At first this was on local farms, then restaurants. At the time I met him, he worked as an insurance agent. While he supported work as a positive cultural trait, he did feel that many people in his family sacrificed educational opportunities because they felt such a strong pressure to be good providers. Luis placed himself in that category; he assessed that the pressure of the Mexican work ethic delayed his entrance into college.

*Margo*

At the time of our dialogue Margo was 25 years old and married with a three-year old daughter. She was returning to school after a five-year absence. I had not met Margo before our class, but since then she enrolled in a second class with me. She identified herself as Mexican American, although she also referred to herself as an
Americanized Mexican. Her interest in taking the class derived from a sense of isolation from Mexican heritage. She said that her mother purposely chose not to teach her Spanish. This led to difficulty with cousins who felt that she was putting on airs.

Margo reported that she constantly felt like an outsider. She said that she was often placed in uncomfortable positions because people assumed she spoke Spanish. As she explained in our dialogue “… because I looked Mexican my bosses asked me to help Spanish speaking clients. That was always a disaster. Either my bosses looked at me like I let them down, or the clients gave me dirty looks.” Margo expressed a strong interest in connecting with Mexican culture, but felt she was losing the cultural battle because U.S. society had was such a strong draw.

Teagun

Teagun was a pseudonym chosen by the participant. This was a light-hearted way of combining contradictory images she had of herself. On one hand, she saw herself as an urbane tea-drinking intellectual. On the other hand, she conjured an image of a science fiction heroine wielding a ray gun. Part of the joke was that in the eyes of the U.S. government, she was an illegal alien.

At the time of this study, Teagun was 22 years old. I did not know her before our class, but since then I have encountered her in a number college events. She was Vice President of the Associated Student Body, and was in Rho Alpha Mu, the Gavilan College chapter of Alpha Gamma Sigma, an academic honor society. One of the most important reasons for Teagun’s involvement in college and community events was that she felt a need to take advantage of resources while they were
available. At the time of this study, she had a petition pending with the U.S. State Department to regularize her residency. Her parents brought her to the United States as a toddler, and had not returned to Mexico since her arrival. The residency application was submitted in 1997, but the last word she heard was that the State Department was still working their way through the 1996 petitions.

Teagun identified herself as Chicana. She felt that her undocumented status made it clear that she was not fully welcome in the only nation she had ever known. And although she was a Mexican citizen, she had no direct connection with the country. Her family feared visiting Mexico because they wanted to be able to truthfully tell State Department officials that she had not left the country since her arrival. She chose Chicana as her identity because of the allegiance she felt with people who were dispossessed. Claiming Chicana identity was an affirmation of her authority to chart her own course in a political and social environment that denied her legitimacy.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study were mostly related to the small amount of time that students and the instructor had to work with each other. The class is designated as one-semester lecture course. There is a substantial amount of required content that needs to be covered during the term, leaving a limited amount of time to clearly describe and implement the narrative inquiry methodology. As designed, approximately nine class hours were dedicated to the project. Additionally, students come into the course with a wide range of academic skills. Every semester is
different, and there is no telling what mix of skills students in a particular class will have. In turn, the time taken to describe the methodology was difficult to predict.

A second set of limitations had to do with students who are not of Mexican descent. As noted early, approximately 90 percent of students were Latina/o, but not all were of Mexican descent. In addition, approximately 10 percent of students were Anglo American. Nevertheless, all of the students who volunteered to participate in the dialogues were of Mexican descent. So even though the narrative process was designed to lessen barriers, it was hard to gauge the experience of all students.

Another set of limitation was associated with the applicability of the methodology beyond the classroom. It is not clear how many, if any, other classes offered at the college will use the skill set practiced in our class. So even if the methodology helps create a transformative environment in the classroom, students might not find many other academic environments to apply their knowledge.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

In this chapter I present an overview of broad generative themes that appeared in participants’ responses to my research questions: 1) To what extent did narrative inquiry affect students’ perspective of Mexican American and Chicana/o identity?; 2) In what manner did narrative inquiry affect engagement with course material?; 3) To what degree was narrative inquiry, as a methodology, useful to students in critiquing Mexican American history textbooks?; 4) To what extent did narrative inquiry affect a sense of caring and responsibility to each other?; and 5) How were students’ views of the broader community affected by the use of narrative inquiry?

Participants’ responses to research questions were based on four main data sources: I.D. Cards, narrative essays, culminating essays, and dialogues. The first three sources resulted from in-class projects during the semester. The dialogues occurred after the conclusion of the term, and final grades had been issued. Adhering to the methodology presented in Clandinin and Connelly (2000), narrative inquiry used in this study focused on participant experiences as lived and told stories. These phenomena were considered in terms of a three-dimensional inquiry space: along a temporal dimension, a personal-social dimension, and a physical location dimension. Participants examining themselves as historical actors addressed the temporal dimension. Participants reading, discussing, and assessing other students’ narratives addressed the personal-social dimension. Participants’ locating the narratives within their community addressed the physical location. To illustrate the findings that
emerged from my data, I present samples from participants’ responses according to these sources.

Research Question 1:

To What Extent Did Narrative Inquiry Affect Students’ Perspective of Mexican American and Chicana/o Identity?

Self-Discovery

Self-discovery was a theme that was brought up in some manner by all of the participants. The nature of discovery tended to gather around three sub-themes: 1) scanning the range of identities presented in class and finding others’ identities that were similar to their own; 2) sharpening an ambiguous definition of self; and 3) questioning how identities were constructed.

Finding Self in Spectrum of Identities

Six participants (Elisa, Helen, Kate, Luis, Margo, and Teagun) said that they enjoyed finding other students whose identity was similar to their own. This issue appeared prominently in the essays and interviews of Margo and Kate. Margo found solace in the narratives of other students whose parents purposely hid their Mexican roots from them; being raised in an English-only home was a big component of their missing roots. Inability to speak Spanish was a prominent feature that led to a sense of personal and cultural isolation. In Margo’s culminating essay, she noted that:

For a long time I thought I was alone when people said I was a disgrace to my culture because I didn’t speak Spanish, and I was not a typical Mexican woman. I have a lot people say to me that they are proud of their roots, but little do they know that I am very proud too no matter what language I speak. Surprisingly, a lot of people in class had similar judgments and criticisms. I was not alone.
In the researcher’s dialogue with Margo, we explored the issue of isolation and finding other students with similar experiences.

E: In your culminating essay you said that it felt good to find out that you were not alone in being ostracized for not speaking Spanish. Could you tell me a little more about that?

M: Yeah, I guess I always knew that, that I was not alone. But it feels good when someone else brings it up and you can join them. Like you can just agree with them, you don’t have to try and explain everything, they already know it. Um, I’m not a lonely person or anything. It’s easier to talk with someone who says ‘ya me too.’ Things are funny, you laugh about things.

E: Did you find a lot of people like you?

M: Hmm, I don’t know, I didn’t count or anything. But when we talked in groups about our I.D. cards I did find someone. It seems like through most narratives, I am not different, I guess I am not different from Mexicans not learning English and maybe they have a story like I do. I don’t know, it just seemed like I stopped holding my breath and relaxed, I didn’t have to fight.

Kate did not directly express a sense of breaking through isolation, but was pleasantly surprised by the breath of identities, one with the same ethnic mix as herself: Japanese-Mexican. We discussed this issue in our dialogue.

K: The I.D. card was cool. It was good to see everyone else’s cards… seeing what they made… getting feedback about my card.

E: What was your experience discussing the I.D. cards in small groups?

K: I really liked seeing the different backgrounds of people in class. It’s easy to say we come from different places with different backgrounds… you lectured about diversity. It is different to hear someone tell you their story, it’s more real, it’s personal. I could connect with the things people were saying, even though I didn’t experience any of the hardships some people told.

E: You said there were a lot of different backgrounds, which ones stood out to you?

K: The story Jim told, I think it was Jim, really was amazing. He was born in Canada, and immigrated to the U.S. and goes by Jim, but his name was Santiago, but his family was from India. He said he was really confused, embarrassed until last year when he went to India. He found out that in his
name is not Spanish, it’s Portuguese. It came when they colonized Indian and forced people to become Catholic. He is Catholic.

Colonization of India was not an issue that was covered in class. Where Kate initially found it surprising to find Catholics in India, she later recognized that the spread of religion was connected with European colonization on a global scale. Through her conversation with Jim, she was able to put a face on history of colonization.

Discussion of I.D. cards also helped Kate explore her own ethnic history:

E: Did people relate to your story?

K: Some people were surprised. I did see that there was someone who was Japanese Mexican, I saw their I.D. card, but didn’t talk to them. I did read their narrative, but their story was different than mine. They talked about being Japanese. They were proud, they didn’t say much about their Mexican side. I wonder about that.

E: Could you share more of your thoughts once you noticed that there was another Japanese Mexican?

K: I did feel good to see that someone else had my background, even if their story was different. I thought I was the only Japanese Mexican person. I felt more connected to what we talked about in class. Maybe I connect to my American identity because they are not connected to anything. But in class I felt mestizo—but a different kind than what we talked about…it was good to hear that this was not new…the Japanese have been here for a long time. They were farmers and gardeners. It sounds like Mexicans.

Kate’s dialogue indicated her understanding of similar historical experiences between Japanese and Mexicans. Beyond that, she expanded the definition of mestizo (usually used to describe a person of mixed indigenous and European heritage) by identifying with the term.

The group discussion experiences described by Margo and Kate appeared to be similar to most other students. Field notes I took refer to a general air of comfort and openness among most students. Dialogues with four participants (Helen, Kate,
Luis, and Margo) confirmed this observation in that these students reported feeling comfortable engaging with others, and enjoyed putting faces to stories that they read.

The observations that participants made in their culminating essays also indicated the importance of finding others with similar experiences. Nevertheless, observations made in essays often struck a more somber note than those in group discussions. Margo reported that:

…There was a lot of things, not so good, but I feel better that I know there are more people like me, I still am considered ‘white washed’ because I do not know a lot of my history. But identity is not only history, there was a narrative that says that their step-dad hit his mom and was not a good person. At first I thought my step-dad is not a bad person, and he never hit my mom (that I know of), but he did not have hit her to hurt her, he was hurting her emotionally. Because he was white he thought he was better than my mom because she was Mexican, and would let her know it all the time.

Helen, who saw similarities with her own family, noted Margo’s family experiences. In her narrative, culminating essay and dialogue, Helen brought up family strife and divorce. She found it important to stress that divorce appeared to be the unifying theme in all of the essays she read. And like Margo, she felt better knowing that others also had estranged relations with fathers and stepfathers which led to feelings of isolation.

Teagun, Elisa, and Luis also noted that they enjoyed finding other students whose identity was similar to their own. Like Margo and Helen, Teagun referred to family strife. But instead of discussing her own strife, in her narrative she spoke of a childhood friend who experienced events similar to Margo and Helen. She used the events to explore the details of life that take people in different directions. In her view, divorce was the key event that ultimately led her friend into the criminal justice system. Divorce put more economic pressure on a single mom and left Teagun’s
friend without parental supervision. Economic pressures led to relocation into a
tougher neighborhood, which also had more gang activity. In Teagun’s assessment,
family stability was a defining factor in life trajectories. Her family was stable, and
her friend’s was not.

Elisa and Luis’ stories overlapped with Teagun’s in that they focused on the
importance of family. Like Teagun, they were thankful that their families were stable.
In addition, Elisa and Luis stated that their families made a point of promoting their
Mexican heritage. Celebrating Mexican holidays and family events were all part of
maintaining strong ties with cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. In their view,
feeling part of a supportive extended family gave them a strong positive identity.

Sharpening an Ambiguous Definition

Another aspect of self-discovery was sharpening an ambiguous definition of
self. Six participants (Alex, Helen, Jaime, Kate, Margo, and Teagun) commented on
this. The tone of comments ranged from off-hand comments to a cathartic experience.
Observations Kate made in her dialogue are an example of the lighter tone:

Doing the narrative, uncovering stories, ya that was cool. You get to dig into
your own past. It was interesting, and brings up all kinds of stories. At first I
was worried about what to write about. But I got a chance to clarify their
[parents] story. I heard most of it before, but now I got a clearer picture where
I came from, of who I am.

At the other end of the spectrum were three participants (Jaime, Teagun, and Alex)
who commented that they often thought about their identity, had mulled over how to
define themselves. They found the narrative process to be the first opportunity to fully
flesh out their thoughts. Each of these participants stressed their interest in sharpening
their definition of self in their narrative, culminating essay, and dialogues.
For example, Jaime felt that the narrative process gave him confidence in defending his Mexican identity. In our dialogue he stated that he identified very strongly as a Mexican person, even though he and his parents were born in the United States. Nevertheless, prior to our class he never volunteered comments on his identity, and only responded when asked directly. He reported that even though he had a strong sense of pride, he felt hamstrung by the limited range of vocabulary he had to defend his sense of self. This issue was probed in our dialogue.

E: In your narrative you expressed pride in your Mexican identity. Could you talk a little bit about that, and if it changed in any way due to class?

J: Yeah, well I am not resentful to say who I am. In the past I stayed quiet. I really dislike being judged. But now I clearly saw who I am, where I fit. I know the range of success and failures as a group. I can claim my place as an individual.

E: So did the narrative give you this sense of self?

J: Not really, it didn’t tell me who I was, I knew that. It gave me a chance to talk about my grandfather, who is my role model. He is not a stereotypical lazy person. I got a chance to remind myself about him. I talked to my parents about what he did, and how we got here [the U.S.]…I got a chance to compare him to history. I think I got details, I think that was the most important thing. I think the details are the things that give me confidence.

Like Jaime, Teagun reported the narrative gave her an opportunity to clarify thoughts she had. In our dialogue she explained that her interest in defining herself started in 1994 when she was seven years old. This was a result of participating in a march against California’s Proposition 187 that sought to curtail educational opportunities to undocumented children. She was not completely sure what was going on, but was made aware that the purpose of the protest was to defend her educational rights. (At that time she was unaware of her status as an undocumented immigrant.) Although she did not have a political sense of what the marches were about, she was
left with a sense of excitement. She felt a part of something; though the specifics were unclear, she belonged to a group. Her interests intensified years later after a difficult conversation with an uncle. Her uncle held a special place in the family because he was the person with the most education, and had an administrative position at San Jose State University. Teagun recalled the conversation saying:

I read a book that said that Chicanos were Americans of Mexican descent who were second, third or forth generation. I didn’t think that I fell into that category because I wasn’t born here, but I was still raised here, so it was kind-of confusing, and my uncle… he started saying that I had an accent when I spoke Spanish and I was Chicano, and wasn’t Mexican. I didn’t understand why he had a negative view of the whole thing, but I guess when he was going to school there were groups who called themselves Chicano. They were setting themselves up apart from everyone else, not like elitism, but they weren’t integrating themselves. He felt that all the classes that have to do with that are B.S., they don’t do any good for anyone. So I wanted to see for myself. What was a Chicano, if he didn’t like them why was he calling me that? If I wasn’t Mexican, what was I?

Perhaps the most impassioned statement came from Alex. He titled his narrative essay “Me-Xicano Experience,” a play on words blending the terms “me” “Mexicano” and “Chicano”. He opened his narrative essay by writing: “First and foremost allow me to convey my extreme relief in finally submitting this narrative essay…It’s about time I got these feelings/thoughts on paper…” Alex’s narrative was a description of life in which he felt controlled and oppressed by parents, religion, education, and in particular, the legal system. Over the past 15 years he had bounced in and out of schools and the criminal justice system. He reported that he often thought about his life path and identity, especially during interminable periods of boredom sitting in jail. So the narrative was not so much a discovery of identity, but an opportunity to clarify it, and more importantly, to make it permanent by placing it in a written document.
Alex had previously been in my class, but had withdrawn because of a parole violation that sent him back to jail. While incarcerated, he did all the reading for class. When he returned in a later semester he brought a wide range of history, social, and educational theory to bear in his narrative. While he accepted responsibility for improving his life situation, he also argued that he was the result of socio-economic system that purposely colonized and disenfranchised his community, alcohol and self-hate being among the most destructive weapons of oppression.

In his view, the steps to recovery include appropriation of negativity and recovery from self-hate. Reassessing his place in society was part of the process. In part his narrative read: “…I always remember feeling extremely proud of my Mexican heritage, but it wasn’t until about 2000 that I became aware of my true indigenous heritage that was stolen from me, and the true glory of my indigenous ancestors (not the biased savage/violent label they have been given).”

While taking pride in his Mexican heritage, it was his attraction to indigenous identity that led to his self-description as a Chicano. The class requirement to write a narrative gave him the opportunity to document his many thoughts on the issue and to more clearly articulate his Chicano identity, while maintaining an allegiance with Mexican heritage.

*Questioning How Identities Are Made*

Alex’s discussion of the process leading to his Chicano identity related well with questions Helen asked in her culminating essay. Where Alex described steps he took leading to the writing of his narrative, Helen described a process that preceded and succeeded the narrative. In our dialogue, she explained that like others she
appreciated the opportunity to clarify her views on identity. But she also stated that her definitions of self were clarified by reflecting on the stories of others. In part her culminating essay read:

Our narrative… gave me a chance to really sit down and describe who I was…I used that paper to just lay everything out and put it on paper; which, in turn, helps me organize my thoughts…but was I the only one who had trouble finding my identity? Were there others who were ‘in the middle’ and torn between parents’ cultural identity and the culture they grew up in? What is an identity and what does it mean to have one? Is it something we are born with and inherit from our parents, or is it something we create for ourselves? Do we learn who we are or are told by our parents, or even society…is it our choice or is it something we ‘just can’t help’?

Helen’s discussion of identity remained largely tentative. She consciously resisted making any conclusive statements. She was brought up with pride in Mexican heritage, but felt shackled by Mexican traditions that, in her view, burdened women with oppressive stereotypes of domesticity and subservience. These stereotypical views limited opportunities for Mexican women, and were a reason for high levels of teen pregnancy. Conversely, she lamented that high divorce rates (her parents counted among them) were not a part of the old traditions, but had become a new Mexican tradition. For her the beauty, and challenge, for Mexicans living in the United States was that they are close enough to feel their heritage, but were responsible to build upon it by making good new choices.

*Language and Intra-group Conflict*

While the process of narrative inquiry opened the door to self-discovery, whether by finding others with similar stories, sharpening previously ambiguous definitions, or questioning identity construction, participants also pointed out levels of discomfort within their ethnic group. Six participants (Alex, Elisa, Jaime, Helen,
Luis, and Margo) discussed some manner of intra-group conflict. These participants either criticized an aspect of the Mexican heritage community or had been criticized themselves by the community. The issue was of particular importance to Alex, Jaime, Helen, and Margo, who brought it up in their narrative, culminating essay, and dialogues.

Spanish language usage appeared as a consistent theme in intra-group conflict. Intra-group conflict appeared to be an important factor in participants self-identifying as American, Mexican American, Mexican, or Chicana/o. Participants referring to themselves primarily as Americans, or Americanized, commented that they did not know Spanish. Participants referring to themselves primarily as Mexican American or Mexican, either felt confident in their Spanish usage, or strongly supported bilingual programs. And participants who chose to identify themselves primarily as Chicana/o commented that Mexicans had consistently criticized their Spanish usage.

**American or Americanized Identities**

Helen, Kate, and Margo identified themselves as American or Americanized; Helen and Margo explained that their lack of Spanish was a result of parental choices. They reported a strong sense of isolation, most intensely from Mexican heritage, but also American society. These participants felt they were racialized by Mexican, and to a lesser extent, by U.S. societies. And while both lamented disconnection from Mexican heritage, they reported being happy that they were not shackled by Mexican traditions. These participants wrote about the issue in their narrative, and gravitated to narratives of others students who reported similar experiences.
In her culminating essay Margo referenced material from other students’ narratives and integrated them with her own:

In her essay [referencing other students] it was hard for her to grasp onto her roots because her family…thought it would be easier for her. She was Americanized. Her paper sounded a lot like mine. I understand where her elders were coming from. They wanted to protect her from judgments. My mother never taught my sisters and I Spanish…[later] I learned more of her reasons. My step-dad’s parents did not approve of her and therefore she hid her roots from them.

In narrative 22, the author speaks about how her mother grew up being teased for being Mexican and that is why she did not learn Spanish. Although different scenarios, our mothers chose not to teach us because they were afraid that we would deal with the same discrimination and judgments…A mother’s instinct is to protect her children, but now I suffer from not knowing a second language. I wish I was bi-lingual because I would not be considered to be a disgrace to my culture.

I brought up the issue of discrimination and judgment in the dialogue with Margo:

E: You also refer to feeling that others thought you were a disgrace to your culture. Can you give an example?

M: Well, I remember working in customer service at a printer’s store. A man approached me about making business cards. He spoke to me in Spanish and it actually irritated me that he didn’t know English, and I was willing to help him, but he actually was disgusted that I didn’t know Spanish. I was ashamed and could not believe this guy was judging me for being Americanized. I mean come on where do we live?

E: How do you feel about growing up in United States?

M: It is where I am from, we will never have what Anzaldua [referring to author Gloria Anzaldua] had. We don’t have food and smells tied to my identity, to my homeland. We will never have that feeling because we were born in America, and this is our homeland so we really don’t know…because the United States is so mixed that anything can smell of your city, it is different and usually nothing alike for people.

E: Is this good or bad?

M: It’s mostly good, because we can choose. We can choose, and be more than one thing. So when you asked us in class, how do we identify ourselves, I said I am American. Whether anyone believes it, I am proud of who I am and just because I don’t speak Spanish, or because I want equality between myself
and my husband, doesn’t mean I am less Mexican. I think that is what it means to be American.

Like Margo, Helen felt that her parents had purposely denied teaching her Spanish to silence voices of discrimination. In addition, they felt that focusing their efforts on English would give them an advantage. She did not disagree with her mother’s premise, but felt it disconnected her from family and culture, and ultimately led to an overall feeling of resentment. In her culminating essay she wrote:

Being that I grew up not knowing the language, I always felt like the ‘black sheep.’ At times I did feel like they [her family] had a secret language that I could not break through…I also began to become angry with the language and those who spoke it because I could not understand it. I felt like I was being made fun of and criticized because I could not understand what everyone was saying…I soon began to believe if they wanted to live in this country, they should learn English, after all, that is the language of success in this country. The only problem with that was that I soon began to resent Spanish-speakers.

In our dialogue Helen concluded that her biggest frustration was that bigotry on both sides was related to social connotations built up around Spanish, the result being that Mexican and U.S. communities were caught in a vicious cycle of silence and shame. If anything, her tendency to relate to U.S. culture was based on the premise that in U.S. society there is freedom to choose, and she chose not to accept shame.

*Mexican American, Mexican Identities*

Elisa, Jaime, and Luis used the terms Mexican American and Mexican interchangeably to identify themselves. None used the term Chicana/o. This group of participants felt pride in their heritage and comfort in it. They did not specifically state that their Spanish usage was good or very good, but none reported having been criticized for poor Spanish. Additionally, they were highly supportive of bilingualism
as a way to maintain cultural ties. They expressed fond thoughts of Mexico even though Jaime and Luis had never visited the country. They had a strong sense of family, all three in this group reported that they lived in two-parent households, and their parents had never been divorced.

Additionally, Elisa, Jaime, and Luis felt that their families had been economically successful. All had a critical view of how most Mexicans were treated in the United States. But Jaime and Luis reported that the family member initiating migration had been undocumented for at least some time and had an employer who served as a sponsor that helped regularize their legal status. All three participants in this group felt indebted to the family member who decided to immigrate and achieve the American Dream. Their definition of the American Dream was largely economic, it included the ability to support their family in the United States and send money back to Mexico, to own their own home, and most importantly, to establish financial roots that allowed later generations to prosper.

Jaime provided a representative example of the tone and perspective of the others. He titled his essay is *el Sueño*, The Dream, and opened it with a providential statement: “He [his grandfather] was born on July 4th, 1930, into a life of poverty in the small town of Valle de Guadalupe, Jalisco.” Jaime closed the narrative with the other side of the story:

My grandfather is a self made man with much respect and admiration from all his family. Currently he has 26 grandkids and 21 great grandkids. Many of his grandchildren including myself look up to him for all that he has done and all he has provided. Though his children grew up in the United States and were given more opportunities then he had, none of them have surpassed what he has accomplished. He began his teenage years without parents’ guidance, no formal education and came to the states by himself not knowing the language. He worked hard and didn’t see any money until he reunited his entire family
in the states. Coming from living on borrowed land to being the largest landowner in Cañadas [small community in Jalisco, Mexico] is definitely something to be respected. More so because all the money he used towards this land, was money he received with hard labor and sacrifice.

Jaime revisited this position and provided evidence from other students narratives, in his culminating essay:

Through hard work and struggling for many years, this family [referencing other student’s narrative] just like my grandfather and many others received the American Dream. The ability to feel at home in a country that you were not born in and having your own property, and finally being in a free country that provides endless opportunities to grow and continually better yourself, and one that protects you in so many ways.

Chicana/o Identities

The two participants (Alex and Teagun) who chose Chicana/o identity reported that they felt isolated from Mexican identity due to accented or limited Spanish usage. Place of birth was not the defining factor, Alex was U.S. born, and Teagun was a Mexican national, coming to the United States when she was four. Both reported a strong sense of isolation from U.S. and Mexican society. Alex reported feeling the sting of being racialized by both societies. Teagun was undocumented, with a petition pending with the State Department. The petition was filed in 1997; as reported by Teagun, the State Department had not finished reviewing petitions from as far back as 1996.

Although Teagun and Alex both identified themselves as Chicana/o, they had starkly different childhoods, and consequent outlooks on life. Teagun did not express any negative comments about either country. She stated that her choice of Chicana had more to do with classification. Although she had lived in the United States since she was four years old, her undocumented status made it difficult to identify with
either country. In our dialogue she commented that Mexico was a place of birth, but her family never took her there for fear that they would not be able to return. Her family also wanted to be able to honestly tell immigration officials that she had not left the country since her arrival. Additionally, her uncle often criticized her Spanish language usage, saying the she “talked like a Chicano,” making her feel even less comfortable in self-identifying as Mexican.

Alex had a very different life experience that led to an intense connection with Chicano identity. As noted earlier, he was in and out of the criminal justice system since he was in middle school. In our dialogue he identified that the trouble started when his aunt returned to Mexico. She was the one person who provided unconditional love. As an adolescent he intellectually understood his aunt’s explanation for leaving the United States, but nevertheless felt abandoned by her, and by association, the best part of Mexico. Alex reported that he did well in school, but found no place for himself in U.S. society. He was identified as “dirty Mexican” by some kids, and responded to their taunts by beating them up. He was criticized for his accented Spanish by “Mexican kids,” and once again responded violently. Ultimately he found refuge in alcohol abuse, which not surprisingly led to more violence.

Alex was once again enrolled in school, but felt precariously close to reincarceration. In the conclusion of his narrative he stated his Chicano perspective:

Whenever a gabacho [slang for American] calls me a wetback I remind him that his ancestors crossed the Atlantic, mine have been here for thousands of years…I got something for a Mexican national who calls me a pocho [low class person of Mexican descent]. I tell him that if he thinks he’s more Mexican simply due to the fact that he can speak a foreign language (Spanish) better than me then he doesn’t know of his indigenous roots and the various native languages. Cenca tlazochamati (muchas gracias/thank you very much).
In this statement Alex referenced criticism by both the U.S. and Mexican societies. His reference to Spanish as a foreign language implied Spain’s colonization of the Americas and was a critique of history that de-emphasized oppression of native people. Lastly, he closed with a Nahuatl (language of ancient Aztecs) phrase stressing his Chicano orientation with indigenous roots.

Summary
Participants reported that narrative inquiry was very useful in clarifying their perspective on ethnic identity. The two major themes that appeared were self-discovery and intra-group conflict. Self-discovery was discussed along three main themes: 1) finding self in spectrum of identities; 2) sharpening an ambiguous definition of self; and 3) questioning how identities are constructed. The second major sub-theme that emerged was language and intra-group conflict. It appeared that Spanish language usage was a major factor in intra-group conflict. Participants that identified themselves most often as American or Americanized said that they felt isolated because they did not know Spanish. Those that identified themselves as Chicana/o reported that their Spanish had been criticized often; they felt isolated from both U.S. and Mexican societies. Those that primarily identified themselves as Mexican American or Mexican did not report criticism of their Spanish usage. They strongly supported bilingual education as a method to maintain their culture and language.
Research Question 2:

In What Manner Did Narrative Inquiry Affect Engagement With Course Material?

*Impact of Self-Generated Topics*

All participants reported that the narrative process was helpful in engaging and understanding course material. The most common comment was that the topics generated by students in their narratives had the biggest impact on engaging the course material. The content area most commonly focused on in the culminating essays, and written about with most authority, were those that appeared most often in narratives: conflicts over language and immigration. These sub-themes appeared in narratives, culminating essays, and dialogues. The narratives were written before participants covered the issues in assigned readings. That participants identified the topics as important prior to doing required readings on the issues appeared to be an important factor in their level of interest and engagement.

*Language*

As noted in Research Question #1, six out of eight participants pointed out that language usage was a key factor in their identity as American, Mexicana/o, and Chicana/o. They also observed that intra-group conflicts were directly related to Spanish language usage. In relation to Research Question #2, participants commented that course readings demonstrated that language conflicts had a longer history than they had previously thought. Class material also allowed them to recognize that Spanish is a living language created within communities.

Alex, Luis, and Teagun articulated clear connections between current debates over bilingualism and cultural maintenance, with class material. A common
observation was that narratives made it easier to understand the effects of 17th and 18th century efforts by the Spanish to impose their language on native people.

Comments made by Luis in our dialogue captured the general tone of other participants:

First hand accounts made it easier to empathize with historical characters. I knew about the Spanish conquest. But talking to people in class, discussing their struggles, and reading how many are angry, traumatized almost, because of how their language was stolen, I mean wow, we could almost be in New Mexico in the 1700s, we could be talking to Pueblo Indians.

Helen, Jaime, Luis, Margo, and Teagun linked narratives with the course reading “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” by Gloria Anzaldúa (1987). These participants connected their personal experience, and those expressed in the narratives of other students, with the language variation that Anzaldúa outlined. Whether or not they agreed with the author’s position that traditional Spanish, Spanglish, Pocho, and Tex-Mex are viable languages, they presented well-articulated views on the relation of culture to language. They also discussed reasons for language variations within the Mexican descent populations of the U.S. Southwest. For example in her culminating essay Margo wrote:

In the *Wild Tongue* article the author talks about how she was ‘caught speaking Spanish at recess—that was good for three licks…’ (p. 53). Speaking Spanish was frowned upon, but the author struggled with finding her identity considering Spanish was her primary language. She was told that Spanish was not accepted, meaning the language, but when people were trying to be nice they called her a Spanish girl. She got confused, wasn’t she being told that she was not accepted? How could she take it any other way? She had to speak English. She was torn between two cultures.

The whole article opened my eyes to a lot of issues that I believe I knew all along, but never really identified. A bunch of narratives talked about the same things. They talked about Spanish as the secret language. Some of them used it to keep secrets from others, but more felt it was to keep secrets from them. How can we feel a part of society, when we use an underground language?
In the dialogue with Margo I explored the issue of language variation:

E: In your essay you seemed to agree with a lot of what Gloria Anzaldúa said. She talked about different kinds of Spanish…

M: Yeah, Spanglish, Tex-Mex…

E: Right. Do you believe that those should be considered languages?

M: I’m not sure what you mean by language. I know a lot of people think that Spanish from Spain is the real Spanish. I think we should try to teach the real formal Spanish. But language is not just for school or work. People communicate and make up all kinds of words. I think that is what she was saying. So those people that don’t go to school, their language is a real language. I mean unless you believe that God just gave people a whole language, then it had to have come from somewhere. I don’t think schools invent language. The language comes from somewhere. People make their language, they make it in their family, their community. I think that is what Gloria was saying.

**Immigration**

Immigration was a second theme that was addressed by all participants. And as with language, participants were surprised at the long history of the conflict involved with immigration. Alex, Jaime, Kate, and Luis commented in one manner or another that 19th and early 20th century economic issues and migration patterns had similarities with 21st century patterns. And as with the language theme, first hand accounts that appeared in student narratives were credited with making it easier to empathize with historic events.

Nevertheless, there was an important difference between the themes of language and immigration. One difference was the intensity of participant responses to the issue. When commenting about language usage, most participants had strong to very strong statements; but with immigration there was a much wider range of tones. Some had a rather academic detached tone, expressing recognition of economic
factors pushing people out of Mexico and into the United States. Others struck a more personal tone, connecting course material to family stories. Still others expressed an impassioned defense of immigrants’ rights. Direct personal relation to the immigrant experience appeared to be related to the tone of responses.

Kate’s culminating essay was a good example of a somewhat detached, academic tone. She did not report having a clear family picture of immigration to the United States. The Japanese side of her family came around the time of World War II, but it was an issue that was not discussed. Her Mexican side came from Texas and stretched back to when the territory was held by Mexico. Kate’s analysis focused on the economic factors that pulled immigrants from different regions of the world to the U.S. Southwest. In our dialogue she commented that writing her narrative, and reading the range of stories and ethnicities in other students narratives, allowed her to empathize with the history of immigration from China, India, the Philippines and Japan. That she found narratives that represented most of these groups gave class readings increased credence.

Jaime and Luis were good examples of using class material to verify and amplify family stories. Jaime commented that he was familiar with the Bracero Program, a guest worker program between the U.S. and Mexican governments that ran from 1942-1964, because his grandfather originally came to the United States under the program. His narrative focused on his grandfather’s story, and in his culminating essay and dialogue he commented that the combination of narrative and course material gave him an element of authority on the topic. Luis commented that different generations of his family came at different times; the course material
allowed him to see the ebb and flow of immigration, and relate it to how different family members entered the country. He felt that he was better able to fill the historical void in the stories his family told.

Alex had the most impassioned analysis of immigration. He used a wide range of class sources and research to address the issue, and placed his family into the historical pipeline of laborers that built the U.S. economy. Although Alex was U.S. born, his parents had recently become naturalized citizens. A big part of his narrative was a heart-rending separation with his aunt, the only person who had given him unconditional love. (During our dialogue I paused the recording when he choked up while recalling her leaving the United States.) Feeling that she would soon be deported, she left the United States in response to xenophobic media coverage surrounding the passage of Proposition 187 in 1994. Like Kate, Alex placed immigration into historical context, discussing the economic pull of the United States, matched by the instability in Mexico that pushed migrants out. But his analysis included a sharp criticism of the nature of capitalism. He argued that it was not simply an economic system, but also a social and psychological system that forcefully colonized people of color to serve as the laboring class. In his analysis, immigration policies of the past 100 years were a system of divide and conquer. The most degrading aspect was that it promoted self-hate as a system of control. In his culminating essay he wrote:

When we look at how desperate immigrants are treated by this country it should not come as a surprise…It is sad to say but oppression is, by far, not a unique experience as it applies to all of meager means. What I will attempt to demonstrate is the effects of oppression in the form of Internal Colonialism…When looked at within a bio/psycho/social context it can, at
least in my view, be attributed to my alcoholism and how I rebelled against the dominant (white) society with little to no respect for the laws.

Summary

Writing narratives early in the semester appeared to provide an important platform for student engagement with course material. The topics of language and immigration that occurred most often in the narratives were those that students wrote about with most depth and authority in their culminating essay.

Research Question 3:

To What Degree Was Narrative Inquiry, as a Methodology, Useful to Students in Critiquing a Mexican American History Textbook?

Authority Limiting Critique

Critique of the course textbook was limited. Only the commentary of Helen, Jaime, Alex could be defined as a form of assessments or criticisms of the text. Exploration of this issue in dialogues demonstrated that overall students accepted the authority of both the instructor and the author of the text. Teagun commented that “...at times the book was a little boring, but why would you assign it if it wasn’t accurate?” This comment corresponded with the responses of Elisa, Luis, Kate, and Margo. Their critique of the textbook was guided by comments that I, as the instructor, had made. When I pointed to areas in the textbook that were weak, students tended to accept it. Three participants reported that they avoided reading those sections because they did not want to waste their time on material that was incorrect. Two participants explained that they did recall being instructed to critique all elements of class, including the text, but found it difficult because they did not
know very much about the history covered in the book. These students expressed an element of confusion. Aside from meeting a general education requirement, the reason for taking the class was to learn the history, so how could they be expected to know enough to critique it?

Another element of authority had to do with prior academic practice. Kate, Margo, and Elisa commented that their experience in school focused on recalling information, and that they felt uncomfortable expressing their view of the textbook. They did not recall having been assigned to critique textbooks in their other college classes. These participants were less reticent about commenting on articles, and even less so in commenting on assigned videos. They were most comfortable identifying arguments and political positions in the videos than in any of the written documents. These participants had a difficult time pinpointing the reasons for this, but they tended to accept textbooks as factually accurate.

The criticisms by those who did critique the textbook were tentative. Alex did not argue with what was in the book, but noted that it was an overview and felt the need to find more in-depth reading either in consultation with an instructor or librarian. Nevertheless, authority still appears to be an important element. Alex accepted the expertise of school figures and invested his time based on the advice he was given.

Helen expressed the strongest claim to authority, but still limited her critique of the textbook. In her culminating essay she noted that the narratives gave her authority and responsibility to participate in the construction of history; they allowed her to remember the human element in history. She wrote: “We need to realize that
there is much more to the story than just what historians think [emphasis hers] happened. The narratives serve to reconstruct the ‘ripped out pages’ of history. History is made every day and it is up to us to make sure it is remembered.” Nevertheless, she did not argue with the positions presented in the textbook. Instead, she pointed out that there was more going on then what was covered. She used class narratives as a tool to identify areas that the textbook needed to augment. The key issues she pointed to were dysfunctional aspects within the Mexican American community, including struggles over language usage, and high incidence of divorce.

Summary

The most common statement made by participants was that the textbook served as a resource. They offered very limited critique of the textbook. The underlining reasons for this appears to be a perceived lack of authority on the part of students. Part of the reason for this was that they did not feel they had enough historical background, but institutional authority seemed to play an important role. Participants’ previous experience in school appeared to have stressed the authority of institutions. Teachers assigned them tasks that concentrated on recalling facts, not questioning the nature of information. In the process the institution tended to assign authority to written documents and to its staff members. It was difficult for students to stray very far from this structured system of authority.
Research Question 4:
To What Extent Did Narrative Inquiry Affect a Sense of Caring and Responsibility to Each Other?

Self-Initiated View of Responsibility

Material from culminating essays appeared to have the most self-initiated statements that related to Research Question #4. The instructions for the culminating essay did not ask any direct questions about caring and responsibility. The assignment asked students to respond to the following: 1) To what extent do narrative histories conform, contradict, or enhance material covered by class materials?; and 2) To what extent are your perspectives of Mexican American history affected by writing your own narrative, and then reading the narratives of others?

Dialogue questions related to caring and responsibility asked participants to expand on statements they made in either their narrative or culminating essay. Two strong tendencies related to caring and responsibility appeared in participants’ responses. One was a need to support Mexican American women who felt oppressed by Mexican traditions, and a second sought to support young people of Mexican descent in reaching their educational goals.

Women Oppressed by Tradition

Margo and Helen focused their essay on the way that Mexican traditions oppress women. An additional three participants (Luis, Alex, and Elisa) noted the burdens of Mexican tradition on women, but the issue was brought up in the context of other challenges the community faced. In all cases, but especially among the two
participants whose essays focused on women’s issues, respondents commented that they felt responsible to promote gender equality in the Mexican community.

Margo and Helen used oppression of Mexican and Mexican American women as the central focus of their culminating essays. When referring to their identity, both considered themselves as Americanized, even though they often referenced their Mexican heritage. These respondents looked at immigration, work, stereotypes, and family separation from women’s point of view. These participants used the narratives of other students to support their views.

In her essay Margo introduced women’s traditional roles by referencing another student’s essay, demonstrating the similarities with her family, and the challenge of changing those expectations:

According to narrative 17, ‘a woman is the one that should tend to the children and the household chores.’ This is the reality in my parent’s home. My mother cooks, cleans, does laundry, and then goes to work in a kitchen in a junior high. So she is doing the same things at home and at work…That is how they [parents] were raised (and a lot of other people), and this was passed on to me. It is my choice to follow or not.

Margo referenced a number of class sources and their relationship to women’s oppression. She began by using the class text to question the natural order of gender relations. She noted that the textbook gave an example from New Mexico in the 1700s where women owned property, ran businesses, and had authority in the community. This was a very different experience than in other parts of the Spanish empire. The key reason was that New Mexico had a small population, and every member was needed for community survival. In Margo’s view, the lesson to be taken from this example was that there was no natural order for women’s oppression.
Still, Margo recognized that the lion’s share of history demonstrated the oppression and denigration of women. Referencing the video *Quest for a Homeland*, from the video series *Chicano*, she pointed out that even as the Chicano movement was pushing civil rights, its leaders did not think it odd to keep women out of decision making positions, while expecting them to do clerical work, cooking and cleaning.

Referencing the documentary *Farmingville*, in her culminating essay Margo commented that even though a woman organized undocumented Mexican men to defend themselves against intensifying xenophobia, there was an undertone of male chauvinism:

Although a small detail, in the movie *Farmingville*, a group of men are warming tortillas on a BBQ, and when they have a hard time cooking they said ‘where’s the women?’ It may seem like an insignificant joke, but I don’t think Mexican men would find it funny if American men cleaning a toilet said ‘where’s the Mexicans?’

Margo pointed out that a positive side of being Americanized was that women have more choices: “My Americanize ways are different from Mexican traditions, but having equality is a positive change for both men and women…I’m not asking people to completely change and become assimilated, but maybe accommodate the better parts of the ‘American Way.’

Luis, who most often identified himself as Mexican, also commented on male chauvinism in Mexican culture. In our dialogue he expanded on this issue and its relation to the conservative bent of immigrants.

I don’t know that we should find it so hard to see why they [immigrants] have these views. We said that most farm workers come from poor towns in Mexico. I don’t know, but living in Hollister [the most rural town in the college’s district] we can’t help but see how conservative it is. There are a
bunch of white families that feel that women’s place is in the home. I mean proposition 8 [denying homosexual couples the right to marry] won in a landslide…It’s funny, if they thought about it those groups should support undocumented workers because they believe the same things.

Both Margo and Luis felt that they had a responsibility to fight against chauvinistic attitudes in the Mexican community. Beyond their willingness to express their views on gender equality and respect, neither suggested any specific steps to help remedy the situation.

*Divorce and Single Mothers*

Where Margo and Luis focused their comments on traditional roles that oppressed women, Helen expressed a concern with what she referred to as a new Mexican tradition: single motherhood. One variation of a single mother was the teen that became pregnant; the second was the result of divorce. She noted that there was probably a correlation between the two. Young moms who marry because they became pregnant would likely get divorced. In her culminating essay she wrote:

Don’t get me wrong, I greatly appreciated everything they [parents] did for me, but I had always wanted to excel and be better than the stereotypical Mexican who ended up getting pregnant by 17 and never doing anything…I knew I could do better and that is why I continually choose to further my education and ‘redefine’ what it means to be Mexican.

I had grown up watching all of the stereotypes come true; in high school, one of my friends got pregnant at 16 because she *wanted* [emphasis hers] to. Personally I just think that she needed someone to pour her love in to, and who would love her back, mostly because a child does not know any better. But another stereotype I saw was that my parents divorced when I was eight. Even now, since I’m naturally a sarcastic person, I always reply to the question of ‘are your parents still together’ with ‘of course not, we’re Mexican.’

We discussed these issue in our dialogue.

E: You mentioned that a lot of Mexican girls fit the stereotype of getting pregnant. Why do you think that?
H: I said I had a friend this happened to, but it’s pretty obvious that it happens to a lot of girls.

E: Why do you think it happens?

H: I think it has to do with self-esteem, it’s also expectations. I don’t think that a lot of Mexican parents have expectations of girls. They are supposed to be mothers, that’s it. But I also think, it’s a little bit like, it’s a girl’s version of joining a gang. I mean if nobody wants you, you look for something.

E: Yeah, you mentioned something like that in your essay…about children’s love.

H: Umhm, yeah, children’s love. I think girls are looking for true love, and that is not with a man. It’s with their children.

E: You don’t think there can be true love between men and women?

H: No, no I don’t think that, but I don’t think it happens that much. I think it’s pretty obvious, a lot of students wrote about it, a lot of women raise their family on their own. My mother did…she’s my hero.

Both Margo and Helen expressed concerns about the experience of Mexican women. They also felt that asserting their rights as women was a responsibility to their mothers’ efforts. Both felt that women’s rights were more important in U.S. society, and thought it was a good place for accommodation between cultures.

*Educational Achievement*

Six participants (Elisa, Helen, Jaime, Luis, Margo, and Teagun) noted that education was an area in which they needed to take added responsibility. The nature of responsibility was varied, but these participants consistently responded that they needed to pay back the efforts of family members. All connected education with immigration. A common statement was that immigration to the United States was in search of economic and educational opportunities.
Elisa, Luis, Margo, and Teagun expressed relief that other students had high educational goals and felt reassured about their own progress after discussing the issue with others. Participants’ educational goals varied and included professions in environmental science, architecture, graphic arts, and medicine. Two participants commented that they were impressed with how much of their educational plan some students had completed. Teagun and Margo both commented on Elisa’s accomplishments; they felt she had a clear plan that mixed work and school, with a future profession.

At the time of our dialogue, Elisa worked in an afterschool youth program. She saw herself as a current and future educator. The work in the youth program gave her a sense of fulfillment and concern. She said she loved working with kids, but was unable to give students as much time and attention as was needed. She also observed that narratives written by some students in our class had many writing errors. In her assessment, she was looking at two sides of schools’ failures. In her job she saw 4th and 5th graders who were struggling, and a system that did not have the resources to support them. And in our class she saw college students who had a lot to say, but whose skills had not progressed very far beyond elementary school.

Regarding current educational reform, Elisa observed that the movement to standards based education was not meant to serve kids in her schools. “They are drill and skill, you take out all the fun stuff and hammer the standards.” When asked if the system had any success, she responded by saying: “To bring up workers, ya, but to support individuals…schools are factories to make workers, verses a place to find
yourself.” These observations gave her an additional sense of urgency to complete her education and to find a role in transforming schools.

Summary

Responses that appeared in culminating essays indicated that participants felt particularly responsible to address chauvinistic attitudes about women in the Mexican community. They conveyed a strong sense that those attitudes played a role in the oppression of women, as well as concern that due to high incidence of single-parent homes, women had additional burdens placed on them. A second area of discontent was with the educational system. Participants felt responsible to pay back the efforts of earlier generations, but they also recognized that the school system was not structured in a manner where all could succeed.

Research Question 5:
How Were Students’ Views of the Broader Community Affected by the Use of Narrative Inquiry?

Defining Community

For the purpose of this research question, we can define the term “community” using participants’ responses to earlier research questions, especially #1 and #4. Research Question #1 asked about participants’ perspectives of Mexican American and Chicana/o identities. While Research Question #4 asked about a sense of caring and responsibility to each other. In their responses to these questions, participants placed themselves in relationship to their community. Nevertheless, they demonstrated different attitudes about their community depending on how they used the term. As presented in their narratives, classroom discussions, culminating essays,
and dialogues, community was used alternately to mean classmates, people of Mexican heritage, and physical location.

Alex’s comments in our dialogue were a good example of the fluid manner that participants defined community. In this dialogue Alex commented on his reception by classmates, and to intra-group conflict:

I don’t know what people really thought, but it felt good talking. I told that I needed to write that narrative. I was worried, sort of feared saying that thing out loud…It was really good when people asked questions, wondered what it was like to be clubbed by cops. In a way they were saying that I contributed.

…Ya, but who knows what they really thought, I don’t know, but I do know that I didn’t get that feeling, where I think someone is gonna get violet, usually me.

…it was cool though, there were lots of different people in class. But I thought there would be more Chicanos. What were there, three or four?

…I don’t think people really respect our Indian past, they still look down, I hear people joke about Aztec dancers…most of them [those making jokes] are Mexican.

In this dialogue we also discussed his experience in two local institutions: the police and the community college. Alex pointed to the situational nature of community by showing starkly different pictures that the local police and college instructors had of him. He explained that police knew him. They saw him as trouble so they often stopped him with the intent of provoking him into an offense that would return him in jail. Conversely, Alex named several instructors who saw him as a great student. To this I asked Alex:

E: So who do you think you really are, the criminal the police see or the A student that we [college instructors] see?

A: (short deep laugh) Both. I’m trying to be a good student more. So it depends who needs the money more. You both [criminal justice and education] make money on me. Ha, so do you need students more, or do cops need criminals more?
In this comment, Alex indicated his view of U.S. institutions: in his assessment, all institutions ultimately protected their self-interests. Alex’s comments represent how participants referenced different types of community within a brief conversation. This same variability appeared in other participants’ narratives, culminating essays, and dialogues.

Community of Fellowship with Classmates

In some form, all participants commented that they gained a feeling of fellowship with others as a result of sharing common attitudes, experiences, and interests. Elisa, Helen, Kate Luis, Margo, and Luis all voiced surprise and appreciation for the willingness of other classmates to tell deeply personal stories. In their view, these stories helped expand definitions of Mexican American, Mexican, and Chicana/o. (See data in Research Question #1).

Beyond defining the Mexican heritage community, Kate, Elisa, and Margo noted that they valued the contributions of classmates who were not of Mexican heritage. Kate paid special notice to students whose heritage derived from India, Japan, and Cambodia. All of these participants also commented on students whom they referred to as white or American. They stated appreciation for these students’ interest in Mexican heritage, as well as their willingness to tell stories about their experiences in the Mexican community. Both Kate and Margo remarked on the experiences of James, who worked in a furniture refinishing shop. In her culminating essay Kate quoted from James’ narrative:

Day after day I would work with Mexican immigrants, whom were at the bottom of the socioeconomic food change…They would be forced to shut up and do what they were told. There was no room for complaints, for slacking off, for expressing their concerns with how to improve working conditions.
All they knew was that their jobs were continuously in jeopardy...Such an atmosphere seemed unjust to me, but eerily familiar to them.

In Kate’s view, James had a better connection with Mexican workers than she had. And because his empathy derived from experience, in some ways he was closer to the Mexican community than she was.

In her culminating essay and dialogue, Elisa commented on Brian’s experiences. He considered himself a victim of reverse discrimination. Although this was not an issue covered in class, students understood Brian’s argument. In his narrative and in class discussion, he explained that his high school grades were exemplary. But in his view, universities did not give him a scholarship because he was not a minority. He also told of his struggle with alcohol. While accepting that his alcoholism had many contributing factors, he sensed that discrimination was one of them. He stated that his inability to afford his preferred university was part of his overall depression. Although Elisa questioned some of his contentions, she empathized with his sense of alienation and judged that perceptions of being stereotyped were still injurious. Elisa’s willingness to acknowledge Brian’s experience was an example of a general tone of acceptance that permeated the class. I made this observation in my field notes, and it found support in dialogues with other participants.

Grouping the data around a community of fellowship, participants appeared to have a strong interest in making connection with classmates. They sought to cross barriers and demonstrated attentive listening. Participants’ responses indicated a high level of acceptance. This attitude was strong in the classroom community, but less so
when community was defined by shared identities, such as Americanize, Mexican, or Chicana/o.

**Community Based on Shared Identities**

As with fellowship, all participants reported being part of a community based on shared identities. As reported in Research Question #1, participants reported feeling part of Americanized, Mexican American/Mexican, or Chicana/o communities. Spanish language usage played an important role in the group where individuals placed themselves. When grouping the data around these definitions of community, intra-group conflict manifested as a prominent concern. Participants used individual narratives to find others who had similar experiences and characteristics as themselves, often making comments that were in defense of their group.

Helen, Kate, and Margo identified themselves as Americanized. Helen and Margo stated that their inability to speak Spanish was an important factor in their isolation from their Mexican heritage. Elisa, Jaime, and Luis identified themselves as Mexican American or Mexican. They conveyed pride in their Mexican heritage and pointed to bilingualism as an important element in maintaining cultural connection. In contrast, these participants did not express a sense of isolation. Alex and Teagun identified themselves as Chicana/o and reported feeling isolated from both the Mexican and U.S. communities. As with those who defined themselves as Americanized, these participants felt that their limited ability to speak Spanish was an important factor in their isolation from Mexican heritage.

While language was important for individuals’ definition of their group, a deficit perspective of the community was apparent in participants’ comments of intra-
As described by Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez (1992), “the prevailing perception of working class families is that they are disorganized socially and deficient intellectually” (P. 134). Comments made by Elisa, Helen, Jaime, Luis, and Margo appeared to support these perceptions. At times the deficit perspective appeared in direct comments. As an example, in her narrative Helen referred to the high incidence of teen pregnancy and her desire to break from it: “I had always wanted to excel and be better than the stereotypical Mexican who ended up getting pregnant by 17 and never doing anything…” As she explained, teen pregnancy was a result of low expectations of women in the Mexican culture. Margo also criticized Mexican culture for oppressing women. Both of these participants defended themselves as Americanized women. In their view U.S. culture offered an opportunity to improve the condition of women.

In our dialogue Luis, who identified himself as Mexican, expressed similar concerns about the Mexican community. Referring to several narratives he read, he noted that individuals told stories of womanizing fathers. He was surprised that the stories were written, but said that they were probably accurate depictions: “Why would someone choose to write that stuff about their family? But, it sucks to say it, the stereotypes come from somewhere.”

Some participants indirectly demonstrated a deficit perspective. Jaime provided an example when he discussed his family’s success in the United States. In writing about his grandfather, Jaime explained that he was not the stereotypical lazy Mexican. His attainment of the American Dream came through hard work. Jaime’s comments implied that those who had not achieved the dream had not worked as
intelligently or as hard. These comments indicated that he viewed substantial numbers
of Mexicans as lazy people who sought the easy route.

*Community Based on Locality*

As with the other definitions of community, all participants made comments
that referred to their locality. The cities that the respondents came from were
considered as bedroom communities of the Silicon Valley. They had mixed
economies that included some level of light manufacturing, service industries, and
agriculture. Nevertheless, in their narratives Elisa, Helen, Kate, Luis, Margo, and
Teagun referred to their community as rural.

Participants most often commented on the topic of immigration when they
referred to their locality. When grouping the data around this definition of
community, participants tended to use historical data from class sources to express
their views. These views tended to point to the relation of U.S. economic growth to
immigration flows. Alex, Elisa, Jaime, and Luis identified specific job sites that drew
family members toward their locality. All of these jobs were related to agricultural
industries, including the tomato processing plants in Gilroy and Hollister, as well as
the local strawberry industry.

When participants defined community through shared characteristics intra-
group conflict was prominent, but comments were generally positive and supportive
when they were related to locality. Participants’ historical assessment argued for the
importance of immigrant labor using material from textbook, class lecture, assigned
articles, videos, and independent research. Students used narratives to augment these
historical appraisals. While people of Mexican heritage were depicted in a positive
tone, the participants portrayed U.S. companies as abusive. Likewise, they depicted U.S. society negatively. They painted a picture of a hypocritical society that feared immigrants, and while accepting their services, ignored their contributions.

Summary

Responses that appeared in narratives, classroom discussions, culminating essays, and dialogues indicated that participants’ views of community varied depending on whether they were referring to classmates, people with shared identities, or locality. When defining the community as classmates, they gave a general sense of fellowship. Participants demonstrated an interest in making connections with other students and were accepting of different experiences. When defining the community by shared characteristics, participants’ comments brought to light intra-group conflict. They also focused on community deficits. When defining the community by locality, participants tended to use historical data and offered generally positive assessments. They focused on the importance of immigrant workers to the U.S. economy as well as the hypocritical nature of U.S. society.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this teacher research study was to examine narrative inquiry as a method for student engagement with course material and the local community. This study derived from a need to better understand the complexities of implementing cultural citizenship (Rosaldo & Flores, 1997) curriculum in the classroom.

The intent of this study was to understand how students perceived themselves within Mexican American history. Guided by the concept that educators should include students’ distinct abilities and knowledge in the educational process (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992), this study used narrative inquiry as a way to involve students in their own history (Flores & Benmayor, 1997), and at the same time, help redefine the terms Mexican American and Chicana/o for themselves and their community. Furthermore, students were asked to take an active role in critiquing, and in the process, broadening the scope of Mexican American and Chicana/o history. Students were asked to write their individual or family story, and then examine the extent to which their stories were reflected in the history they were presented. The goal was for students to interpret the meaning and significance of their family experience. It was also hoped that narrative inquiry would enable them to theorize how their background fit into historical and contemporary contexts.

Summary of Findings

Chapter four revealed that participants felt that narrative inquiry was very useful in clarifying their own ethnic identity. Self-discovery and intra-group conflict emerged as the two major themes. Participants that identified themselves most often
as American, or Americanized, said that they felt isolated because they did not know Spanish. Those that identified themselves as Chicana/o reported that their Spanish usage had often been criticized. Thus they felt isolated from both U.S. and Mexican societies. Those that primarily identified themselves as Mexican American, or Mexican did not report others’ criticism of their Spanish usage. This last group strongly supported bilingual education as a method to maintain their culture and language.

This research study indicated that writing narratives early in the semester provided an important platform for student engagement with course material. Language and immigration surfaced most often as common topics in the narratives. These topics were also the ones that students wrote about with most depth and authority in their culminating essay.

While participants engaged with a wide range of course materials, narrative inquiry did not strengthen their critique of the course textbook. The underlining reasons for this seemed to be a perceived lack of authority on the part of students. Participants reported that they did not have enough historical background to critique the textbook. But participants’ reluctance may also have been a result of previous school experiences that stressed the authority of institutions. It seemed as if textbooks, unlike other course materials were invested with more institutional authority.

Even though students were reticent to critique the textbook, narrative inquiry did help build a sense of caring and responsibility. Participants expressed particular responsibility to address chauvinistic attitudes about women in the Mexican
community. A second area of concern was with the educational system. Participants felt responsible to do well in school as a way to pay back the efforts of earlier generations. They also expressed a desire to restructure the school system to better meet the needs of their community.

Nevertheless, the term “community” was not used in a consistent manner. Participants’ views of community varied depending on whether they were referring to classmates, people with shared characteristics, or locality. When defining the community as classmates, they expressed a general sense of fellowship. When defining the community by shared identity, participants’ comments illuminated intra-group conflict and community deficits. When defining the community by locality, participants tended to use historical data and had generally positive assessments. They focused on the importance of immigrant workers and the hypocrisy of U.S. society.

Discussion

Effects of Narrative Inquiry on Student Engagement and Authority

The positive effects of the narrative inquiry process were evident throughout the findings. Participants consistently stated that the three-step process, which included the creation of an I.D. card, writing of individual narratives, and culminating essays, was an effective system for engaging with course material. They also reported a sense of validation because they recognized that their experiences were a part of Mexican American historical experience. In addition to engagement with course material, the findings indicate that participants developed a strong sense of fellowship, as well as caring and responsibility for each other.
Nevertheless, the effect of narrative inquiry on authority was mixed. On the one hand, the process amplified student authorship in that they spoke and wrote with passion and conviction. They used narratives accounts as data to support positions they took in their culminating essays, and effectively quoted and paraphrased from narratives to illustrate personal and historical events. On the other hand, as practiced in this study, narrative inquiry did not overcome institutional authority. Participants were reticent to critique the material presented by the instructor or the textbook.

**Student Engagement**

The discussion of I.D. cards initiated the narrative process by having students identify and refine elements of their identity. At the same time, this exchange set a baseline for supportive student conduct. My field notes indicate that throughout the semester students engaged with each other as friends and peers. As an example, it was common for students to visit with each other before class began; they grouped in various parts of the classroom and then relocated to their regular seats once class started. When we had class-wide discussions, students spoke openly, other students listened attentively, and they framed any disagreements in a respectful manner.

That students felt comfortable in the classroom space was particularly important. As Price and Osborne (2000) contend, teaching and learning by nature involves social interaction, and teachers need to play a positive role in creating learning contexts in which students are able to empower themselves. Moreover, Rosaldo and Flores (1997) assert that social gatherings play a central role in the construction of collective identity and sense of belonging. Claiming physical space is necessary in order to create a sense of community. Once the space is claimed, it needs
transformation, because as Shor (1996) argues, the traditional classroom is not a democratic environment.

I initiated the transformation of the space by pairing students and acting as a facilitator. Students were asked to move their initial location; those from the back and corners of the room were paired with students who sat near the front. Students who normally sat next to a friend were matched with students that they did not know. This process was purposefully structured to combat the Siberian Syndrome (Shor, 1996), where students passively resist institutional authority by placing themselves as far from the instructor as they can get.

The goal of the activity was to begin the process of inclusion. As hooks (2003) argued, establishing an environment where students can safely exchange experiences, where their views are included and respected, is key to recapturing dignity. This is particularly important for students who come from marginalized groups where shaming has been used as a disciplinary weapon. As argued by Fránquiz and Salazar (2004), recapturing dignity is an important part of humanizing pedagogy. In keeping with this point of view, creating and discussing the I.D. cards established a friendly and safe environment that mitigated a sense of otherness. These first steps were crucial in order to develop a sense of agency and self-identity.

Where the interactive activities associated with the I.D. cards functioned to create a comfortable and supportive environment for discussing the narratives, the purpose of the narratives was to place students at the center of knowledge making. This is in keeping with Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez (1992), who contend that tapping students’ existing knowledge and language base is the key to successful
learning. These researchers argue that new information is understood and integrated in a framework of prior knowledge. For the purposes of this study, students’ narrative essays served as the core knowledge base. As noted earlier, the choice of narrative themes was entirely up to each student; at times these themes were autobiographical, other times they were based on a family member, or a person that was close to them. Narratives were organized into four sections: theme, key topics, abstract, and the full text. In this manner narratives were separated into component parts, making it easier for other students to effectively analyze them. These narratives became the data that students interrogated in discussions with each other and in their culminating essays.

Interrogation of data began with a discussion of narratives in groups of four. Each student paraphrased his or her narrative for other students. Then as a group, students listed the key topics that appeared in the narratives. One reason for collecting topics was to build a broad picture of the narratives. After collecting the topics, it became clear that data created by the class showed that the issues of most concern were immigration, education, the struggle with low wages, language conflicts, and stresses of working class families.

A second reason for collecting topics was that it required students to negotiate the meaning of terms. It is important to note that the exchange between students asked for attentive listening and negotiation. In our dialogues Elisa, Jaime, and Teagun said that this process was surprisingly difficult, but a helpful practice. The difficulties arose because at times individuals used the same term to mean different things; other times they used different terms to refer to the same experience. Jaime expressed surprise at how easy it was to be misunderstood and to misunderstand
others. Teagun said that the discussion of terms was conducted in a series of questions and answers within the group. This led to deeper understanding of each other’s narrative, as well as closer personal connection. The result of this process was that students intensified comprehension and continued to strengthen social linkages begun in I.D. card discussions. These findings support Fránquiz and Salazar’s (2004) contention that when teachers create learning conditions where students, especially those perceived as low status, can demonstrate their knowledge and expertise, they are able to see themselves, and be seen by others, as capable and competent. The I.D. card process is also a practical example of the outcomes that Benmayor, Torruellas and Juabe (1997) maintain can occur in a cultural citizenship curriculum. Students can use a collective space to cross boundaries and promote inclusion.

In addition to negotiating terms, participants stated that the use of abstracts was very helpful. As used in this study, abstracts refer to summaries of the full narratives written by students. All of the participants commented in some manner that abstracts were beneficial. They were easy to read, even when there were a significant number of writing errors. It was also easy to navigate a wide range of narratives. Luis, Jaime, and Kate all said that the abstracts were effective at characterizing the range of stories presented in class. Jaime indicated that he was familiar with abstracts, but had not used them effectively. The narratives expanded his ability to use abstracts. In addition to selecting articles to read, he discovered that he could use them to scan data for tendencies. By looking at the data as a whole, he saw that the class was telling an overall narrative. These findings are an example of what Price and Osborne (2000) assert: that teachers need to create a learning context where students can empower
themselves by learning skills that enable them to function like insiders.

The final part of the narrative inquiry process was the culminating essay. This was a reflective essay that asked students to use narratives to critique course material covered during the semester. An important transformation occurred in the culminating essay; narratives were transformed from first person stories to data. The first two phases of narrative inquiry, the I.D. Card and narrative essay, consistently sought to reinforce a supportive environment. And as noted earlier, the construction of a supportive environment was generally very successful. Students interrogated each other in order to clarify material. But since students honored the supportive environment that had been created in the classroom, they were reluctant to challenge the views of others. Instead, they expressed their differences in their culminating essays. Part of this may be due to the anonymity of the narratives posted on the class webpage; students could express their difference with others by referencing a numbered narrative.

Students used the data that they produced in a wide-ranging manner. At times the data was used to support a personal experience; other times the data was used to augment historical material from the textbook or class lectures. Nevertheless, students clearly understood the narratives were data created in the classroom. It was not sanctioned by an outside source, it was peer reviewed directly by students in the class. The authenticity and accuracy of the material was up each person to measure. In turn, students became authors in the broadest sense: they expressed their authority to originate data and interpret its meaning.

From these findings we can see that the narrative inquiry process supported
key components of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1993). The process successfully lowered institutional barriers that traditionally restrict communication between individuals, and it supported an environment that treated all students as knowers and builders of knowledge, not just receptacles to be filled by institutional experts.

**Authority**

Nevertheless, critical pedagogy also contends that learning environments need democratization; for true dialogue to exist, remedies for asymmetrical authority and power relationships are needed (Fránquiz & Salazar, 2004). As noted earlier, the findings of this study indicate that narrative inquiry had a mixed effect on perception of authority. Students wrote with passion and conviction about knowledge that they generated in their narratives, they also interrogated other students’ narratives in their culminating essays. In addition, they critically assessed articles and videos that were presented in class. Still, students rarely interrogated my lectures or the class textbook in the same manner.

The nature and application of classroom authority requires investigation. Pace’s (2003) research indicates that notions of authority are often taken for granted, but in practice produce confusion among students and teachers. The need for clear, conscious, and fair construction of classroom authority corresponds with Shor (1996), who argues that teachers must first look at themselves in the mirror and deconstruct the nature of authority that they carry. This is of importance because students have little experience with critical inquiry and power-sharing. Therefore, teachers have little choice but to use institutional authority to ease into a process of sharing power.

[An educator needs] to behave like an authority who is a legitimate teacher, someone who knows something worth learning, who knows how to be fair
with grades and assignments, and who can maintain order… If [teachers] deny these professional signs of authority, [they] will broadcast incompetence or carelessness (p. 20).

Following Shor’s (1996) model, I deconstructed my own authority as it related to teaching a Mexican American history class. I am a middle aged Mexican immigrant male. I struggle with both English and Spanish, feeling self-conscious when using either language. I am from a working class family whose origins in a small Mexican town come with preexisting views on class, race, and sexuality. I have received non-passing grades in a good number of college classes and have dropped out of San Jose State University and UCLA. Conversely, I have also been successful in college and have received scholarships. Most recently, this study is part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. I communicated all of these aspects of my background to my students.

In dialogues with students six mentioned that my background made them feel more comfortable. Alex, Jaime and Teagun said that their anxieties about college were eased by my experiences because at some point all had dropped out of college. All the participants said that they were interested in the dissertation process because they felt it would help them with their future educational goals. More broadly, it appeared that my failures and successes in the educational system spoke to students’ own struggles. Similarly, my ethnic and language heritage provided authority as a transcultural person. I, like many students, was part of two cultures that were perpetually being redefined.

From participant responses, and the conduct of students in the narrative inquiry process, I feel that authority was effectively established and administered in a
manner that promoted positive outcomes. This approach addresses Pace’s (2003) call for clearly constructed classroom practices of authority. As demonstrated in this study, authority was exemplified in the ease that students worked with each other. They did not question instructions for working with others, and accepted that they would need to write their own stories. Beyond that the students wrote thoughtfully about issues that often depicted serious and traumatic events. Moreover, students were consistently respectful and courteous to each other, and also had fun and made friends.

Nevertheless, students did not interrogate my class lectures and the textbook. My initial thought was that the narrative process was not able to overcome the institutional authority that teachers and textbooks carry. But on further review, it became apparent that I did not create a context where my lectures and the textbook were exposed to the same level of scrutiny as the other class sources. I assumed that the dynamic used for discussing the I.D. cards, narratives, articles, and videos would naturally extend to class lectures and the textbook. This did not appear to be the case.

This outcome corresponds with Coll’s (2004) research that focused on developing space for community building. Coll’s structure was modeled after Pratt’s (1991) contact zones. These zones are physical locations and critical learning processes that seek to renegotiate power and social relations. In Coll’s research people met in these zones, saw their common humanity, and were able to take important steps toward more democratized communities. Like Coll, my findings indicated that crossing boundaries was limited to the structured environment created by the researcher.
Language and Community

As noted above, the narrative process created opportunities for students to generate and interrogate knowledge. Language and community appeared prominently in relation to identity. Participants reported that narrative inquiry was very useful in clarifying their views on ethnic identity. Two major themes that appeared were self-discovery and intra-group conflict, and Spanish language usage was a major factor in intra-group conflict.

In addition to ethnic identity, participants demonstrated a fluid picture of community. Statements that appeared in narratives, classroom discussions, culminating essays, and dialogues indicate that participants’ views of community varied depending on whether they were referring to classmates, people that shared their identity, or people from a shared locality. When defining the community as classmates, there was a general sense of fellowship. When defining the community by shared identity, participants’ comments brought to light intra-group conflict. When defining the community by shared locality, participants tended to use historical data and offered generally positive assessments.

Language

The findings in this study indicate that language influenced participants’ definition of identity and was an important aspect of intra-group conflicts. Isolation from Mexican culture was listed as an important reason why some participants referred to themselves as Americanized or Chicana/o, and language was an important factor in feeling excluded. Participants who did not know Spanish referred to themselves as Americanized. Those who had their Spanish criticized referred to
themselves as Chicana/o.

Language discrimination was an important factor of intra-group conflict. Those that identified themselves as Americanized and Chicana/o commented on the deficits of other groups. They also felt that others had unfairly criticized them. Helen and Margo both felt that Mexican people racialized them. These participants based race on cultural practices more so than on skin color. In our dialogues it became apparent that they felt that their lack of Spanish was the source of racial discrimination. They both said that they had been treated as if they were traitors to Mexican culture. Alex, who referred to himself as a Chicano, felt that both U.S. and Mexican communities racialized him. In his view, the U.S. culture racialized him based on his Hispanic last name, use of Spanish, and “Indian” features. Conversely, he felt Mexicans racialized him because of his accented use of Spanish.

These findings are supported by Fox (2006), who examined multiple layers of the inclusion/exclusion process among transnational populations residing in the United States and Mexico. He argued that language was a key identifier of ethnicity, and that systematic language discrimination excluded some groups from being accepted as truly Mexican. Groups whose Spanish language was limited, flawed, or accented were denigrated. Fox pointed out that the indigenous of Mexico, as well as Chicana/os, suffer from the same criticisms and ostracism. Fox’s analysis is supported by LatCrit theory (Yosso, 2005), which extends critical race discussions to address layers of racialized subordination that comprise Chicana/o and Latina/o experiences. Racism, sexism, and classism are experienced among other layers of subordination based on immigration status, sexuality, culture, language, phenotype,
Unlike participants that identified themselves as Americanized or Chicana/o, those who identified themselves as Mexican American or Mexican did not report being criticized for their language usage. They said that they regularly participated in Mexican cultural gatherings and felt comfortable in the Mexican heritage community. Elisa, Jaime, and Luis did not report feeling ostracized and did not make any negative statements about language or U.S. culture. Instead they stated strong support for bilingual programs that helped maintain Spanish language usage. In their view, Spanish was the key to maintaining connections with an extended family. These participants also felt confident in their ability to succeed in the U.S. economic and educational system. They reported that their parents had achieved a level of economic stability, and as a way of repaying their parents’ efforts, these participants felt responsibility to succeed in school.

The reasons that participants gave for choosing their terms for self-identity align well with Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco’s (2001) findings. These researchers outlined tendencies in identities and styles of adaptation that they observed in the children of immigrants. They described three main orientations: ethnic flight, adversarial, and transcultural. Embracing total assimilation, and complete identification with mainstream U.S. culture were tendencies found in ethnic flight. Rejecting dominant U.S. culture characterized adversarial identities. Incorporating selected aspects of the family’s original culture with that from the United States marked transcultural identities.

Beyond demonstrating a triad of tendencies, Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco
(2001) also outline the key factors that influence identity choices: ethnic community, opportunity structure, individual factors, family factors, and social mirrors. Various elements comprise each one of these factors. Some of the important influences of the ethnic community were cohesiveness and density of its population. Opportunity structures were characterized by economic and educational access. Individual factors included developmental level and resilience to social images. Key family factors included the ability to maintain authority and cohesiveness; and either reflect positive, or deflect negative, social images of their ethnicity. In the authors’ view, the factor that had the strongest effect was the social mirror. This referred to public images that are internalized, especially in reference to racial distortions.

Alex, who identified himself as Chicano, had the most strident criticisms of the United States as a colonizing force, whereas his criticism of Mexican culture was less intense. For the most part he recriminated Mexican people who did not recognize their colonization by Spain and the United States. And while he did defend his indigenous identity, he also recognized that it was something that he was purposely constructing. No one in his family saw themselves as Indian. On the contrary, they came from a heritage that disparaged the indigenous of Mexico. Alex was interested in telling his story so others could learn from his mistakes. Nevertheless, he was also adamant about exposing the exploitative nature of capitalism. His perspective is a good example of an adversarial orientation (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). He clearly articulated a belief that public images created racial distortions, and because of this he rejected dominant elements of U.S. culture.

Helen and Margo, who identified themselves as Americanized, had some
negative comments about Mexican culture, especially its oppression of women. But their narratives, culminating essays, and dialogues indicated that it was their parents who chose not to teach them Spanish. It was a way of defending them against the negative aspects of U.S. culture. These parents felt it was in their children’s best interest to assimilate. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco’s (2001) framing of ethnic flight appears to be more appropriate to the parents rather than children. Both Helen and Margo understood that their parents sought to shield them from racism, but lamented those choices. Both said that they took the class on Mexican American cultural history with the expressed desire to reconnect in some manner with Mexican culture. And both said that they were heartened by the opportunity to express their views with others who wanted to bridge cultural boundaries. This indicates a desire to move toward a transcultural approach.

The experiences of Elisa, Jaime, and Luis were clearly transcultural in nature (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Their extended family provided cohesiveness and maintained positive images of their ethnicity. Perhaps most importantly, they were confident enough to criticize elements of Mexican culture, while still holding an overall favorable view of their culture. Taken together these factors appear to have influenced their overall positive attitude. They did not express any conflict in holding on to Mexican culture while feeling entitled to access U.S. economic and educational opportunities.

Regardless of how participants identified themselves, they all demonstrated clear understanding of the interaction of language and culture. Their awareness of language usage is in keeping with Arteaga (1994), who argued that for Chicanos and
Mexican Americas language has been a legal criterion to classify and differentiate.

While English is neither the original, sole, nor official language of the United States, U.S. culture presents itself as an English language culture and actively strives to assert a monolingual identity.

This is to say, its overriding tendency is toward the assertion of a monolingual authority and the complementary suppression of alternative languages… English is elevated from a status of one language among languages, albeit the dominant one, to that of sole and pervasive language in general. This is coupled with the simultaneous erasure of Spanish through the restriction of its use. (pp. 12-13)

Huntington (2004), among others, has justified linguistic assimilation of the Mexican heritage community. His arguments are based on fears that the nation will break down into separate language-based societies. But the findings in this study contradict those contentions. Participants, who identified most strongly with their Mexican heritage, including language usage, were the most confident and optimistic about succeeding in U.S. economic and educational institutions. Conversely, those who were most isolated from Mexican culture felt ostracized. They reported feeling that they had been racialized; and as Bernal (2002) pointed out, language, accent, and surname are important layers of racialized subordination.

It is particularly important to understand that racism circulated in a complex manner. At times the sources of racism came from U.S. culture; other times it came from Mexican culture. Nevertheless, a strong connection to Mexican heritage appeared to deflect negative social images.

Community

Anderson (2006) used the concept “imagined community” to describe the nation-building process. It referred to a collection of people who did not have direct
contact, but instead, defined themselves as members of a community through a series of constructed social traits that they shared. The findings of this study indicate that the narrative process may provide an opportunity to re-image community by allowing students to collect their individual stories, interrogate them using counter-hegemonic resources, write their own interpretation of history, and in the process re-imagine the contours of the community.

Examining the narratives, essays, and dialogues of the participants, it became apparent that they did not describe community in a single manner. When participants chose to identify themselves as Americanized, Chicana/o, or Mexican, they tended to point out the differences and conflicts between the groups. I referred to this as a community based on shared identity. When participants discussed their experience in class, they spoke of each other as peers, and made positive statements. I referred to this as a community of fellowship. When participants referred to their locality, they took a more historical approach, examining events, politics and economics. I referred to this as a community based on shared locality.

The importance of recognizing the fluid nature of community is that we can take steps to create inclusive environments that promote positive interactions among peers, allowing them to examine how identity, language, and intra-group conflicts interact. This is at the core of the cultural citizenship (Rosaldo & Flores, 1997) approach. It appropriates physical space to negotiate, maintain, and, I would argue, construct culture. As demonstrated in this study, when participants used other students’ narratives, course documents, and research to interrogate their history, they implemented a creative process of re-imaging their community.
Nascent examples of a re-imaged community appeared in the writing and attitude of participants. When they wrote about their shared locality, they used material from throughout the semester to assess how the U.S. economic, political, and social system constructed an environment that was an uneven playing field. Nevertheless, in our dialogues at the conclusion of the class, participants consistently spoke respectfully about other students, even when they disagreed with their views.

As an example, Alex felt that other class members maintained prejudicial attitudes toward indigenous people, but believed that people tried to hear him out and were as open as they could be. In his analysis, the hegemonic nature of U.S. culture made it difficult to overcome the truth about disenfranchised groups. Nevertheless, he felt that the class environment had created a small opening, and in turn he was willing to work with others to make a more equitable society.

Similarly, Elisa listened to Brian’s claim that he had suffered reverse discrimination. Although she did not accept that it had occurred, she acknowledged his sense of alienation, and sought a way to bridge differences. In each of these cases the important point was that participants indicated their desire to understand others with an expressed purpose of creating a socially just community.

Recommendations

This study examined a narrative inquiry process as a method for establishing situations where dialogue among students can occur. Through dialogue, students interpreted the meaning and significance of their family experiences. Moreover, students interrogated the corrosive environment that marginalized and disenfranchised people live in. The findings of this study indicate movement toward
improved dialogue and democratic exchange among students. Nevertheless, much more work still needs to be done. The following recommendations seek to build on the successes, and resolve some of the limitations, of the narrative inquiry process as conducted in this study.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study indicate that students felt comfortable with each other and were engaged with course material. However, they were not completely able to overcome the authority of the institution, and in turn, only took tentative steps toward critiquing the instructor’s lectures, and the textbook. These findings support the contention of critical pedagogues (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Fránquiz & Salazar, 2004; Freire, 1993; Shor, 1996) who argue that educators need to be politically informed and recognize that educational institutions are not neutral. Instead, they reproduce power relations of dominant institutions. Future research should pay special attention to the structure of authority and practical approaches to redistribute authority in a more democratic manner.

Beyond authority, this study demonstrated that a cultural citizenship approach was successful in an ethnic studies course. Still, could this approach effectively be used in coursework without an ethnic studies orientation? Studying cultural citizenship in classes like U.S. history, or other coursework aimed at the general population, would offer opportunities to apply humanizing pedagogy on a broader scale. Approaches that promote dignity, trust, and understanding seem to be particularly important in social and political environments like we are in now that are filled with anger, fear, and tension.
In addition to expanding humanizing pedagogies to other disciplines, a cultural citizenship approach, such as narrative inquiry, should also be studied as a way for students from different school levels to collaborate. Students and teachers from community college and high school could work together on projects that build on student knowledge. This type of collaboration may be helpful in easing the transition of students from high school to college; but perhaps as importantly, it may lessen the stigma that students feel when they attend community college. As Aragon (2000) has argued, community college students often feel frustrated with the disparaging remarks made about their schools; that stigma is a roadblock to student success. Moreover, since community colleges are the most accessible avenue for students of color into higher education, it is particularly important to underrepresented students that progress is made toward relieving institutional stigma.

While expanding humanizing pedagogies is vital, there is also a need to increase the use of teacher research methodology in community colleges. Perhaps the most important reason for this is that there are no specific teacher preparation standards for community college instructors. Professional requirements for community college instructors focus on expertise in academic disciplines. It is left to individuals to prepare themselves as teachers by attending conferences and workshops. This practice has left wide pedagogical gaps. Teacher research methodology provides an avenue to fill these gaps and may improve practices of community college instructors. As Mohr, Rogers, Sanford, Nocerino, MacLean, and Clawson (2004) have argued, through systematic study of their teaching, instructors
can examine assumptions, build and articulate theory, and present their findings to others.

Recommendations for Teaching: Improving Narrative Inquiry

Beyond limitations related to authority, the results reported in these findings were based on a small sample of students. This study built its data from eight students who volunteered to participate in dialogues after the semester ended. Observations made by other students only appeared as data when directly referred to by one or more of these eight participants.

In order to hear from a wider range of voices, surveys of all students should be conducted at the end of the term. Broadening the range of students who are interviewed is another way to include the voices of students who take the class. Collaborating with an anthropology class could also be helpful in accessing information from the entire class. Coordinating coursework with an anthropology class would also offer an example of a learning community (MacGregor, 1994) where students and teachers bridge the walls of a single classroom and promote the notion of interdisciplinary thinking and action. Anthropology students could conduct ethnographic interviews, collecting data about students’ places of origin, language practices, and important events affecting identity. This would serve the needs of both classes and help distance data gathering from the instructor’s sole authority.

The perspectives of students who stopped attending class are also missing from this study. First, it is important to recognize that not all students who withdraw from classes do so for academic reasons. Some students find that a course does not meet their needs and choose to take actions that lead them toward their desired outcome.
Nevertheless, some students are administratively withdrawn, or get non-passing grades because they stop attending class. Finding out whether the narrative inquiry process plays a role in their actions could change the way the curriculum is delivered. Still, accessing these students is problematic. Working more closely with academic counselors to contact students that stop attending class may provide insights into the role that class curriculum plays in their actions.

Expanding the use of knowledge created by students may provide additional impetus to the narrative inquiry process. The webpage created for in-class exchange of narratives could be expanded. Adding each semester’s collection of narratives to the webpage would provide a wider range of data for students to work from. The database of narratives could also be made public and become a community resource chronicling local history. However, it would be particularly important to attend to the anonymity and consent of contributors.

Another avenue for expanding the use of data is to have students create multimedia presentations from one semester to the next. In this manner students from the current semester could frame the process and welcome an in-coming class. This might also be helpful in moving authority even further toward students and providing an additional level of student centered knowledge.

Making connections outside of the class is another way to improve the curriculum. As practiced in this study, the narrative inquiry process was successful in helping bridge barriers between students. Connecting with existing resources outside of the class could provide avenues for bridging other barriers. One method is to look for internship opportunities with local organizations. Although many educational
institutions have used internships, it is not clear how many have focused on the practical application of critical pedagogical perspectives. My recommendation is that relationships be developed with organizations that focus on constructing positive communities.

To this point I have been attentive to internship opportunities, but I have done so as an individual. As a result, only a small number of students have been provided access. Broadening institutional support for internships in community-based organizations will be necessary for a successful internship program. Service learning efforts have been developing on our campus and could provide the necessary support.

Travel study is another method of expanding the narrative inquiry process. And as with internships, the focus should be social justice. Along with a colleague, I have organized student travel to the Mexican states of Chiapas and Chihuahua. The program in Chiapas, Schools for Chiapas, works with local Zapatista communities to provide educational and healthcare services. Apoyo Tarahumara is a community based relief group that delivers food and school supplies to indigenous communities in remote areas Chihuahua. Both of these organizations have made a positive impact on students and communities. A narrative inquiry process that collects peoples’ stories to help build and chronicle knowledge could easily be added to the activities of these organizations. That being said, opportunities for travel study, as with internships, have been limited. Fundraising has been a factor, but less so than students’ availability. For the most part, only students who could make the time, and get away from work for an extended period have been able to participate.

Personal and financial resources will likely continue to be a factor limiting
internships and travel study. Nevertheless, collaboration with other educational institutions could provide a new set of opportunities. Educational institutions have a wealth of technology and are often looking for innovative ways of using their resources. As example, nine years ago I was able to access resources from our college and conduct a collaborative project with a class from Evergreen College in Washington State. I sought to open a dialogue between two classes using a web-based classroom management system. Our class in Mexican American history and a class at Evergreen College in Chicano literature discussed issues of identity and disenfranchisement. Although students reported that they enjoyed having a focused dialogue with students in another state, in my judgment, the overall affect was of limited value. A large amount of time was spent learning and trouble shooting the technology. In addition, I lacked a clear theoretical foundation for the project.

The methods and findings of this narrative inquiry study have gone a long way in resolving theoretical and practical issues. Basing the study on tenets of critical pedagogical provided a theoretical baseline from which I constructed the curriculum. Classroom practices were built with an outcome in mind: engaging students in their own learning by using their existing knowledge to build new knowledge. Moreover, internet communication and student familiarity with technology have improved dramatically in the past nine years. Taken together, these factors should mitigate earlier difficulties in having in-depth dialogues with classes in other regions of the country. Considering these changes, collaboration with classes at other colleges appears as a viable manner to expand the narrative inquiry process.
Conclusions

The current social and legal environment in the United States has heightened tension regarding ethnicity and national origin. We are living in an environment of intensifying xenophobia. This can be seen in recent vitriolic condemnation of Muslim centers, and the writing of anti-immigrant legislation. The increasingly irrational environment calls out for responses that tone down the hostile rhetoric and provide safe places for sober dialogue.

Recent laws passed in Arizona capture the fear that is present. Arizona State Senate Bill 1070 essentially expropriates federal authority by charging state and city agencies with enforcing immigration statues. This law gives local police the authority and responsibility to question individuals that they suspect are in the state illegally (State of Arizona, 2010). Although the U.S. Attorney General has challenged this law, it has not dampened social tensions. This is evidenced by a second Arizona law, House Bill 2281, that seeks to band ethnic studies classes, specifically Chicano Studies classes. Authors and supporters of the bill argue that these courses are designed for students of a particular race and promote ethnic solidarity over community integration. This law prohibits the teaching of any classes that focus on “ethnic solidarity instead of treatment of pupils as individuals” (Barr, 2010).

People of Mexican descent cannot but feel that they are targets of racism. This caustic environment calls out for a safe place where individuals can express varying views. The findings of my study demonstrate that narrative inquiry can create an environment where students can negotiate identity and family experiences. In the process they can interrogate current events with a historical perspective. My study
confirms that participants can openly discuss intra-group conflict, examine sources of conflict, and use that knowledge to gain a better sense of how and why they hold certain beliefs.

This study also expands the body of knowledge related to narrative inquiry. Earlier research focused on how narrative inquiry could be used as a method for individuals to deconstruct views of themselves. But narrative inquiry has previously not been used as a method of gathering social science data about a class, and having that same class use its self-generated data to analyze and critique historical sources. The results of this study indicate that the narrative inquiry process can be successfully employed to engage students in their own learning. Moreover, the process also provides an example of in-class practices that place students at the center of learning in a democratized setting.

The findings of this study strongly refute the fears that are apparent in HB 2281. The humanizing pedagogy used in this study demonstrates that ethnic solidarity and respect for individuals are mutually supportive. This collaborative narrative project builds on students’ engagement, willingness to cross barriers, and interrogate knowledge. If anything, class conflict can be better understood, individual identity can be valued, and racial tensions can be lessened in an environment that promotes dialogue.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

IRB Email Approval of Human Subjects Request

IRB Application #10-004 - Approved
From: irbphs <irbphs@usfca.edu>
To: eluna@XXXX, Susan Roberta Katz <katz@usfca.edu>
Date: January 21, 2010 7:55:43 AM

January 21, 2010
Dear Mr. Luna:
The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at
the University of San Francisco (USF) has reviewed your request for human subjects
approval regarding your study.

Your application has been approved by the committee (IRBPHS #10-004).

Please note the following:
1. Approval expires twelve (12) months from the dated noted above. At that time, if
you are still in collecting data from human subjects, you must file a renewal
application.

2. Any modifications to the research protocol or changes in instrumentation
(including wording of items) must be communicated to the IRBPHS. Re-submission
of an application may be required at that time.

3. Any adverse reactions or complications on the part of participants must be reported
(in writing) to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days. If you have any questions,
please contact the IRBPHS at (415) 422-6091.

On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research
APPENDIX B

Institutional Approval From Gavilan College

December 15, 2009

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
University of San Francisco
2130 Fulton Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

Dear Member of the Committee:

On behalf of Gavilan College, in Gilroy California, I am writing to formally indicate our awareness of the research proposed by Enrique Luna, a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco. We are aware that Mr. Luna intends to conduct a Teacher Research Study using narrative inquiry in a class on Mexican American Cultural History.

As Vice President of Instructional Services, I give Mr. Luna permission to conduct his research at Gavilan College.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact my office at (408) 848-4760.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Kathleen A. Rose
Vice President of Instructional Services

KAR/ao
APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form

Purpose and Background

Enrique Luna, a doctoral student in the Department of International and Multicultural Studies, School of Education, at the University of San Francisco, is conducting a Teacher Research Study using narrative inquiry as a method to engage students in course material. I am being asked to participate in this study because I am member of his class in Mexican American Cultural history at Gavilan College.

Procedures

If I agree to be a participant in this study, the following will happen:

I will be asked to participate in two dialogues after the end of the term. In the first dialogue I will be presented with a range of questions. The second dialogue will be a follow-up with questions that derive from outcome of the first dialogue.

Risks and/or Discomforts

I am aware that I may experience some emotional discomfort when I share my personal experience in discussion, and have my experience read by others.

Benefits

I may benefit from sharing my experience with others, and see a broader picture of my community. Additionally, I will be exposed to advanced research methodology.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no financial cost to me as a result of taking part in this study.

Payment/Reimbursement

I will not be reimbursed for my participation in the study.

Questions

I have talked to Mr. Luna about this study and have had my questions answered. If I have further questions, comments, or concerns about this study, I may e-mail Enrique Luna at eluna@gavilan.edu or call him at (408) 848-4864.
If I have any questions or comments about my participation in this study, I should first talk with the researcher. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the University of San Francisco’s Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling (415) 422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message, by FAX at (415) 422-5528, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the: IRBPHS, Department of Counseling Psychology, Education Building, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Consent

I have been given a copy of the “Research Subjects’ Bill of Rights,” and I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep. PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to be in this study or to withdraw from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on my present or future status at the University of San Francisco.

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant’s Name (Please Print)

Participant’s Signature Date of Signature
APPENDIX D:
Research Subjects’ Bill of Rights

The rights below are the rights of every person who is asked to be in a research study. As a research subject, I have the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is trying to find out;

2. To be told what will happen to me and whether any of the procedures, drugs, or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice;

3. To be told about the frequent and/or important risks, side effects, or discomforts of the things that will happen to me for research purposes;

4. To be told if I can expect any benefit from participating, and, if so, what the benefit might be;

5. To be told of the other choices I have and how they may be better or worse than being in the study;

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study, both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study;

7. To be told what sort of medical or psychological treatment is available if any complications arise;

8. To refuse to participate at all or change my mind about participation after the study is started; if I were to make such a decision, it will not affect my right to receive the care or privileges I would receive if I were not in the study;

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form; and

10. To be free of pressure when considering whether I wish to agree to be in the study.

If I have other questions, I should ask the researcher. In addition, I may contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS by calling (415) 422-6091, by electronic mail at IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to IRBPHS, School of Education, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.