A critical analysis of barriers that inhibit Latino parent involvement as students make the transition from Esl to mainstream classrooms

Linda R Skroback-Heisler
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF BARRIERS THAT INHIBIT LATINO PARENT INVOLVEMENT AS STUDENTS MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM ESL TO MAINSTREAM CLASSROOMS

by

Linda R. Skroback-Heisler

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

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in

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Department of Instructional and Curricular Studies
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The Dissertation of Linda R. Skroback-Heisler for the degree of Doctor of Education in Instructional and Curricular Studies is approved.

Marilyn McKinney, Ph.D.
Co-Chairperson

Stanley J. Zehm, Ph.D.
Co-Chairperson

Martha W. Young, Ph.D.
Examinining Committee Member

Lynda M. Nilges, Ph.D.
Examinining Committee Member

Teresa S. Jordan, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative

Ronald W. Smith, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
August 1997
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of Latino families concerning parent involvement roles while their children made the transition from ESL to mainstream classrooms. Three families were interviewed individually at eight week intervals for ten months. Using critical theory as a framework, data sources established three themes of status quo describing parents' knowledge and beliefs during prior experiences, ESL class, and during the year their fourth grade children were mainstreamed. Initially coded by constant comparative methods, a second and critical analysis of data uncovered the fourth theme: barriers encountered by Latino parents during the mainstream year. Further research with language-different populations is recommended to examine language barriers and parents' personal limitations.
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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

During the last two decades, I have learned much about teaching and learning while working with students from kindergarten age to adults. One aspect of teaching that has involved considerable change for me was how I included parents as partners. After a major career shift from reading specialist in junior high to elementary English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom teacher, I became aware of creating a classroom community in elementary school. In the three years I worked with bilingual assistants, parents communicated primarily through the assistants. Along with the sense of classroom family, parents came to us with questions, concerns, and needs. For me, the connection with parents was new. During the last five years, I have communicated directly with parents in their language, thus forming my own connections with Latino parents.

My experiences with Latino parents of elementary-age children challenged my previous assumption that parents did not want to be involved. Parents told me that they wanted to participate in their children's education but they were not always certain how to help. One child’s mother telephoned me at least once a week and sometimes nightly for an explanation of the homework even though, as she reported when he was in first grade, her own English was the level of a kindergartener. Most of the parents worked long hours with
extended family obligations and, as a result, could not participate in traditional school activities such as volunteering and attending meetings. Because I taught the ESL class with a teaching partner, I was available to talk with parents when they visited informally. My connections and prior conversations with Latino families led to more questions, including those in this study.

**Definitions**

Because there are different interpretations of words, definitions of some terms have been culled from several sources to clarify how they were used in this study. A common interpretation of Latinos, middle class, and working class may be helpful in understanding this study.

Latinos were defined as individuals:

who reside in the United States and who were born in or trace the background of their families to one of the Spanish-speaking Latin American nations or to Spain. . . [Latinos] share some common basic cultural values. . . [of] familialism (the importance of relatives as referents and as providers of emotional support) and. . . simpatía (the preference for positive interpersonal interactions). . . [A] majority of [Latinos] speak Spanish and are Roman Catholic. . . [M]ost. . . are racially mixed, including combinations of European White, African Black, and American-Indian.

(Marín & Marín, 1991, p.1-2)

Hodgkinson (1991) defined middle class as "having a college education, suburban living options, and a white-collar or professional job" (p. 8). Middle-class parents, college graduates and professionals with strong career opportunities, are less vulnerable to changes in the economy (Lareau, 1987). Middle-class families are connected to schooling through their common belief
that education is a shared responsibility between home and school (Lareau, 1989). As a consequence, middle-class families "closely supervise and frequently intervene in their children's schooling" (Lareau, 1989, p. 9).

In comparison, when describing working-class participants in her study, Lareau (1987) explained: "A majority of the parents were high school graduates or dropouts, employed in skilled or semiskilled occupations, paid an hourly wage, and periodically unemployed" (p. 75). Income levels, education, and types of occupations held by Latino families such as operators, fabricators, laborers, service occupations, and support positions in sales and technology place one third of Latinos into the working class (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993). Lareau (1989) discussed separation between schools and working-class families who, in contacting schools about non-academic matters, believed that teachers were solely responsible for educating children.

The Effect of Changing Demographics on School Reform and Minority Parent Involvement Framed by Critical Theory

Demographic projections for the next few decades predict that the Latino school-age population will continue to increase faster than any other minority or majority population (Alsalam, Fischer, Ogle, Rogers, & Smith, 1993; Campbell, 1994; Educational Resource Service, 1990; Snyder, 1992; Trueba, 1993b; U. S. Department of Commerce, September, 1993). As a result, Latinos will impact schools more directly than other minority groups (Day, 1993; Educational Research Service, 1990). Latinos comprised 8.4% of the student population in 1980 (U.S. Department of Commerce, September 1995), are expected to be 16% of the student population in 2000 (Educational Research Services, 1990), and are projected to make up 25 to 28% of the school-age
population in 2020 (Garcia, 1995; Pallas, Natriello, & McDill, 1989). At the same time, the white majority population is projected to decrease by 25% (Garda & Pugh, 1992).

Incoming students and their parents have different backgrounds, experiences, and expectations of schools that challenge middle-class teachers' expectations and beliefs (Gay, 1993; Ritter, Mont-Reynaud, & Dornbusch, 1993; Trueba, 1993b). In the 1990s, teachers are 89.6% white and 7% black; and Latino teachers comprise a portion of the other 3.4% (Snyder, 1992). Valencia and Aburto (1991) predicted a further decline in Latino teachers by the year 2000 as higher achievement in education will lead Latinos to more lucrative fields than teaching careers (Peters, 1992). Garcia and Pugh (1992) stated that in order to "avoid immense educational failure later...our schools, their programs, and their teachers should reflect the changing population patterns of our nation" (p. 40). Since population trends predict that the teaching population will not reflect the general population, schools must compensate for the predicted imbalance between incoming students and white middle-class teachers. Referring to Latino and minority children, Garcia (1995) said:

the future of our society rests with these students...As they emerge as the majority in the schools, their success is our success and their failure is our failure. They must succeed. (p. 377)

Rather than continuing to reflect western European heritage and middle-class values, effective schools have responded to the needs of incoming children with different backgrounds and languages (Trueba, 1993b). Through restructuring, education can be reinvented, reformed, rethought, and transformed (Murphy, 1991). As a result of reform efforts, schools will be able to meet the needs of tomorrow's children and society. Reavis and Griffith (1992) describe restructuring as:
A complete change in the culture, organizational assumptions, leadership, curriculum, instructional approach, and accountability of the school. Ideas of how things get done, work norms, decision making, authority, motivation, and professional expertise all must be radically revised. It means wide participation in a number of areas that have traditionally been reserved as the prerogative of building or center office administrators. It means the learning of new roles by administrators, teachers, students, parents, and members of the community at large. It requires the adoption of a market orientation in which the customers are the parents and the students (p.2).

Within Reavis and Griffith's definition lies the issue of minority parent involvement, the facet of restructuring addressed in this study.

**Minority Parent Involvement**

Researchers have found parent involvement to be one factor that strongly affected students' educational success (Comer, 1984; Crispeels, 1992; Epstein, 1987, 1992; Henderson & Marburger, 1990; Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1990; Swap, 1990). Many Latino parents, with a cultural frame of authoritarian and patriarchal styles of interaction (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991), have not experienced participation within a democracy like the United States. DeVos and Suárez-Orozco (1991), ethnographers of other cultures including Latino, stated that Latino parents needed to understand that in a democracy one must have input rather than remaining passive, and if knowledge about how to get involved is lacking, then it must be taught directly. Zelazo (1995) suggested that schools and teachers might need to initiate and provide extra support, including the knowledge needed, in order for Latino parents to participate. DeVos and Suárez-Orozco (1991) reported that
minority parents who learned skills of school advocacy and participation caused change to occur in their children's schooling. These skills provided parents with tools to help many students stay in school rather than drop out (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991).

Present methods of involving parents in schools (e.g., classroom helpers and meeting formally in parent-teacher organizations) have not been effective with all social groups. Literature describing working class (Good, 1987; Heath, 1986; Lareau, 1987, 1989; Sulzby, Teale, & Kamberelis, 1989) and Latinos (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Heath, 1986) revealed that both working class and Latinos believe that the school's responsibility was to educate children while parents' concerns were limited to behavior issues rather than being involved in academic and administrative matters. Mainstream parents, on the other hand, reported active intervention in academic (Taylor, 1983), behavioral, and administrative concerns (Chavkin & Williams, 1984, 1985; Lareau, 1987, 1989). Yet parent participation in children's education has been found to positively affect graduation statistics (Comer, 1984; Epstein, 1987, 1992; Henderson & Marburger, 1990; Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1990). As increasing numbers of Latino children enter schools in the next decades, efforts to reform schools in order to involve Latino parents as co-participants will become more pronounced and necessary.

Research has indicated a need to examine the process of parent participation as schools and minority parents collaborate (Davies, 1987; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Epstein, 1992; Lightfoot, 1978). Most of this research has been initiated by the school with Latino parents as co-participants (Davies, 1987; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991): Few studies have focused on the effect of school practices to involve parents from the perspective of the Latino parents themselves.

**Critical Theory as a Framework**

One way to examine Latino parent involvement within school reform and predicted demographics is by using critical theory. Critical theory is a method of participatory dialogue (Carr & Kemmis, 1986) and analysis for purposes of critiquing existing situations and institutions (Freire, 1970, 1973, 1978; Gibson, 1986). Through dialogue, critical theorists and participants examine personal perceptions to describe and challenge the status quo. Status quo has been defined as "the state of affairs as it is" (Erlich, Flexner, Carruth, & Hawkins, 1980, p. 668). Perceptions of situations depend upon the viewpoint of the participants (Code, 1991; Gibson, 1986; Harding, 1991; hooks, 1984; Jagger, 1989; Lather, 1991; Weis & Fine, 1993).

During dialogue, factors are discussed that enable or prevent people from influencing and controlling their lives (Giroux, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994; Lather, 1991; Weiler, 1991). As a result of exploring factors that enable or constrain, problems are identified in order to resolve them (Freire, 1970, 1973, 1978). Through empowerment, or gaining power over situations, participants are emancipated "from inequalities and unfair restrictions" (Gibson, 1986, p. 7). Dialogue and other data are then critically analyzed for empowering and disempowering issues (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Thomas, 1993). Critical theory thus frames both the dialogic process and data analysis.
The purposes of this study were to: (1) describe three Latinos parents' perspectives of their participation over time in their children's education; (2) establish definitions of "status quo" as it related to these parents' perceptions of their involvement prior to ESL, during three years of ESL, and during the transition to mainstream classrooms; and (3) identify barriers that inhibited active parent involvement as their children made the transition from ESL to mainstream classrooms. Research questions were framed by critical theory in which participants question situations and institutions. A critical analysis of data from multiple sources revealed issues of enabling and constraining circumstances for the parents in this study. Minority parent involvement studies were linked to changing demographics, school reform literature, and critical theory.

Research Questions

This descriptive study critically examined Latino parent involvement. Through dialogue, parents described prior, ESL, and mainstream experiences with U. S. schools. What parents learned from their older children's mainstreaming experiences and from interactions with the ESL classroom teacher and how they applied skills and knowledge to their child's current mainstream classroom situations formed the basis for the questions in this study.

An overarching question was developed to critically analyze barriers to parent participation:

Do barriers exist that inhibit parent involvement as ESL students make the transition to mainstream classrooms?
Previous studies involving Latino participants (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Hernández, 1992; Ogbu, 1992) have recommended the importance of exploring parents' perceptions of past and present interactions with schools in both Mexico and the United States. Since parents and I had not had the same educational experiences, it was necessary to understand parents' prior experiences and previous participation in school situations. Therefore, to establish trust, to enhance understanding, and to generate a description of status quo for this period in time, the following question was used:

1. How do working-class Latino parents describe their involvement in their children's education prior to ESL experiences?

According to Freire (1970, 1978), multiple conversations with parents might lead beyond a dialogue about education to a more conscious-level awareness. The next related question explored specific ESL classroom interactions. This question also helped to establish the picture of status quo needed for critical analysis:

2. How do working-class Latino parents describe their involvement with their children's education during the three-year period their children attended an ESL classroom?

The first two questions investigated parents' perceptions of their own skills and knowledge constructed during a three-year relationship when their children were in ESL class. If Latino parents believed they had established a voice in the ESL classroom dialogue, would their voices continue to be heard as empowered parents in the mainstream classroom? Empowerment, the goal of critical theory, is most potent when transferred from a familiar situation to a new setting. The last related question generated a picture of status quo while
examining interactions between the Latino parents and the new mainstream classroom teacher:

3. How do working-class Latino parents describe their involvement in their children's education when their children entered mainstream classrooms?

Evidence from parents' conversations revealed Latino parents' knowledge about schools and parents' experiences during the mainstream year, thus describing the status quo that appeared to exist within the mainstream classroom. Multiple data sources were used to provide the evidence needed to determine if changes in parent involvement occurred.

Research Methodology

Ethnographic methods, including case studies, provide unique insights in describing social change and contextual information from people's experiences (Trueba, 1993a). Case study investigations trace contemporary events as they change over time yet retain the "holistic view . . . of real-life events" (Yin, 1989, p. 13-14). Case study methods include: (1) studying a contemporary event, (2) seeking answers to how questions, (3) observing directly and systematically, (4) interviewing participants, and (5) using a variety of evidence, for example: interviews, artifacts, and observations (Yin, 1989). Each of these case study methods was employed in this study.

Data collection used multiple sources of evidence as suggested by Mathison (1988) as a way to ensure credibility and confirmability. I focused on the process of selected Latino parents' involvement through dialogue of past and present school experiences using conversation transcripts, direct observation notes, journal writing, and theoretical memos. Individual parents member-checked (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) all quotations included in this study to ensure
correctness of both the grammar and their intent. The topic of parent involvement was approached in a way that asked parents to reflect but did not intrude on the personal aspects of their lives.

I interacted with parents in their home environments and neighborhood. *Plática* conversations (Sherradan & Barrera, 1995) as an informal conversational approach for building trust addressed Latinos' preferences for positive interpersonal interactions (Marín & Marín, 1991) rather than using formal interviews (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Lather, 1986; Sherradan & Barrera, 1995; Oakley, 1981). The use of qualitative research methods of multiple case study (Yin, 1989) was an appropriate approach to explore questions raised by this study.

As an insider-outsider relationship, Latino parents and I collaborated. They were inside the Latino community while I was the outsider, a non-native speaker of Spanish. The Latino parents were outside the educational system whereas I was the insider and could understand both the school's view and the parents' view. As experts in different areas, Latino parents and I began our conversations as equals, thus balancing the power between us. Power balance between participants and a participant-observer is an issue of critical theory.

The purpose of data analysis (Appendix D: Flowchart of Data Analysis) was to develop a narrative account of Latino parents' exploration of their own parent involvement. Using the constant comparative method, I generated and provisionally tested concepts and relationships during data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Transcripts of conversations, observations, journal, and field notes (Constas, 1992) were coded and categorized according to patterns of responses. Initial categories guided further questions in later interviews (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Consistent with the constant comparative method, new data were compared to existing categories throughout the study. The first
analysis uncovered what is (Thomas, 1993) to establish a picture of status quo for each time period.

The second and critical analysis of the data uncovered changes and discovery in which past perceptions flavored present perceptions. For this analysis, I examined data for issues concerning critical theory: power, equality, marginalization, empowerment, differential treatment, hidden power, language practices that disguised power (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) and assumptions that inhibited, repressed, and constrained (Thomas, 1993) as expressed in conversation transcripts and other data sources. Critical analysis uncovered ways that Latino parent involvement changed and barriers that parents encountered when their children were mainstreamed. Data from three cases were used to write this narrative report following an organizational framework suggested by Yin (1989). In the narrative, parent responses were organized by themes identified through the collected data. Parents and children chose the pseudonyms used in this report.

To increase my own objectivity in this study, categorized subsets of the interview data were read by a second reader. The reader was a bilingual teacher in the local school district who was new to the Mexican Latino population of this city and was unfamiliar with my study. Upon consultation with the second reader, it became clear that the chain of evidence logically led to theory and interpretation.

**Addressing Ontological, Epistemological, and Methodological Questions**

In order to add rigor and accountability to qualitative research, Guba and Lincoln (1994) posed specific questions concerning the process of qualitative
research for researchers designing a study. In this section, I will briefly
describe and address each of their questions based upon my critical study.

In critical theory, the basic ontological question concerns the nature and
form of reality in a historically situated sense (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Thomas
(1993) asked the ontological question as: What is there in the world to know?
For the parents in this study, dialogue revealed their personal views of reality,
specifically concerning their roles as parents involved in schools. Repeated
questions uncovered parents' personal histories and thinking regarding
education in both Mexico and the United States. Latino parents and I created a
shared reality by understanding their memories that influenced opinions and
viewpoints during the time frame of this study.

The epistemological question of critical theory asks about the relationship
between the knower, the would-be knower, and what can be known (Guba &
Lincoln, 1994; Thomas, 1993). As the researcher and would-be knower, I was in
the position to learn about Latino situations and experiences through non-
judgmental questions. Parents, in this case the knowers, were the experts who
could express their ideas and opinions, identify sources of problems, and
suggest solutions. In order to uncover the parents' views and opinions, I
repeated the same questions throughout the study, focusing on a different
family member's education at various points in time. Parents' responses
revealed similar views over time, focusing on different aspects of their
knowledge and how things worked from their perspectives.

The methodological question asks how the inquirer can find out what can
be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative dialogic methods, natural
setting, and discovery as an element in inquiry met Guba and Lincoln's
criteria for focusing on the methodological question. Using a dialogic
framework of critical theory, I invited parents to describe their views,
identify problems, and suggest solutions. At their invitation, our conversations took place in their homes or nearby restaurants. I began with my own working guidelines of what parents might say, as suggested by Thomas (1993), but during repeated conversations over a long period of time, parents negated, confirmed, and extended my own thinking, thus leading to discovery. Reflections and questions about prior conversations led to further refinement in their thinking during later conversations.

Contributions of This Study

Although research in the area of parental involvement has increased in the last few years, there is little documentation of perceptions held by Latino parents about their own involvement in school (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1992; Ogbu, 1992), particularly when their children move from ESL to mainstream classrooms. This critical study focused on Latino parents' dialogues concerning their children's experiences but revealed parents' own roles and beliefs. Latino parents in this study suggested changes that could be incorporated within schools by teachers and administrators, thus contributing to school reform literature. In addition, the results of this study have informed my own teaching practices.

This study also contributes by involving a rapidly increasing minority in school culture. The interviews and discussions in the parents' native language added their voices, as Latinos, to the existing body of literature concerning minority parent involvement. Because of the recent increased attention given to minority parent involvement within school reform literature due to predicted demographic changes, this study was both timely and significant.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RESEARCH LITERATURE

Introduction

Since 1980, education-related organizations have actively promoted parent involvement in order to increase children's success in school (Moles, 1993). From Gallup poll surveys prior to 1980, Moles (1982) concluded that:

the joint and coordinated effort by parents and teachers is essential to dealing more successfully with problems of discipline, motivation, and the development of good work habits at home and in school... educational standards impossible to reach without such cooperation. (p. 44)

For the last two decades, schools have called on parents to seek more participation and parents have responded, but not all parents. For some minority families, specific school practices encourage and others inhibit parent participation.

This literature review begins with examining specific school practices that encourage and discourage minority parent involvement. Literature that examines enabling and constraining factors is critical in nature. Critical research addresses issues of empowerment and disempowerment, based on the process of dialogue and later analysis of factors. Critical studies and reviews of critical literature comprise the first area of this literature review. Supporting research studies, critical-in-intent, relate to issues of dialoguing and questioning current situations with the goal of resolving injustices. The first
area is summarized in terms of research questions, population, empowerment, and suggestions. However, critical studies have not defined parents' roles or parents' beliefs concerning their children's education.

For discussions of minority and mainstream parents' roles and beliefs, parent involvement research from the field of education provides definitions and descriptions. From 1980 to 1986, researchers focused on describing mainstream parents' roles. Later understandings concerning parents' roles evolved from early qualitative and quantitative studies. Studies are presented chronologically in order to demonstrate how early findings built the foundation for later studies. These early studies defined and identified some parental roles in Latino and minority populations. In order to add background information, Latino role definitions are supplemented by a number of mainstream studies and reviews of literature which identified and compared categories of parent involvement. The summary of the second area focuses on defining parents' roles and contrasting Latino at-home findings with mainstream roles at-home and at-school.

The third area of educational research, since 1987, built upon the foundation provided by early studies. These later studies developed descriptions of parent involvement as researchers shifted the focus from mainstream groups to other ethnic populations. Educational research expanded upon mainstream parent roles by asking, "What do Latino and minority parents do?" Researchers identified variations in parent roles by contrasting ethnic and cultural roles to those of mainstream parent populations. During this era of research, at-home role definitions by Latinos were refined and in-school roles were identified. In the third area of research, background information from mainstream studies supplemented Latino findings. The summary of this area expands definitions of Latino
parents' roles in their children's education along with presenting newly-identified barriers to parent involvement.

The fourth area describes what researchers have found about parents' beliefs concerning why they are involved in their children's education. Several ethnographic studies from 1980 until the present form the major research for this fourth area. Each study contributes significant advances in understanding Latino and working-class viewpoints. Other studies with minority groups add to basic understandings and will be discussed within the context of their contributions to Latino working-class populations. The summary of the fourth area focuses on parents' beliefs that guide their involvement roles. Taken as a whole, Latino empowerment issues are refined by early and later definitions of parent involvement, descriptions of parent roles, and beliefs.

Critical Models of Parent Participation

Scientific "views of knowledge with its emphasis on specified measurable learning outcomes" (Kincheloe, 1995, p. 72) provide one type of data and generalizations. However, some questions do not lend themselves to scientific manipulation, interactions, or quantification. As another way to view data-gathering and interpretation, qualitative research, including case studies, yields rich description from the standpoint of participants and researchers. Qualitative practices include gaining entry to research sites, establishing ongoing rapport, and maintaining confidence of participants (McLaren, 1995). Critical researchers use theory to interpret dialogues and discursive practices (McLaren & Giarelli, 1995) in social situations and practices. These dialogues are situated and "entangled within the larger structures of power and privilege" (McLaren, 1995, p. 273). The data resulting from dialogues are

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critically analyzed to determine what enables and what constrains power relations (McLaren & Giarelli, 1995). Critical models of research focus on dialogue and the analytic process of enabling and constraining factors.

**Critical Research with Multi-ethnic and Latino Populations**

A number of researchers applied critical frameworks of empowerment (critical pedagogy, feminist, ethnography of empowerment, and family ecology) to specific populations and research questions. McCaleb (1994) used critical pedagogy, critical theory applied to educational problems, as one part of the philosophical framework which investigated home-school partnerships. Through involving parents of first graders in co-authoring books about their families' lives and stories, multi-ethnic parents, including Latino, increased their participation within the classroom community. Both individually and collaboratively, the authoring group shared life experiences and goals, focusing on parents' linguistic and cultural knowledge rather than district curriculum requirements. For some parents who spoke another language, their first grade children translated parents' stories. For other parents, groups videotaped with captions in English. McCaleb's project empowered students who explored, interpreted, and created their own knowledge. Empowerment occurred as parents discovered and validated their personal knowledge of their families and cultures. Personal connections with their child's teacher in their native languages, along with teacher recognition of the home culture, played important roles in increasing parental empowerment.

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Latino Populations

Two studies with Mexican and Mexican-American populations were conducted by Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1991, 1992) and Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991). Using a Latino population, Edelsky (1986) reported similar results. Harry (1992) supplemented the others' research with a Latino Puerto Rican population. In each study, researchers examined data for empowerment or disempowerment of participants.

Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba conducted a four year study in Portillo and Carpinteria, California (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1992; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991). As anthropologists, Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba acknowledged both critical theory and Freire (who applied critical theory to curriculum concerns) as contributing to their theoretical base called ethnography of empowerment. Ethnography of empowerment attempted "to provide a broad sociocultural context in order to study the transition from disempowerment to empowerment" (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991, p. 151). In the process of examining literacy of bilingual Latino children, Delgado-Gaitan documented the growing involvement of a group of Latino parents from its inception as one parent's suggestion (1990, 1991) to several groups of parents, bilingual teachers, and administrators in local schools (1991, 1992). During group meetings, organized at the parent-helping-their-own-child level, parents discussed their own agenda of educational issues such as their refusal to become fund-raisers (1991), but also "socialized each other to maximize their potential in dealing with the school" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, p. 4-5). In addition to organizing and attending workshops, parents discussed problems their children had in school. Through group discussions and suggestions, parents found others who had similar problems and learned how to negotiate, whether through compromise or confrontation, with teachers on behalf of their
children (1991). Conventional parent involvement activities "tend[ed] to relegate all power to institutions (including schools) and have usually ignored the needs of groups, especially those with a different language who are unfamiliar with school expectations" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991, p. 43). Conventional parent involvement attempted to make the family conform to the school. With non-conventional activities, power shifted to become a shared responsibility between parents and schools. As one example, in one school, a group of Latino parents exerted peer pressure over other Latinos to increase parent involvement (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991, 1992; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991). The amount of influence a group of parents gained was determined by the extent that they learned to use the system. Non-conventional activities built effective community linkages that enhanced schooling opportunities for many children in the communities of Portillo and Carpenteria (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991, 1992).

Delgado-Gaitan (1990) found that for many immigrant Latino families, especially from rural areas, participation in school was a new practice and needed to be taught as a skill. In addition, many parents did not have the academic knowledge or the materials (in either Spanish or English) to work with their children if the teacher sent a note that said, "Read with your child each night" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, p. 122, 127). As a result, parents felt helpless and did not know who could help in the school if the teacher was unwilling or unable to explain further (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990). One way to alleviate feelings of helplessness in a new culture was through talking with others. Delgado-Gaitan (1990) defined successful participation as parents becoming informed about the school system, how the system functioned, their parental rights in obtaining information about their children, and parental responsibility for supporting their children through school. By becoming
active in children's learning, parents acted as advocates on their behalf, providing "more opportunity for [children's] rights to be acknowledged in any conflict in school" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, p. 119).

Supporting Research From Latino Populations

Two studies by Edelsky (1986) and Harry (1992) examined Latino empowerment using critical frameworks. Edelsky (1986) focused on bilingual literacy of primary grade children while examining parent, community, and school district support of one bilingual program. Prior to the study, parent meetings in English convened during the daytime; consequently Latino parents attended meetings only when their children performed. At the start of the study, Parent Advisory Council meetings were held in the languages of the parents, English and Spanish. As a result of two years of increasing community involvement, Latino parents knew and learned about other school events. The Bilingual Director's invitations to join parent groups increasingly empowered one community of Latino farmworkers. Over time, Latino families became more involved in both knowing how to help children at home but also extended their roles by becoming increasingly effective as children's advocates within the school.

Harry (1992) studied twelve Puerto Rican families whose children were placed in special education classes. She examined interactions between Latino parents and Special Education teams during formal meetings concerning test results, placement, and yearly re-evaluations. Harry found that Latinos' strong sense of respect for the system made it difficult for them to disagree with higher-status school officials but that this respect might be misconstrued as passivity and trust by school officials. Communication, both oral and written (IEP forms, for example) frequently used jargon unfamiliar to parents.
In several instances cited by Harry (1992, p. 482, 483, 485), parents asked questions that revealed that they did not understand where or why their children were in special education. Harry (1992) found that Latino parents did not believe they could affect their children's school/classroom/program placement. Harry argued that if school professionals believed that culturally-different parents, poor and with limited education, could contribute to understanding their children, then communication between officials and teachers must be examined to determine if parents were empowered or disempowered. Harry concluded that special education personnel needed to initiate the process in order to change Latino parent empowerment.

Research findings by McCaleb (1994) and Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1990, 1991, 1992) were supported by research by two other qualitative studies conducted with Latino populations (Edelsky, 1986; Harry, 1992). In three of the studies, parents became empowered (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1992; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Edelsky, 1986; McCaleb, 1994). In Harry's study (1992), findings identified barriers but suggested ways to empower parents of Special Education students. Research completed by McCaleb and Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba, along with supporting studies, formed the nucleus of Latino and multi-ethnic research with a critical intent.

Supporting Research From Multi-ethnic, Including Latino and Mainstream Populations

Cochran and Woolever (1983), and Cochran and Dean (1991) reported results of studies with multi-ethnic populations that included some Latinos. Robinson (1994) described the process of empowerment in a mainstream group. In each
case, critical researchers examined data for evidence of empowerment or disempowerment.

Cochran and Woolever (1983) reported preliminary ethnographic findings of existing formal and informal support systems to empower parents of preschoolers by using their own knowledge in raising their children. Empowerment, sharing power, and choices were issues in taking active roles in the development and education of children. They studied one hundred fifty multi-ethnic families who lived in twelve neighborhoods within one urban/suburban setting. The study found that providing support and strategies within neighborhood groups was more effective than at the institutional level, including schools. Although Cochran and his colleagues studied the process of change through empowerment and critical reflection as a part of school reform, they did not label their framework as critical theory. However, they examined the existing family strengths, questions, and built social networks while, at the same time, describing the processes of empowerment.

As a continuation of the same study reported by Cochran and Woolever (1983), Cochran and Dean (1991) reported later research findings. During the three-year study, researchers gave parents a choice of support group meetings, home visitors, or a combination of both. During home visits, they asked parents to identify activities they already did with their children that they felt were important for the child's development. The home visitors wrote down all activities, verified them for accuracy, and then, with the parents' permission, shared the activities with other parents in the study. Researchers emphasized what the parents already knew and stressed the importance of parental roles in their children's lives. The beginning phase built trust between the parents and the home visitors. The change in parent
involvement became evident in later phases of the study which emphasized building social networks in neighborhoods for mutual support, and later, included schools. Parents learned special skills related to having influence in the school setting through making group visits to the schools their children would attend, role-playing parent-teacher conferences, and talking to teachers about schooling.

Robinson (1994) used a critical framework within a mainstream population and cited Freire's work as one part of the basis of her ethnography of empowerment. As qualitative research, ethnography of empowerment extended beyond a description of the qualities of a given phenomenon and sought to improve the quality of life for everyone involved. Not only did Robinson's study document change, but also transformed the researcher beyond the initial demands of doing a research project.

Using empowerment and transformation as goals, Cochran and colleagues (1983, 1991) and Robinson (1994) studied preschoolers and teacher philosophies. In common, their studies focused on the process of dialogue that resulted in empowerment for participants and/or researchers. Their critical-in-intent studies supplemented Latino and multi-ethnic findings.

Reviews of Critical Literature

In the area of parent involvement, few reviews exist of research using critical theory. Cummins (1986, 1993) reviewed findings about empowerment issues. Bloch and Swadener (1992) reviewed research that applied critical theory to practice with minority or multi-ethnic populations.

Cummins (1986, 1989, 1993) reviewed policies in order to explain patterns of academic success and failure among minority students. While using "dominated" and "empowered" terminology throughout, Cummins described a
model of teaching by integrating language use with curricular content in which students became empowered and assumed greater control over their own goals. In addition, he described school/community relations on a continuum from collaborative to exclusionary (1986). In 1986, Cummins used the vocabulary and frame of empowerment. In 1989, Cummins expanded his ideas and introduced terms consistent with those used by critical theorists such as "critical thinking," "challenge the system," "creatively resolve," (p. 5) and "Freire's conscientization process," (p. 68) he finally labeled his framework, "Empowerment Pedagogy" (p. 73). Examples of empowered parents in programs included Descubrimiento in New Jersey (1989) and Pájaro Valley (1989). Minority parents learned English and applied English in classrooms by working as assistants in the first program and in the second, Latino parents learned ways to improve their children's reading through the use of children's literature written in Spanish.

Bloch and Swadener (1992) focused on critical research issues related to "children's experiences in home, community and school contexts" (p. 165). By rejecting theories of cultural mismatch and cultural incompatibility between home and schools, Bloch and Swadener (1992) stated that education in the "culture of power" would be more effective. However, they said that transformative change was not everyone's goal and described transformation as a grass-roots effort. Transformation and empowerment by members was contrasted to change imposed from above by administrators and supervisors. Concerning critical issues, Bloch and Swadener (1992) questioned whose voices should be heard and how long it would take for collaboration to become effective?

The limited number of reviews of critical literature focused on student/family and school/mainstream power relationships. Researchers
suggested that explicit instruction in the culture of power would be effective for minority groups. Cummins (1989) offered program models that incorporated teacher-parent dialogue and increased opportunities for working together in order to help children.

**Summary of Critical Research**

Research studies with Latino, multi-ethnic, and mainstream groups using critical theory and related critical frameworks are limited. Researchers used a variety of terms to describe their frameworks but all the studies examined empowerment or disempowerment of the participants. These studies, supporting studies, and reviews of literature formed the nucleus of research with multi-ethnic and mainstream groups. In this section, critical literature is summarized by examining the similarity of research questions, comparing and contrasting Latino groups, exploring factors of empowerment and disempowerment, and finally, discussing researchers' suggestions.

For all of the critical studies cited, research questions concerned ways to improve children's success in school through increasing active parent participation. McCaleb (1994) used co-authoring; Cochran and Woolever (1983) and Cochran and Dean (1991) validated parents' knowledge while building social networks; Robinson (1994) and Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1990, 1991) examined teacher-student relationships; Harry (1992) explored existing patterns of discourse between parents and school personnel; and Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1991, 1992) described a parent group that became a powerful advocate for Latino parents and children.

American families in southern and central California. Culturally, their populations were somewhat similar and yet dissimilar. All the families spoke Spanish and varying amounts of English. Beyond that, differences came into play: e.g., whether they had been raised in the city or rural areas of their countries, educational levels, socio-economic status, and how long/how many generations they had lived in the United States.

Robinson (1994) best defined the theoretical base of critical theory applied to education by stating that it went beyond a description of the qualities of a phenomenon and sought to improve the quality of life for everyone involved in the study. Both Robinson (1994) and Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1991, 1992, 1993) found themselves involved, questioning their personal involvement as objective researchers, and finally became personally transformed as a result of their studies. Other researchers focused on participant empowerment (Cochran & Dean, 1991; Cochran & Woolever, 1983; Harry, 1992; McCaleb, 1994).

Within the context of critical studies of multi-ethnic and Latino populations, researchers found that parents became empowered (Cochran & Dean, 1991; Cochran & Woolever, 1983; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1992; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Edelsky, 1986; McCaleb, 1994) or suggested ways that parents could become empowered (Harry, 1992) as a result of their studies. Although researchers used a variety of reasons to reach parents, findings demonstrated that initial personal contacts in which parents were invited into informal activities to help their own children led to increased parent involvement through home activities (Cochran & Dean, 1991; Cochran & Woolever, 1983; McCaleb, 1994), and school committees or events (Cochran & Dean, 1991; Cochran & Woolever, 1983; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1992; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Edelsky, 1986; McCaleb, 1994). In every study, parents' knowledge, language, and cultures were validated by schools and researchers.
By meeting parents' needs in terms of work schedules and supporting parents within a network, schools or researchers and Latino parents began to share responsibility for children's needs (Cochran & Dean, 1991; Cochran & Woolever, 1983; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1992; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Edelsky, 1986). Several researchers reported after initial parent participation, parents learned to use the system which led to long-term positive outcomes of academic success and increased graduation rates for the children whose parents were involved (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1992; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Edelsky, 1986).

Critical literature and studies offered suggestions to increase participant empowerment. Several researchers believed that empowerment could be taught as a skill to people who were disempowered (Bloch & Swadener, 1992). They offered specific ways to gain power through comparisons of language and cultural differences (Bloch & Swadener, 1992), a second language (Cummins, 1989), helping children in school (Cummins, 1989; McCaleb, 1994), supporting at-risk parents and children (Cochran & Dean, 1991; Cochran & Woolever, 1983; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1992), and shifting power relations between teachers, parents, and students through language and information (Harry, 1992; Robinson, 1994).

Critical literature focused on the process of dialogue between researcher and participants. Critical researchers asked related questions regarding parent participation as a factor in children's school success. In the process of analyzing issues of empowerment or disempowerment, critical researchers identified factors that increased children's success in school and barriers that inhibited active parent involvement. Critical research offered suggestions to improve situations using both participants' and researchers' words.
This study builds upon previous critical research by asking similar questions concerning Latino parent involvement roles, growing awareness over time of their roles, possibly increasing parents' active roles, with the end goal of improving children's success in school. Through dialogue, parents described their participation relative to three points in time. A second critical analysis of all data sources uncovered factors of empowerment and disempowerment.


Research from 1980 to 1986 identified and defined Latino parent participation roles in home learning activities. Three studies (Anderson & Stokes, 1984; Teale, 1986; Tomlinson, 1980) conducted with Latinos and other minorities found that not all parents participated in home and school activities in the same ways. A majority of the research from 1980 to 1986 focused on mainstream families. Limited minority findings were supplemented by mainstream research in order to define parent involvement.

**Research With Latino Populations**

From 1980 to 1986, one ethnographic study examined home practices and included Latinos within the population. Anderson and Stokes (1984) and Teale (1986) conducted a multi-ethnic study of lower-income families, including Latinos, in San Diego. Their ethnographic study of pre-school children's at-home literacy experiences included 2000 hours of observation over 18 months. Many of their findings with lower-income families in California paralleled those of Heath (1983) in the Carolina Piedmont.
Anderson and Stokes (1984) described Latino working-class practices with preschoolers and identified for the first time that Latino families, along with other low-income families, actively participated in home learning activities with their children. Teale (1986), part of the Anderson and Stokes research team, reported that literacy experiences between parent and child were an important part of working-class minority children's early life. This study contributed significant advances in understanding Latino working-class viewpoints about their own roles in the education of their child.

Prior to 1984, research by Wells (1981) and Scollon and Scollon (1979) had identified story book reading and book experiences as the only sources of literacy experiences between parents and children. Anderson and Stokes (1984) extended earlier thinking by documenting other literacy experiences between parents and children that also provided a basis for success in school. Anderson and Stokes (1984) reported that Latino parents encouraged school-related activities (such as playing school, using workbooks, or writing) and literacy related to religion for more than half the literacy events recorded. Latino children initiated literacy events more than twice as often as the Anglo child but for a shorter duration (Latino 5.25 minutes per hour; Anglo 7.13 minutes per hour). Storybook reading, resembling school book-experiences comprised 1.5% of the total for Latinos, 0% for Blacks, and 4.3% for Anglos. Anderson and Stokes (1984) refuted the thinking that literacy activities were absent in Latino and other minority homes. By documenting that literacy events between parents and children regularly occurred in low-income homes including Latino, Anderson and Stokes found that family involvement was an important aspect in children's learning.

Teale (1986) concluded from the data that literacy was part of the process of organizing family life within larger contexts of government, church, school,
and work. One major difference found in working-class families was that very little literacy at home related to parents' unskilled or semiskilled jobs and that "almost no reading or writing associated with work 'spilled over' into the home environment" (Teale, 1986, p. 190). However, families' economic circumstances did not restrict the "amount of richness of literacy experiences for preschool children" (Teale, 1986, p. 193).

Anderson and Stokes (1984) and Teale (1986) found that working-class adults arranged for children to come into contact with print but in ways that split along class and ethnic lines. A logical extension of early parent involvement in pre-school children's lives was for parents to continue participating in children's schooling upon entrance to kindergarten and beyond. Given that early literacy experiences were found to split along ethnic and class lines, after 1986, researchers began to examine whether working-class parent participation diverged from that of middle-class families once their children entered school.

Research With Other Ethnic Groups

During the same time period, 1980 to 1986, two studies supported, defined, and further explored home-school activities and parent participation with minority populations including Latino. As a group, these studies extended previous notions about parents' home involvement activities within specific ethnic groups. Two studies during this six year period served to define parent involvement with other ethnic groups.

Leichter (1984) reported many examples minority families' school-like experiences embedded in home activities. Minority parents participated when children wrote notes, asked and answered questions, and needed to look up information. In addition, parents gave explanations and listened to children
read. Tomlinson (1980) surveyed and then interviewed 700 West Indian and Asian families in Great Britain about parents' educational backgrounds, contacts with schools, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their children's schools, and career aspirations for their children. Tomlinson (1980) reported that ethnic minority parents were at a disadvantage because they did not understand the British educational system. She found that immigrant parents depended on teachers for information regarding school events and children's progress but "it seems that schools have been slow to realize the extent of this dependency" (Tomlinson, 1980, p. 198).

Research with other ethnic groups from 1980 to 1986 added to beginning definitions of parent involvement in Latino families. Parents' at-home roles included encouraging children to play school, use workbooks, read and write about religious matters, write notes, ask and answer questions, look up information, and read aloud to parents. Only Tomlinson (1980) reported minority connections with school. In addition, findings described minority parents as disadvantaged because they did not understand the educational system. As a result, minority parents depended upon teachers for additional information not needed by mainstream parents.

Supporting Research With Mainstream Populations

Three reviews of literature 1980 to 1986 focused primarily on identifying, comparing, and suggesting categories of mainstream parent involvement. From a contemporary and an historical perspective, researchers labeled parents' roles in schools. Other quantitative and qualitative research with mainstream populations defined parents' views of participation in schools.
through survey and ethnographic means. Findings from mainstream populations further defined, identified, supplemented, and contrasted with Latino parent involvement roles.

Reviews of Literature

Moles' (1982) review of literature divided parent involvement into two categories: (a) parent-school contacts (telephone calls, notes, formal and informal conferences) in which parents learned about children's performance in school and (b) at-home learning activities which taught children skills and information useful in class. Home learning activities included children viewing and discussing a television program with the family and in school, reading to or listening to the child read, and games or activities related to in-school learning. Moles (1982) concluded that research was needed to identify effective ways of contacting "certain kinds of families . . . and to accommodate diverse circumstances of families" (p. 47). Lombana's (1983) review recommended extending home roles to parents on the level of decision-making school policy such as evaluating, then hiring potential teachers, and making policy decisions.

From an historical perspective, Comer (1984) reviewed changes in parent involvement. Sixty years ago, due to limited mobility, educators lived in the same community where they taught. Informal parent encounters occurred as a matter of routine and "facilitated the mission of the school" (p. 330). By 1984, people became more mobile than previously, developed fewer kinship and friendships as support systems, and traveled longer distances to get to work. As a result, reduced opportunities for personal interaction between families and schools led to "confusion, distrust, and working at cross purposes that undermine teaching and learning in many schools" (p. 331).
Surveys

In the early 1980s, several researchers conducted large surveys to find out the opinions of all the stakeholders in education. In 1980, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) began a six year series of surveys with the six state region of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Each year the focus changed; during year 3 parents answered surveys. Various members of the team (Chavkin, Stallworth, and Williams) summarized results (1982, 1984, 1985, 1986) and each report focused on different aspects of the data analysis. One survey reported that mainstream parents wanted to be involved in policy-level decisions (Stallworth & Williams, 1982); another reported principals' preferences that parents remain involved in traditional ways e.g., at home, Open House (Williams & Stallworth, 1982). Mainstream parents answering the surveys indicated that they had enough training to make school decisions such as evaluating teachers and principals, selecting teaching materials and discipline methods, making budget decisions, and hiring or firing teachers and principals. In addition, parents surveyed also indicated a high level of interest in traditional parent involvement roles (audience, program supporter, and home tutor). Chavkin and Williams (1984, 1985) concluded that administrators most strongly supported traditional parent roles whereas parents also wanted to share in the school decision-making process.

Becker and Epstein (1981) reported the results of 4000 teacher surveys in Maryland. Seventy-five percent responded that parent involvement was a good idea but only half the teachers believed that parents could participate effectively in home-learning activities. Most commonly, teachers asked parents to listen to or read with their children. For the second technique, teachers lent books for parents to read with their children.
Other Studies

Two other studies added to SEDL and Becker and Epstein survey findings. In the first, Graue, Weinstein, and Walberg (1983) synthesized the findings of twenty-two quantitative studies conducted between 1963 and 1980. In the studies, parents learned a technique to use at home for a specified period of time and children's academic learning was found to be positively affected. Although only one of the 22 studies synthesized involved Hispanic parents, the authors concluded that "subjects that were most benefited by the programs... were Hispanic" (1983, p. 355). In the second study, Iverson, Brownlee, and Walberg (1981) explored the relationship between teacher contacts and reading score gains on normed tests. The researchers found that multiple contacts with parents of first-graders made a positive difference in post-test reading scores.

One qualitative study during 1980 to 1986 examined six white first-grade middle-class children within the context of their family life as they learned to read and write (Taylor, 1983). Embedded in their parents' descriptions, Taylor parents took active roles in school activities, supported teachers, and organized family events such as playing word games and discovering rhyming words. Parents expressed their willingness to intervene in school on behalf of younger children rather than leaving all responsibility and decision-making to teachers. Taylor identified and defined middle-class parents' roles in home and school learning.

Large-scale surveys during 1980 to 1986 defined both traditional and non-traditional roles that parents played in their children's education. These definitions contributed to Latino roles discussed earlier. Together, quantitative and qualitative research from 1980 to 1986 established beginning information and definitions of parent involvement for research.

Early studies published between 1980 and 1986 formed a framework of knowledge concerning parents' roles-as-teachers in the home and identified home-school connections and expectations in a variety of communities. Researchers asked what parents were currently doing and described parental roles. Anderson and Stokes (1984) examined Latino parents' knowledge about their roles in school-like activities. Tomlinson (1980) described minority (Asian and West Indian) parents' knowledge along with their high level of trust that school personnel would do their best for every child. Leichter (1984) questioned parents' knowledge of school and related that knowledge to home activities. Studies with mainstream populations included large surveys conducted by SEDL (Chavkin, Stallworth, & Williams, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1986), identifying parental roles held by parents (Becker & Epstein, 1981), and exploring middle-class parent knowledge and expectations (Taylor, 1983).

Parental roles in education were divided into at-home activities and in school activities. Research from 1980 to 1986 defined Latino participation solely within the context of traditional at-home activities: reading books to children (1.5%, Anderson & Stokes, 1984), reading about religion, and school-related (such as playing school, workbooks, and writing). Family involvement played an important role within at-home activities. Other minority home learning experiences included writing notes, asking and answering questions, looking up information, explaining, and listening to children read (Leichter, 1984). Tomlinson (1980) found that minority parents trusted the schools but frequently did not understand the school system. In research from 1980 to 1986, Latino and minority parent roles were confined to at-home roles.

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Research using mainstream groups added further knowledge about at-home roles such as actively watching and then discussing television programs and playing word games related to in-school learning.

Research from 1980 to 1986 revealed in-school roles of mainstream parents, an area not studied in Latino populations. In-school roles included active involvement in school activities (Taylor, 1983); intervention on behalf of the child (Taylor, 1983); and informal or formal parent contacts through notes, conferences, and telephone calls (Moles, 1982). Research with mainstream parents found that parents expected to be a part of school decision-making in curriculum, teaching practices, and evaluation (Lombana, 1983; Chavkin, Stallworth, & Williams 1982-1986).

Other studies during this time period focused on ways to increase parent involvement. For at-home activities, teachers demonstrated home learning experiences that increased children's success in school (Graue, Weinstein & Walberg, 1983; Moles, 1982). To identify and increase parental roles at school (Leichter, 1984; Taylor, 1983), researchers suggested formal and informal meetings, informal conversations, notes, with either teachers or parents initiating contacts (Comer, 1984; Iverson, Browlee, & Walberg, 1981; Moles, 1982). Lombana (1983) recommended that parents seek increased roles in school decision-making.

In summary, research from 1980 to 1986 described what Latino parents did in their homes that helped children in school. During the same time period, research defined mainstream parent involvement roles in both home and school settings. From 1987 until the present, research built upon the foundation and early definitions of parent participation. Moving away from studying the mainstream, researchers began to explore ways in which a variety of social and ethnic groups interacted with their children's schools.
Research since 1987 added to descriptions of Latino and minority parent roles beyond traditional home involvement. In addition, studies with mainstream groups supplemented Latino and minority findings.

What Do Parents Do? Expanding Early Descriptions of Parent Involvement Literature

Research studies from 1987 to the present built upon baseline definitions provided in the earlier studies. Studies since 1987 shifted the focus from mainstream and a few ethnic groups in order to describe parent involvement with specific populations. Literature during this time period added to previous definitions of at-home Latino roles from earlier research and also identified several barriers to active Latino in-school participation.

Research with Latinos and Other Ethnic Groups: 1987 to Present

Moles (1993) reported results of a survey of 2,000 Black and Hispanic parents in which 95% agreed that they verified their children’s homework, wanted to spend time helping children get a good education, and 95% percent said that they had met individually with a teacher during the current school year. Eighty-two percent said they had talked to a teacher or administrator in a year (Moles, 1993). Parents with incomes over $50,000 were three times more likely to have contact with the schools that those with incomes of $7,500 or less (Moles, 1993).

Klimes-Dougan, Lopez, Nelson, and Adelman (1992) reported parent-identified barriers to parent involvement: babysitter problems, conflicts with work schedules, and activities held at inconvenient times. Within the study’s
Latino group, parents without English proficiency participated as often as those who were proficient because researchers contacted Latinos in their native language. In a second study, Klimes-Dougan and colleagues (1992) utilized an intervention strategy of four types of invitations to families: a school flier, a personal letter, a follow-up telephone call, and a reminder invitation with an RSVP. As a whole, parental response to more pro-active school efforts did not make a difference. Researchers concluded that "interventions to enhance parent involvement require a comprehensive approach" (Klimes-Dougan et al., 1992, p. 200).

Several studies suggested ways for schools to initiate parent involvement, thus overcoming barriers suggested by Klimes-Dougan and colleagues (1992). By using multiple invitations and including the entire family in activities, studies showed that Latino parent involvement could be increased. These studies supported several of Epstein's (1987) types of parent involvement: two-way communication between home and school, ways parents assisted schools, and helping with homework. Epstein (1987) concluded that teachers who frequently used parental assistance could elicit good results from all including parents not traditionally thought of as being helpful (Epstein, 1992). Her findings were later corroborated by Moles (1993) and Johnson (1994). Zelazo (1995) examined the process of parent involvement from the perspective of the participants in a two-way bilingual school. Zelazo found that the school staff created a comfortable school environment for the families. Faculty and staff spoke both English and Spanish, invited parents to visit informally, offered transportation, and used a balance of both languages in meetings and informal communication. As an example of a way for schools to initiate Latino parent involvement, Zuñiga-Hill and Alva (1995) initiated a pilot study that involved parents as a community of learners. Modeled on Mexico's institutos,
the Instituto Familiar [Family Institute] began as grassroots informal gatherings in which parents shared their needs, wants, skills, and views of community resources, along with possible solutions. The classes increased both parents' support of their children's efforts, reinforced the need for children to stay in school, enhanced parents' comfort levels, and boosted parent participation in school activities.

**Supporting Studies**

Three supporting studies offered suggestions to improve home-school communication. Bermúdez (1993) recommended that positive home-school communication and in-service programs for teachers to foster knowledge and understanding about minority parents would reduce some apprehension and distrust of other cultures and lifestyles. Abramson (1994) suggested changes for limited English-speaking parents based upon the study: translating school information to the parents' native language was deemed critical, providing ESL training to bring parents into schools in order to learn communication skills in a second language, and using multiple methods to communicate with parents about school activities. Davies (1993) explored contacts between schools and homes that reinforced parents' notions that communication was negative when limited to academic or behavior problems. He concluded that parents did not choose to visit schools. Teachers in all three sites expressed deficit views of low-income families and their neighborhoods. Only a small number of teachers discussed the "possibility that school policies or practices may be a part of the problem" (p. 208).

Several researchers identified what Latinos thought about their roles as parents within the school system. Barriers found by Klimes-Dougan et al. (1992) were addressed by many researchers including Zelazo's (1995) study of
one bilingual school which sought to dissolve barriers between school and families. Building further connections between schools and families was illustrated by Zuñiga-Hill and Alva (1995). For resolving communication problems, frequently a barrier, Abramson (1994) suggested contacting parents in their native language and Davies (1993) recommended an emphasis on positive comments.

Supporting Research With Mainstream Groups: 1987 to the Present

Reviews of research with the general population described the importance of family involvement, identified parents' specific roles, and offered several suggestions. Stockard and Mayberry (1992) summarized research that described parental roles in their children's education such as working as classroom aides, listening to children read, and discussing assignments and work completed in class. Stockard and Mayberry (1992) concluded that "a large amount of evidence now supports the view that parent involvement is an important ingredient in improving individual children's achievement and in enhancing school effectiveness" (p. 66).

Epstein (1992) reported that families were "important for children's learning, development, and school success across the grades" (p. 4). Prior studies (Epstein, 1992) indicated that parents' practices at home to help their children compensated for less education or limited income. Epstein concluded that "many studies are needed that examine effects of school and family partnership activities on families with different backgrounds and needs" (1992, p. 7). Epstein (1992) identified five levels of family and school involvement. The first described basic obligations of families to prepare children for school and to support learning. The second detailed school
responsibilities for communicating with families. The third involved training parents to help as volunteers in school. In the fourth, teachers demonstrated and taught effective ways for parents to assist children at home in learning activities. The last level concerned the role of parents in decision-making and advocacy in schools.

Four studies of general populations described communication and effective parent participation. Gotts and Purnell (1987) found that urban schools provided planned, formal opportunities to inform parents about schools; assumed greater responsibility to conduct public relations and information-sharing activities in order to maintain public support; and finally, assured parents that they would receive prompt, early notice of behavioral or academic problems. Reynolds' (1992) quantitative study found that, according to teacher and parent reports, parental involvement in schools influenced children's performance more than home involvement. Reynolds (1992) suggested that parent involvement increased when schools extended regular invitations to visit and to attend social events. Ames (1993) concluded that typical teacher contacts concerning children not doing well discouraged parents and had the opposite effect than what the teacher intended. Ames suggested that if teachers offered optimism and the attitude that children were capable, parents were motivated to become involved. Lindle (1989) reported that parents stated their dissatisfaction with teachers' professional businesslike manner (including formal ten-minute grade conferences) and instead parents preferred timely information on an informal basis. Parents also indicated that they liked teachers who took a personal interest in their students (Lindle, 1989).

Studies and reviews of literature with the general population from 1987 until the present re-affirmed that parent involvement made a difference in
children's education. Researchers offered suggestions to increase communication between school and home. In addition, reviews of literature recognized that groups outside the mainstream had not yet been asked their opinions (Stockard & Mayberry, 1992).


Studies published since 1987 added to the framework described prior to 1987. For the first time, many studies with ethnic groups examined what minority parents did to help their children in school. Other studies and surveys continued to ask mainstream parents about their roles both at home and in school. Epstein (1992) described types of parent involvement that addressed not only what schools could do but how to help parents expand their roles in school and at home. Several researchers, applying the premise that teacher-level contact made a difference even with hard-to-reach parents, suggested ways to inform and educate teachers in order to increase effective communication.

Research since 1987 expanded views about traditional home roles to include helping children and supporting the importance of education. Classroom roles included working as assistants under the teacher's direction. During this time, research recognized and identified that Latino roles also included in-school contacts with teachers and administrators (Moles, 1993) and involvement with adult/community education programs. Although Epstein (1992) recommended training parents for classroom involvement, studies published since 1987 did not support that Latinos took active roles within their children's classrooms.
Researchers suggested that educators become more pro-active in seeking help from all parents. Two-way communication between schools and families included newsletters, calendars, notes, messages, and meetings (Epstein, 1992) in the home languages of the families (Abramson, 1994; Zelazo, 1995). Researchers suggested frequent informal, timely communication (Lindle, 1989; Zelazo, 1995) especially positive (Davies, 1993) between teachers and parents as ways more parents would become involved. Another suggestion was to relax the formality of school and make the environment comfortable and accessible for all parents by hiring staff representing the ethnic groups/languages of the parents, extending invitations to visit teachers and classrooms informally, providing a space for parents to get together, and offering transportation (Zelazo, 1995).

Research from 1987 to the present recognized barriers to parent involvement and offered solutions. Many of the identified barriers affected working-class Latino parents. Barriers described by Klimes-Dougan and colleagues (1992) concerned babysitting, work schedules, inconvenient times for activities, and communication difficulties (Abramson, 1994; Bermúdez, 1993). One example of solutions addressing the above barriers was Zelazo's (1995) description of a school designed to welcome and involve entire families while, at the same time, eliminated difficulties. Epstein (1992) identified training needs to inform parents in both school and home activities and to offer ways to supplement both areas. Spanning language and interest differences, researchers suggested community programs that increased parent participation (Zuñiga-Hill & Alva, 1995).

This critical study, using the dialogic process, builds upon the findings of other researchers. In response to repeated questions to elicit information about parent roles, Latino parents responded by describing not only their
roles but their beliefs. Our plática conversations allowed time during our conversations, intervals to think between visits, and informality for parents' reflections concerning their beliefs.

Why Do Parents Become Involved in Their Children's Education? Parents' Beliefs: 1980 to Present

Findings from the second and third sections described Latino parent participation in at-home roles. However, as Epstein (1992) noted, Latinos were involved at home in specific ways but still did not take many active roles in school. In another area of parent involvement research, begun in the 1980s, researchers began to ask parents, including Latino parents, why they were involved in their children's education. These underlying beliefs guide parents' actual roles in practice. The focus on parents' beliefs explores why Latino parents assume at-home traditional roles that they do rather than reaching into the school and creating the impact that they could, based on population projections. In this section, I present major and supporting studies of Latino and working-class parents' beliefs. Finally, I discuss supplementary research conducted with other ethnic and mainstream groups.

Research With Latino Working-Class Populations: Beliefs

A study by Heath (1986) built upon her 1983 research with minority and working-class families by exploring Latino working-class parent beliefs in children's early socialization. As one of the early studies of Mexican-Americans, Heath (1986) said that information from this particular group of immigrants might or might not generalize to other groups of Latinos. Heath
(1986) found that within the language-rich environment of the Mexican families, little was actually "directed specifically to preschoolers" (p. 163) unless the child had information to add to adults' conversation. As a result, Latino children were active agents in their own language learning but directed by parents to demonstrate respect and politeness toward elders. Language use, identified by Heath in 1986, added to definitions of what Latino parents did in their homes that related to children's success in school.

Additionally, Heath (1986) stated that language-minority communities were relatively closed and thus unwilling to let outsiders, including educators, tell them how to socialize their young children to language or anything else. Thus, parent education programs that set out to teach parents how to raise their children so they will be linguistically prepared for school have relatively little chance of achieving far-reaching influence. The desire for change in such a core value as how one socializes the young must come from within a group; trying to impose external values on preschool home life is not likely to bring any significant internal change to families. (p. 181)

Based upon Heath's (1986) conclusions, programs such as one described by Zuñiga-Hill and Alva (1995) focused on parents' interest rather than changing patterns of child raising.

**Research With Latino Populations: Beliefs**

Several major qualitative studies by Goldenberg and colleagues (1992, 1992, 1995) were conducted exclusively with Latinos to examine parents' own beliefs and how they wanted to and did participate in schools. Researchers included
some ways schools could initiate more Latino involvement based upon parents' beliefs.

Goldenberg (1992) found that if a teacher took a strong corrective action that included parent intervention and involvement, chances of student success increased. In response to teacher requests, Latino parents used their own resources of time, energy, and educational background to help their children at home. As a result of teacher-initiated parent involvement, both children in the study improved scholastically (Goldenberg, 1992).

In a study of kindergarten literacy, Goldenberg, Reese, and Gallimore (1992) examined the context of the home that influenced early literacy experiences. Researchers observed literacy experiences of ten families during one school year. Similar to previous research findings (Goldenberg, 1989, 1992), Goldenberg and colleagues reported that the Latino families had few literacy materials in their homes and did not have access to books. As a result, children had had few experiences with meaningful text prior to entering kindergarten. They also found that:

many minority and low socio-economic families believe that learning to read is a process of learning decoding and other skills, not a process driven by children's interest in making meaning from written texts and opportunities for frequent interactions with books. (Goldenberg, Reese, & Gallimore, 1992, p. 504)

Because Spanish is a phonetically regular language with 90% correspondence between sound and symbol, reading in Latin America was taught sequentially from sounds, syllables, words, then finally text (Goldenberg, 1990). Based upon their own knowledge and experiences with Spanish, Latino parents assumed that learning to read in English paralleled their own experiences with a phonetically regular language. Latino parents' philosophy about learning to
read in Spanish ran counter to meaning-making and prior experiences with literacy materials, the philosophy of many teachers. In order to address conflicting philosophies, Goldenberg, Reese, and Gallimore (1992) suggested that children's homework reading should be within the parents' frame of reference concerning how children learn.

Reese and Gallimore (1995) used the same data sample as reported by Goldenberg, Reese and Gallimore (1992). Findings from 1995 focused on the origin of parents' beliefs and practices based upon whether they or their parents had experienced ranch or town schooling in Mexico. The Ranch Generation received an elementary education and their parents had had two years or less of schooling and worked on farms. Schooling available on the ranches in the grandparents' day was minimal; some classes met under trees, other areas were too remote for teachers to reach. As a result, education for the grandparents rarely went beyond second or third grade (basic literacy and computation). As parents, the Ranch Generation did not provide literacy materials for their children because they had never had these materials themselves, nor had previous generations.

The Town Generation, with rancher, shopowner, or worker parents, received secundaria (our junior high level) educations. The Town Generation's experiences more closely approximated those found in most areas of the United States. Consequently, both Ranch and Town Generation Latino parents who immigrated to the United States:

seek to play a more active role in supporting their children's education than their own parents did. Lacking, for the most part, models within their own childhood experiences for what the support of schoolwork and literacy actually means in terms of specific, daily activities, many of the parents
look to school for suggestions and requirements for guidance. (Reese & Gallimore, 1995, p. 11)

Goldenberg and colleagues (1992, 1995) concluded that more written and telephone messages between school and home with activities for home learning resulted in greater parental satisfaction and reported involvement with their children's learning. In addition, their research found that home reading activities required as homework for school-age children significantly impacted opportunities and literacy development of younger, pre-school-age siblings.

As support for the Goldenberg studies, Azmitia, Cooper, Rivera, Dunbar, Lopez, Gallimore, Ittel, and Garcia (1995) reported preliminary findings that as low-income/Latino children moved into higher grades, they frequently exceeded their parents' levels of education and had to rely on other family members (siblings, relatives) to assist with homework. However, if parents continued to monitor homework, even if they believed they could no longer help with the content, parental monitoring positively associated with academic performance. Azmitia et al. stated that the discontinuities between home and school might not be in cultural values and beliefs but in levels of "parents' schooling, availability of information about school policies, and parents' ability to take advantage of this information" (1995, p. 7).

**Supporting Research With Working-Class Populations: Beliefs**

Lareau (1987, 1989) examined two first grade classrooms in a working-class community and a professional middle-class neighborhood, questioning what schools asked of parents and how parents responded to school requests. Lareau interviewed parents, teachers, principals, and resource specialists. In both

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classes, teachers made similar requests and suggestions to parents about ways they could help children at home. Lareau found that all teachers took parental participation in school performance seriously and considered their requests reasonable, regardless of parents' social position. However, working-class parents believed that it was the school's job to educate and depended upon the teachers' expertise. People with working-class jobs left work at the end of the day and did not spend time at home working on job-related matters. People with these jobs tended to make less money and had less flexibility in work hours. They could not leave work to volunteer in schools and when they did leave work for school-related reasons, they were usually not paid for the hours they missed. Since the pay was less, many families had multiple jobs and multiple wage-earners living under the same roof (Lareau, 1987, 1989).

To apply Lareau's findings (1989) to other situations, she suggested that working-class schools could tie children's grades to parent involvement. Since working-class parents wanted children to "comply with standards of external authority" (p. 181) as demonstrated by grades on report cards, teachers' comments should be directed towards improving grades. In addition, Lareau (1989) suggested that teachers take advantage of kinship groups and recruit parents and volunteers by asking each person to bring a relative.

Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) conducted a five-year study of four inner-city families. Literacy, parenting, modeling, and involvement intertwined within the context of the families' lives. Parents expressed their desire for children's success in both school and life while communicating with the school and teachers both in writing and in person. Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines' findings contradicted the media and government documents which focused on the deficient lives of welfare and unemployment recipients by describing the rich experiences that permeated the lives of several inner-city children.
Supporting Research: Latino, Non-Mainstream and Mainstream Beliefs

Several researchers studied Latino populations using survey techniques and reported information that had not previously been known about Latinos' beliefs. Other studies focused on barriers to parent involvement and ways to overcome them. Several researchers made suggestions for non-mainstream families to improve communication between home and school.

Dornbusch and Wood (1989) surveyed 7800 adolescents including Latinos and found that:

1. Latino parents with more education emphasized diversity more and conformity less;
2. Parents expected Latino male children to be disobedient in order to take their place as adults within a patriarchal society;
3. There is a positive correlation between student performance and Latino parental expectations; higher than the correlation found with middle-class white parents who may have unrealistic expectations for their children;
4. At both elementary and high school levels, parent involvement has a positive effect of students' attitudes and achievement. (pp. 73-88)

Ritter, Mont-Reynaud, and Dornbusch (1993) surveyed minority parents, particularly lower income, concerning their perceptions about their high school age children's education. They used 2955 mailed-in parent responses and 7,900 adolescent responses given at school; 17% were Hispanic. Within each ethnic group, more-educated parents considered working hard in all academic subjects more important than less-educated parents. As a group, Hispanics responded to statements indicating that they "trust the school, they are less comfortable with teachers, less likely to criticize teachers, and more
likely to defer to the schools" (p. 117). In addition, they were less likely to contact the school if there was a problem. Hispanics, with the lowest level of education in the sample, were "not familiar with the curriculum and procedures of American schools [and] they were less comfortable interacting with the educational system" (p. 118). But, the researchers concluded that Hispanic responses indicated a high level of involvement and caring about their children's education.

Chavkin and Williams (1987, 1989, 1993), continuing earlier SEDL studies, questioned 506 Hispanic parents as a minority subsample focusing on parental attitudes and practices and provided translators for those who did not read English. Hispanic parents agreed strongly with the importance of being involved with their children's education. Responses indicated that more minority parents believed that teachers were in charge of getting parents involved (62% African-American and Latino; 38% of the Anglos). Other differences reported were: 75% of Hispanics believed that school districts should make rules for involving parents (compared to 49% of Anglos), and 38% of Hispanics agreed that working parents did not have time to be involved in school activities (compared to 14% of Anglo parents). Parents, regardless of ethnicity, ranked their top three roles as audience, home-tutor, and program supporter "clearly, the traditional roles of parent involvement" (Chavkin & Williams, 1993, p. 77). Minority parents reported that they participated most often in the traditional activities rather than roles of advocacy, school decisions, budgets, or evaluations. Hispanic parents' highest-ranked responses suggested that teachers should give parents more information about children's success in school, help children understand that parent involvement was important, and make parents feel more welcome in schools. The authors concluded that minority parents, including Hispanics,
"expressed a strong interest in a variety of roles and activities" (p. 80) and that perhaps appropriate structures and strategies for involving minority parents did not yet exist.

Supporting studies by López (1993), Wasley (1993), and one aspect of Zelazo (1995) asked Latino parents what they thought about their roles in school. López (1993) surveyed 208 parents of K-3 children using questionnaires in English; nineteen were answered by Mexican-Americans. Mexican-American parents, making below $10,000 annual income, reported that they were most involved in school by supporting fundraising projects (100%), attending parent-teacher conferences (77%), and attending school-sponsored functions (66%). Mexican-Americans, earning more than $10,000 annually, responded that they supported fundraising (50%), attended parent conferences (100%), attended school-sponsored functions (70%), and participated in parent advisory committee meetings (40%). Mexican-American parents also stated that their reason for becoming involved with the schools was because their children wanted them to participate. In addition, a large number of Mexican-American respondents recommended that schools offer more activities that involve families. López concluded parent suggestions reflected the "strong family orientation of this ethnic group" (1993, p. 154).

Wasley (1993) reported preliminary findings of parents' survey responses, including one high school (80% Latino) in a western community. She classified findings according to three themes:

1. What parents want from schools: access to information about what the school is changing from and to so they can support their children; parents want the schools to challenge their children; parents want to understand how the school works so they can communicate with the person they need.
2. What parents want for children: to be known and well cared for; for children to gain competence and confidence; to like school and to demonstrate what they are learning; to feel that active participation in school means something; for children to have real, meaningful intellectual work.

3. What role parents want: legitimate opportunities to think with the educators about what they want for their children; to help other parents get involved; opportunities to express their views on traditional standards and practices. (Wasley, 1993, pp. 723-726)

Zelazo (1995), as part of her study cited previously, found that Latino parents hold different beliefs than mainstream parents. Spanish-speaking parents, raised and educated in Mexico, believed that educators' responsibilities included decision-making and running the school. In contrast, English-speaking parents believed they had a voice in decision-making and observing in order to monitor curriculum and teacher practices (Zelazo, 1995).

Supporting research that described Latino and minority beliefs emphasized that, although parents did not always understand the educational system, the families trusted educators to be concerned with all children's best interests. In each study, parents said that they believed that parent involvement was important and participated at home as much as possible. Parents suggested that educators could make them feel more welcome and give parents more information about their children's success. In the studies, Latino parents reported that they were interested in traditional roles in school rather than becoming decision-makers and monitors of curriculum.
Why Did Parents Become Involved in Education? Summary of Parents' Beliefs

The nature of parents' beliefs seemed to divide along working class (including Latino) and middle class (including Anglo) lines with some variation within each group. Reese and Gallimore (1995) found that parents' past educational experiences played a significant role. Lareau (1987, 1989), using Bourdieu's terminology, described cultural capital as knowledge necessary to figure out and use the system successfully. Middle-class families who understood the language of schools, patterns of authority, and curriculum (Lareau, 1989), facilitated their children's adjustment to school by providing experiences that prepared children for success in school. Working-class families, including Latinos, believed that schools and teachers were solely responsible for educating children and sought little information about curriculum or the educational process and their involvement was usually limited to non-academic matters (Lareau, 1989; Zelazo, 1995).

Working-class Anglos and Latinos used extended family to supplement their own knowledge of schools. Directed learning activities in the home usually increased when the oldest child reached school-age and had homework (Reese & Gallimore, 1995). Younger siblings benefited by entering school with more school-like knowledge gained through their older siblings' experiences (Reese & Gallimore, 1995; Taylor, 1983). Traditional roles of parent involvement (Epstein, 1987) with a focus on helping at home were filled by working-class and Latino parents.

Since working-class parents considered schools to be the site of all learning (Goldenberg, Reese, & Gallimore, 1992; Lareau, 1989), parents trusted teachers to make sound educational decisions for all children (Ritter, Mont-Reynaud, & Dornbusch, 1993). Teachers, for their part, believed that traditional parent
involvement roles were the most helpful (Chavkin & Williams, 1993). As a result, working class and Latino families were less directly involved in school (Moles, 1993) and therefore did not intervene as successfully when their children needed special help or consideration (Johnson, 1994).

Quantitative studies included surveys (Ames, 1993; Chavkin & Williams, 1987, 1993; Epstein, 1987; Gotts & Purnell, 1987; Ritter, Mont-Reynaud, & Dornbusch, 1993) and studies (Klimes-Dougan et al., 1992; Reynolds, 1992) conducted over a short period of time. Quantitative research provided responses from large samples, thus adding information regarding the structure of parents' beliefs within their involvement. Qualitative studies examined the phenomenon of parents' beliefs with small groups of participants over a longer period of time (Lareau, 1987, 1989), specific cultures (Azmitia et al., 1995; Davies, 1993; Lindle, 1989; Zelazo, 1995; Zuñiga-Hill & Alva, 1995), and re-visited data (Goldenberg, 1989, 1992; Goldenberg, Reese, & Gallimore, 1992; Reese & Gallimore, 1995) with different questions in order to elicit different facets of parent involvement. Qualitative research with small groups and different cultures over extended periods fleshed out the structure with specific information and added to the knowledge base regarding parents' beliefs.

**Summary**

Although critical frameworks differed, researchers began with the same general question: How can children's success in school be improved through increasing active parent participation? Many of the critical studies included or focused on Latino parent involvement. Critical studies employed dialogic processes to involve participants. In the process of analyzing issues of empowerment or disempowerment, critical researchers identified factors that increased children's success in school and barriers that inhibited active
parent involvement. Critical research offered suggestions to improve situations using both participants' and researchers' words.

Literature from education research defined parents' roles in their children's education. Latino, minority, and mainstream findings combined to create early definitions of Latino at-home and mainstream at-home and at-school involvement. Research since 1987 affirmed that Latinos also participated in school areas but that some barriers existed. Several studies suggested ways to overcome differences between social/ethnic groups and schools. During the same time period, other researchers contrasted viewpoints and beliefs held by Latino, working-class, and mainstream parents.

This study used a critical framework of dialogue to explore questions about Latino parent involvement. The focus of the questions was to identify and describe Latino parent roles in participating in their children's education. However, parents responded not only with role descriptions but also explanations of their beliefs. A critical analysis of all data sources uncovered factors that enabled and constrained parents' involvement in their children's education.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, the research design of this study is described. Applying the
dialogic framework of critical theory, this study employed the informal style
of *plática* conversations (Sherraden & Barrera, 1995). Next, the research
context, participants, data sources, and data collection are explained. Data
sources were analyzed using the constant comparative (Strauss & Corbin, 1990)
and critical analysis (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Thomas, 1993). Literature by
(1991), Gibson (1986), and Freire (1970, 1973) contributed to the research
design and framework of this study. In addition, I address the criteria for
goodness of study suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1982, 1994). Finally, I
discuss my assumptions and the limitations of this study.

Research Design

Although data collection focused on a 10 month period during which
children were preparing to attend or were attending mainstream classrooms,
this study took advantage of an insider-outsider relationship that began in
1992, thus allowing participants to draw on multiple experiences over time. In
addition, I used a Latino-accepted pattern of communication of friendly
interviews called the *plática* conversation (Sherraden & Barrera, 1995, p. 455),
a qualitative method. This study took into account Latino distrust of impersonal institutions (Delgado-Gaitán & Trueba, 1991) by creating positive interpersonal interactions (Marín & Marín, 1991). The purpose of dialogue was to elicit parents' perceptions of what is (Thomas, 1993) in reference to three different points in time.

Through qualitative methods of interviews, research questions focused on examining Latino parent involvement. Questions repeated over a 10 month period contributed to the depth and breadth of the parents' responses, filling in the Latino context with much detail. The research context was described through documenting Latino participants' thinking and perspectives in their own words, as suggested by Marshall & Rossman (1989). As a participant observer in this study, I maintained a balance between being an inside participant and outside observer, described by Spradley (1980). By using the constant comparative method of data analysis during the collection and transcription phase of this study, I initially coded, clustered, and organized segments of conversations and other data sources. The constant comparative method revealed descriptions of what is, essential to establishing current situations prior to critical analysis.

As a second analysis of data, I critically examined descriptions of status quo that were generated. Critical analysis uncovered enabling and constraining factors for the parents in this study. Many other areas explored during our plática conversations such as miscellaneous questions, biculturalism, home, miscellaneous, and conferences (see Appendix C, Axial Coding for a list) were not included in this final report.

As suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1982) and Yin (1989) to develop contextual relevance, I used multiple case studies for the research design. Evidence from each family's interviews, including conversation transcripts
and other data sources, formed one case. From the individual sets of data, each case contributed to the larger unit of study (Yin, 1989). Through the process of responding to the same questions during each conversation, parents' responses diverged, indicating different life experiences, philosophies for child raising, and expectations of schools and children. Raw data remain within each individual case in the native language of the parents.

As an on-going process during the study, I examined all data sources using the constant comparative method. I deduced and verified statements of relationships with the data from earlier conversation transcripts and later transcripts as they were completed and other data sources. As examples of the variety of data, some patterns such as experiences in school, parent responsibility, and parental expectations of school (see Appendix C, Axial Coding) emerged and were coded accordingly. These coded patterns of responses across three cases contributed to "thick description" (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Convergent information across all three cases, along with other data sources, supported patterns found in the axial coding. Suggested by Yin (1989) as one way to report case studies, I wove issues across the three case studies into themes of prior, ESL, and mainstream experiences. A second and critical analysis of enabling and constraining factors uncovered barriers for the Latino parents in this study. As described by Mathison (1988), multiple sources of data ensured triangulation and added both credibility and confirmability to this study.

Confidentiality

Before undertaking this study, I received approval for my proposal from the Office of Research Administration, University of Nevada Las Vegas. The original approval was issued in December, 1993 and extensions for data collection were granted until 1996 (Appendix A, Human Subjects Approval).

To participate in this study, parents signed permission forms with the university (Appendix A). Consent forms stated the purpose of the study, permitted release of information for the purpose of this final report, and informed parents of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. In order to ensure anonymity and retain confidentiality, families and children chose their own pseudonyms to be used in reporting. Parents understood that this study would take some of their time and much thinking. Some of this time involved member-checking (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) parents' own words and ideas. But, as Selena's mother stated earlier, "Es tan importante, los padres y los maestros trabajando juntos" [It is so important, parents and teachers working together].

Critical Theory: Framing the Case Study Data Analysis

In order to understand Latino parents' roles, it was first necessary to describe status quo, what is, during three specific time periods. After generating descriptions and establishing status quo, then data can be critically analyzed. In the second analysis, I used a critical framework to examine collected data for investigating power and equality within the context of schooling, as suggested by LeCompte and Preissle (1993). There were eight factors used for data analysis in this study that represent issues central to
critical theory. In this study, coding and critical analysis of data for empowerment included identifying (a) power, (b) equality, (c) marginalized people, (d) empowerment, (e) differential treatment, (f) hidden power, and (g) language practices that disguised power (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). In addition to the above codes, Thomas (1993) suggested an eighth: assumptions that inhibit, repress, and constrain. Some of these codes emerged during the initial analysis of data. More became apparent upon critical re-analysis. During the exploration of beliefs about parent involvement, Latino parents and I uncovered issues of equality, inequality, role differences, and power within the context of their involvement in their children's education.

In order to build background and trust with parents for this study, it was important to begin the dialogic process by focusing on parents' prior experiences with older children and the child who had spent three years in my classroom. During the last four years, these parents had communicated with me in their native language. Frequently we had discussed what their children knew, their own involvement in their child's education, and, as a consequence, what they themselves had learned about school. Since parents knew me as their child's former teacher at the time the study began, our conversations provided a safe atmosphere in which to discuss education. At the time of this study, a child in each family was undergoing the process of adapting to a fourth grade mainstream classroom. During ten months of conversations, parents reflected upon their children's experiences while describing and helping a child adapt to a mainstream classroom.
Research Context

The District and School

The urban elementary school classrooms in this study were located in the southwestern part of the United States. Currently, the school district was the tenth largest in the nation with almost 22,000 language different students (Helvie, November 1996). At the time of the study, the Second Language Program Center assessed and placed a weekly average of 180 English as a Second Language (ESL) students (Helvie, 1994). After testing, ESL students enrolled in the school zoned for their neighborhood. Ninety percent of the second language students were Spanish-speaking with all other foreign languages comprising the remaining ten percent (Helvie, 1996).

Children whose parents participated in this study attended an elementary school of approximately 600 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. The school was located in an upper middle class neighborhood of custom homes owned by parents working in professions. Many children walked to school while others from the immediate neighborhood received rides from parents both morning and afternoon. Faculty welcomed parents' help in various ways in the classrooms, cafeteria, and office.

The student population of the school in 1994-1995 (latest figures during data collection for this study, June 1996) was 65.1% white, 6.8 % black, 5.3 % Asian, and 22.2 % Latino. The minority population totaled 34.9%. Test scores on the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) placed a majority of the 125 Latino children in four ESL classrooms. School administration mainstreamed the remaining Latino children, considered bilingual according to test scores, into classrooms of approximately thirty teachers.

In contrast to families and students from the upper middle class

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neighborhood, four busloads of children arrived from two other areas of the city, including 99% of ESL students placed in ESL classrooms. Two busses of children came from the neighborhood described in this study. Approximately 95% of the bussed children were from the lowest socio-economic status as revealed by free or reduced-price school breakfasts and lunches. Because of the distance, parents of the children from these two areas needed to find transportation and time during school hours in order to visit the school or to take care of school-related problems.

The Neighborhood

The families in this study lived in one of a series of cul-de-sacs near the intersection of two busy streets. The two streets provided easily accessible public bus transportation for some of the families in this area. The cul-de-sac had twenty two-story buildings, each with four one and two bedroom apartments. Various landlords owned the buildings but they were managed and maintained by a management group. As a result, this was a better-kept cul-de-sac than a neighboring one where there was no organized effort of community upkeep. The management painted the outside of the buildings, maintained the pool and surrounding areas, and mowed and trimmed the grass each week. Children played tetherball and other games in grassy areas. Rents ranged from $400 to $550 a month during the time of the study.

Every five years, management re-painted and re-carpeted each apartment. In addition, if residents wanted to paint more frequently, the management company supplied the paint. The families decorated their apartments with entertainment centers, pictures, mirrors, and silk flower arrangements. In the dozens of visits I made to the cul-de-sac to see families, teach English, and to pick up their children for adventures, their apartments were well-worn but

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neat and clean.

The neighborhood was ethnically mixed. Some of the residents were Anglo, Black, and Native Americans; others were from Latino and Asian countries such as Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, El Salvador, Southeast Asia, and China. Frequently when I met with parents, there were other adults visiting and working while staying temporarily with their relatives in the neighborhood. Several years ago, a student in my class named thirteen people who were visiting or lived in her two bedroom apartment. By having a number of working adults in the apartment, families could afford the rent more easily. Many adult family members worked in construction, sales, nurseries, and auto repair; others worked in hotels as maids, valet parking, buspersons, bellpersons, cooks; and still others worked as babysitters for the neighborhood's working parents.

School district rezoning placed children from this cul-de-sac in three different elementary schools between 1990 and 1996. The first zoning change affected two of the children after kindergarten and moved them into the school in this study. Because of a zoning change in 1996 by the school district, all three students will attend a different school for fifth grade.

**Gaining Entry Into the Neighborhood**

During the three years preceding my study, I met many of the residents of the neighborhood. I taught in the school that the neighborhood's children attended and was one of two Spanish-speakers at the school. Because I team-taught with another teacher, I could leave the classroom to interpret for many Latino parents both in the school office and on the telephone.

My teaching-partner, Karon Lee, and I also involved our students in extracurricular activities such as student council meetings and summer Math Camp.
The student council met before school. Since our students were bussed and unable to arrive early enough for the meetings, we each picked up four students in our cars, bought them breakfast, and then took them to school. We also involved our students in the university-sponsored Math Camp. Students experienced spatial math activities in a university setting in the mornings. In the afternoons, we visited museums, classes and dormitories on campus, and places of interest off campus. In order to arrange transportation for these activities, I telephoned parents, wrote letters, and talked to them in person if we could not contact them in other ways. In the process of picking up and dropping off children at home, we became acquainted with their families and they also became acquainted with us.

In addition, Karon and I taught English in the neighborhood twice a week for one school year. Selena’s mother, who originally said that she would not walk to the pool area to learn English, decided two years later that she needed English so she could talk to people at work. She arranged to have the classes in her apartment and invited a group of people to join her. We met many neighborhood families during the English classes.

Whenever I visited the neighborhood for this study, I always parked at one end and walked to the opposite end. Walking gave me an opportunity to talk to other parents who were picking up mail, watching children at the pool, going to their cars, or even driving down the street. We exchanged comments, I asked and answered questions, and I frequently ran errands and made telephone calls to the school for information they needed. Families who were not participants in this study greeted me, waved, and asked questions. I always felt welcomed in the neighborhood.
Research Participants

Selection Procedures

Three criteria were used for selecting Latino families to participate in this study. The criteria were:

1. Parents of children who received scores on the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) that identified them as bilingual and ready to leave an ESL classroom.

2. Parents of children who had been in my classroom from first through third grades in order to determine what classroom interactions aided parents later during mainstreaming.

3. Parents who had prior experiences with older children in the family moving from ESL to mainstream classrooms.

Only the families of Selena and Jerry met the above criteria.

In June, 1995, I amended the original criteria due to personal problems in both Selena's and Jerry's families. I added a third Latino family. Their son, Jorge, qualified on the LAS for the mainstream classroom and had been a student in my classroom for three years. Because Jorge was the oldest child in the family, his parents did not meet the third criteria. Therefore, with Jorge's family, we began with research question two. Three families met the original and amended criteria.

All three students, considered bilingual according to the Language Assessment Scales given in February, 1995, entered regular classes with their English-speaking peers in August, 1995. Two, Selena and Jerry, had older brothers or sisters who had been mainstreamed into regular classrooms in the previous three years. I had communicated with all the parents regularly from 1992 to 1995 and developed a beginning relationship of trust and
The Families

The three families in this study patiently answered my questions and extended my listening and speaking vocabularies in Spanish. I asked questions that drew on their own experiences and knowledge. They, in turn, respected me as a teacher with many questions and some answers. Parents willingly participated in plática interviews in which we digressed for many reasons important to us.

The First Two Participant Families:
Selena and Jerry

As stated previously, I originally asked two families to participate in this study. Selena's mother, who had arranged for us to teach English classes in her home, said that she would be happy to answer questions. Jerry's mother also agreed. Both families met my original three criteria.

Both families had children who had been assigned to my multi-age ESL classroom from first through third grade. Frequently, the parents and I wrote notes to each other and we had built rapport during our three years of parenting-teaching their children. Both children, Selena and Jerry, passed the Language Assessment Scales given in the spring of 1995 so they were ready to be mainstreamed in August 1995. Selena and Jerry had older siblings who had experienced the transition from ESL to mainstream classes. Therefore, the Latino parents in this study would be able to compare older children's experiences to those of Selena and Jerry.
Selena's Family. Selena was the youngest child in her family. She lived with her father, mother, mother's mother, and two brothers. At the beginning of this study, Selena entered fourth grade, one brother continued in middle school, and the other entered high school. All three children attended different schools. Selena's father had lived in the United States for about twenty years and worked as a non-union carpenter. During the four years that I had known the family, he changed jobs several times, though always to a job that was a bit more stable than the previous one. When he worked, the family could afford a new dining room set and living room furniture. However, some of his jobs were construction piece work, which did not provide a steady income.

During the days, Abuelita (Grandmother) babysat for some of the neighborhood's children and took care of the house for the family. In her mid-seventies, she cooked, cleaned, and babysat for young children. In addition, if Selena or her two brothers were sick, they could stay home with Abuelita. I did not understand Abuelita's role at first, but after seeing her as an active participant and organizer in a neighborhood wedding and funeral, I began to understand her position as the matriarch of the extended family.

To provide the family's steady income, Selena's mother, Rosario, worked as a maid in a large hotel. As a member of the union, she received benefits and some job security. During the last four years, the hotel laid her off for a few weeks at a time when business slowed. Her days off coincided with my weekends, so we usually met on Saturday mornings or Fridays after school.

Rosario willingly talked about any subject and expressed her opinions about everything. Frequently we talked about issues other than my questions. Much of our miscellaneous conversations related to comparing schools and life in Mexico to life as working parents in the United States.
Rosario discussed her aspirations for her children's future on several occasions. In an early conversation prior to this study, Rosario's younger son had not performed particularly well in school. She talked about how much he loved animals and their ownership of a *rancho* in Mexico where he could live and raise many animals. At that time, she was not certain that he would do well in school. At the time I asked question one and related questions in July 1995, his grades had improved and she considered different future possibilities for him that included academics. For Selena, Rosario said that she would like for her to be a professional, a teacher, for example, but insisted that Selena's future was the child's choice. Selena and her other children would not be pushed into professions that they did not want. Rosario's aspirations for her children changed, based upon their strengths in school and what the children themselves said they wanted to do in the future. Rosario said she wanted her children to have spouses and families and to be content like she and her husband were. For all of her children, Rosario wanted them to be good citizens.

**Jerry's Family.** Jerry's mother, Marta, also worked as a maid at another large hotel. Married, Marta had four children: Jessica was three, James entered kindergarten that August, Jerry entered fourth grade, and Lisa was a junior in high school. Like Rosario, Marta, belonged to a union that provided health benefits and some job security. Her husband was the father of the two youngest children. Jerry's father was a doctor in Mexico, and his older sister's father had died several years ago. As Marta described her life during the interviews, she had had time to spend with the oldest child, less with Jerry, but very little time to spend with the two youngest. She felt responsible for the housework in addition to working full-time. She frequently stated that lack of

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time was the biggest problem in her life. According to Marta, another problem was her husband. Together her problems compounded her frustration with not being able to do all that she wanted.

When I visited Marta for the first interview of this study, she seemed very distracted, talking and verifying answers with her older daughter, Lisa, rather than speaking directly to me. After the interview, I turned off the tape recorder. She explained that her husband had just moved out and they were contemplating divorce after several difficult years of marriage. She worried about him but did not know what else to do to help her husband.

In spite of her current difficulties, Marta supported Jerry's and Lisa's future aspirations. Lisa told me that she expected to go to college, become an accountant and later on go back to college and become a pediatrician. After attending the university math camp, Marta reported that Jerry discussed his goal of attending college. Marta said that she would do what she could so he could attend. In many of our ensuing conversations, we continued to discuss college, ways to finance college, and scholarships. For this family, children's aspirations to continue their educations beyond high school were augmented by specific information so that Marta could begin to set plans in motion.

In spite of Jerry's frequently stated desire to attend college, he had a difficult time in fourth grade. Marta's goal for him became limited to surviving the current school year. During Spring vacation, Jerry's mother and I had our last official conversation, including discussing what we could do to help Jerry to at least get him through fourth grade. We also talked about her continually worsening problems with her husband and we discussed what could be done. I drove Marta home and a few hours later her husband suffered a fatal heart attack. Two days later she invited me to come to his funeral and told me what had happened. The difficulties with Jerry became less important
than the family's financial survival for the next couple of months.

Adding the Third Family: Jorge

During the first two interviews, Selena's family reported problems with Immigration, and a formal hearing was scheduled for September 1995. If they did not win their appeal, then they would have to leave the United States immediately. In the summer and fall, Jerry's family was also in a transition between marriage and divorce. Marta's husband helped financially by buying bicycles for his children but did not offer money for food or rent. Marta did not know if she would stay in the apartment, try to move to a less expensive apartment, or even return to Mexico. I had begun this study with three criteria; Selena's and Jerry's families were the two who met all three criteria. Both families reported problems that might cause them to return to Mexico, thereby ending this study before I could begin asking question three. In order for me to continue this study, I decided to amend one of the original criteria so that I could add a third family.

Jorge's Family. Only one other child had been in my multi-age classroom for three years and would enter a mainstream class in August 1995. I had developed rapport with his parents because they visited school far more often than any other family, frequently expressing their well-thought-out opinions related to school. The only original criteria for my study that they did not meet was that Jorge, my former ESL student, was the oldest child in the family. His parents would be unable to compare his mainstream experiences with an older child’s (Question one). Therefore, when they agreed to participate in the study, we began by discussing question two concerning his three years in my ESL classroom. In our conversations, Jorge's family described their own
background experiences in school.

Jorge's father worked several jobs concurrently. He cooked in one hotel's Mexican restaurant and was a salesman and auto mechanic. Jorge's mother, Rosa, was a housewife with two children younger than Jorge. She also babysat for several of the neighborhood's children. When I saw the family either at school or at their apartment, they often had additional children with them, including Jerry's little brother, who attended morning kindergarten. In one of our early interviews, Rosa explained that they thought it was so important for them to be with their children that her husband arranged his work schedule around the hours of the school day.

Jorge, the oldest child in his family, had many adult responsibilities, unlike Selena and Jerry. As the person in the family with the most English, Jorge accompanied his parents to doctors' offices, Immigration, stores, and other places in order to translate. His mother also said that his ability to translate written material made it easier for them. As the oldest child, Jorge served as his parents' bridge to the English-speaking community. He, more than the other two children in this study, was required by his birth-order to assume the role of chief interpreter for his family.

Rosa's aspirations for Jorge included attending a university. To do so, the family had begun a college saving account before they left Mexico. She wanted him to pursue a professional career such as law. During the last interview in April, she became more specific when she said that all three children enjoyed the bank and that perhaps they should all become bankers. For Jorge and his younger siblings, parents based their expectations upon their children's interests. As the most educated parents in this study, their expectations were also the most focused and financially planned. Since this was Rosa's first encounter with mainstreaming, her responses offered an
important contribution to the plática conversations.

Data Sources

In developing three case studies, multiple sources of evidence were examined. From these multiple sources, triangulation provided converging lines of evidence in order to cross-reference data and interpret results (Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Mathison, 1988; Yin, 1989). Triangulation of data sources enhanced the scope, dimension, and clarity of theory during the course of this study. At the same time, a second reader prevented too-ready acceptance of initial impressions, as suggested by LeCompte & Preissle (1993). The sources of data for this study consisted of transcripts from audiotaped interviews/informal conversations, observations, field notes, a log of other informal untaped conversations, my personal journal, and theoretical memos.

Interviews/ Conversations and Transcripts

In line with recommendations and findings by Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991), LeCompte and Preissle (1993), Oakley (1981), and Trueba, Rodriguez, Zou, and Cintron (1993) informal interviews or plática conversations (Sherraden & Barrera, 1995) with Latinos were selected as most appropriate for building trust and examining the changing nature of parent involvement in mainstream classrooms. Parents explicitly stated what they knew about the school systems in the western United States and described their roles as parent participants with their older children. Consideration was given to the importance of the parents’ contribution to the research, which promoted trust and added to their personal investment in the process (Sherraden & Barrera, 1995).

Because I had previously gained access to the Latino community (Sherraden
& Barrera, 1995) and established a legitimate working relationship (Hornberger, 1992; Vasquez, 1989) with the families, much dialogue and interaction took place as parents described past and present experiences. Each conversation, conducted mostly in Spanish, occurred either in their homes (Sherraden & Barrera, 1995) or nearby restaurants. At times, depending upon the context of the discussion, we conversed in a mixture of Spanish and English. Although conversations focused on aspects of the research questions for the study, the informal nature of the conversations allowed for other questions and divergent responses.

I audiotaped all conversations and then transcribed them on HyperQual (Padilla, 1991a; Padilla, 1991b; Tesch, 1991), described further in the data analysis section. Briefly, I transcribed all conversations as spoken in Spanish to create the case-study data base. The original data base remained intact and retrievable throughout the study.

Conversation Schedule

During the conversations, I asked focus questions based upon the research questions (Appendix B). During July and August, 1995, discussions centered around previous experiences with mainstreaming, the ESL classroom, and parents' predictions about their child's future experience. From September 1995 until April 1996, I met with each family every eight weeks to discuss their own and their child's experiences as a mainstreamed student. I expanded the depth of our discussion to include grandparents' educational levels and institutos (see Additional Questions in Appendix B) in February and April, 1996 as I learned more from our conversations and my research.
Direct Observation, Field Notes, and Log

Most direct observations occurred casually during conversations at parents' homes, restaurants, and at school when they visited their children's new classrooms. Observations provided additional information and added to the description of context of the study (Yin, 1989). I wrote observations, including the location, time, duration, affective behavior of participants, and other details pertinent to this study in my personal journal.

I used additional observational documentation to augment evidence from other sources in answer to each question (Yin, 1989). Documents included my rough sketches of homework notes from the mainstream teacher to the parent in order to explain the meaning to parents and test score results that I explained to each family. I drew the rough sketches in the file folder available at the time of the conversation and placed them in my journal as an addendum.

Immediately after each conversation with the family, I developed field notes on all discussions. Field notes briefly recounted the context, event, participants, setting, and an outline of the conversations/interviews, direct observations, and documentation. Field notes served as summaries of facts and events.

At times, unplanned and untaped conversations occurred, usually when parents called me or when I saw them at school. I summarized untaped conversations in a log so that later I could expand and add them as field notes.

Data sources that were objective recordings of events included conversation transcripts, field notes, and the log. By maintaining the objectivity in three areas, I was able to triangulate, trace, and verify the actual occurrence of the event. Objectivity from multiple data sources added distance from myself and the participants, thus reducing bias in reporting.
Personal Journal and Theoretical Memos

My personal journal and theoretical memos became flavored with subjectivity. As I continued interacting with parents over the course of this study, I found that my insights led me to understanding parent involvement and empowerment in different ways. Parents' responses to additional questions led to more refined data analysis, particularly for issues of empowerment and disempowerment.

I wrote in my personal journal once a week during this study. The journal contained subjective connections between parents' words and actions, noted patterns of behavior and response (Holly, 1989), and revealed beginning insights in understanding what I was investigating. The journal included the feelings that surrounded the event, both my own biases and my perceptions of the parents' feelings, along with other pertinent details. Journaling allowed me to reflectively connect, in a subjective manner, a string of events or interviews. Journaling occurred more frequently when I worked with conversation transcripts. Frequently, patterns of response, new coding areas, and further questions became evident while I worked with the data and thus provided new areas for journaling.

Periodically, I wrote theoretical memos to review what I had learned. Theoretical memos contained more succinct and refined connections. By revisiting patterns and extending my own thinking, further reflection led me to brainstorm, question, and research in other areas.

By utilizing both objective and subjective sets of evidence, I maintained a chain of evidence that supported the effectiveness of this study. Multiple sources of data contributed to "thick description" (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) and, at the same time, verified and further refined deductive theories. Using the data from this study, an outside researcher would be able to trace the objective
events while, at the same time, view the development of my own thinking process through the subjective evidence.

Data Analysis

The purpose of data analysis was to develop a narrative report that recreated status quo and common themes of parent involvement that emerged from three individual cases. A flowchart of data analysis is found in Appendix D. In the first step of data analysis, I used the constant comparative method to generate and provisionally test concepts and relationships during data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Data were coded and categorized according to patterns of responses. Consistent with the constant comparative method, new data were compared to existing categories throughout the study. The first analysis uncovered what is to establish a picture of status quo for each time period. In this narrative report, the first three themes were derived from the constant comparative analysis.

For the second and critical data analysis, I examined all data for issues concerning critical theory: power, equality, marginalization, empowerment, differential treatment, hidden power, language practices that disguised power (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) and assumptions that inhibited, repressed, and constrained (Thomas, 1993). This critical analysis uncovered ways that Latino parent involvement changed and barriers that they encountered when their children were mainstreamed. Thus, the fourth theme of this study was derived from the critical analysis of data and revealed barriers to participation.

I began by audiotaping conversations with three Latino families. Next, I transcribed but did not translate conversations on HyperQual (Padilla, 1991a, 1991b; Tesch, 1991). The case-study data base, consisting of questions and responses in Spanish along with other data sources, remains intact and

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retrievable for independent analysis by other researchers.

As I transcribed (Flowchart for Data Analysis: Step 1, Appendix D), I examined the transcripts on a conceptual level, looking for similar comments, statements, and use of words across the multiple conversations with all participants. In this first level of constant comparative analysis, I developed theories about what parents knew about education, where they acquired this knowledge, and how they applied it to help their own children. During this phase of data analysis, I began to create a list of possible codes. Other data sources were also analyzed and categories were added to the list of codes. An example of the progression illustrating data coded at the beginning stages and later stages of this study is found in Appendix F.

As I examined data (Step 2, Appendix D), I began writing labels or codes for each idea and segment of text on the printed transcript. This recursive process is called the constant comparative method of analysis in which theory is discovered, developed, and verified during data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Similarities in data across three cases were clustered into subcategories. Theories as to why there were similarities and contradictions among responses were developed in my journal and theoretical memos. I pursued contradictory responses, as suggested by Thomas (1993), in later conversations that confirmed or refuted my tentative theories. An example of theory-building came from my outside reading of Reese and Gallimore (1995) which discussed educational levels of Ranch and Town Generation parents. From prior conversations, I had learned that Latino parents in this study were Town Generation but possibly their parents were Ranch Generation. My "AHA!" theory was that I was working with a group of parents for whom educational opportunity in the families was relatively recent. Therefore, the parents in the study learned about parent involvement from parents who themselves had
limited educations. The parents in this study might view parent involvement very differently than parents whose own parents and grandparents were highly educated. Further questions of the Latino parents confirmed that their parents were indeed from Ranch Generation backgrounds. Thus, by building theory during the stages of gathering and analyzing data, as described above, my theory was grounded in the collected data of the parents’ responses and other data sources.

Codes for categories were defined or self-explanatory such as: *kid experiences in school*, *ESL*, *communication with school*, and *teacher support*. The independent reader (her role is discussed later) and I came to an agreement that codes and definitions accurately reflected data segments. All data sources were included in the case-study data base. These sources, including field notes, documents, journal entries, and logs were labeled and color-coded to identify their origin within the categories and coding. As I re-read printed data (Step 3, Appendix D), new subcategories emerged.

Using HyperQual (Padilla, 1991a, 1991b) on the computer, I highlighted the section, words, or sentences on computer (Step 4, Appendix D), labeled with the handwritten code from the printed transcript (but subject to change depending upon further thought), and then re-saved each as a separate file. At this first level of computer coding, I labeled subcategories for this study with short phrases (e.g., *parental rights, a part of school, influence, triangle, conflict*, and *haciendo lo correcto*). All information and ideas across multiple parent conversations with similar subcategories were included in this particular computer file.

During the next stage of conceptual labeling (Step 5, Appendix D) using HyperQual, axial coding clustered groups of small subcategories into larger groups while, at the same time, interpreted the data as suggested by Marshall.
and Rossman (1989) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). For example, the phrases listed above all became a part of the larger category, *parental expectations of school*. Axial coding clustered similar ideas into categories that were retrievable and printed as separate computer files. For other data sources, codes were handwritten and segments cut, pasted, and added to categories. All printed data were placed in the data notebook which contained printouts of coded conversation segments and all other coded data.

Because interviewing and coding were recursive processes (Step 6, Appendix D), I began transcribing one set of conversations while initiating or continuing conversations with other families. Constant comparative analysis of data began at the same time as data collection. Theories and connections that I initially made were verified or negated by parents in later conversations. After building an extensive background through our conversations, I added more questions concerning power relations, the language barrier between Latino homes and school, and why the barriers continued to exist even after identification and awareness began to emerge.

During the last stage of coding (Step 7, Appendix D), I applied the theoretical framework of critical theory. I re-examined and coded segments of data and all subcategories according to empowerment terminology: *power; equality; marginalized people; empowerment; differential treatment; hidden power; language practices that disguised power; and assumptions that inhibit, repress, and constrain* (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Thomas, 1993) to create separate files for further analysis. In the Axial Coding Chart (Appendix C), I underlined empowerment and disempowerment categories. By combining pieces from multiple sources of data into empowerment categories, synthesis revealed commonalities and differences in the parents' ideas, along with language and terminology that demonstrated their evolution in parent
involvement. The last stage of critical examination of data directly addressed my overarching question concerning the barriers that inhibited parent involvement.

Themes Derived From the Data

Using the constant comparative and critical analyses of data from multiple sources, I derived three themes. In the first theme, I describe status quo from parents' early experiences with older children and parents' own experiences with education in Mexico. The second theme of status quo consists of data from three years their children were in my ESL classroom. The third theme of status quo is derived from multiple sources of mainstream classroom data. For the fourth theme, I critically re-examined all data for issues concerning critical theory to uncover the disruption of status quo that was generated during the year ESL children entered mainstream classrooms. Several major factors provide evidence of disruption.

The Axial Coding Cart in Appendix C illustrates codes and subcategories of data that contributed to each theme. Brief examples of categories and subcategories, described below, demonstrate how data segments contributed to the first three themes.

For the first theme of describing status quo from prior experience, data from several axial codes contributed to understanding parents' experiences and reflections. Axial codes included: *children's experiences in school*, *parent responsibility*, *parental expectations of school*, *parent knowledge*, and *parent participation*. For example, dated entries from June, 1995, from the subcategories of *experiences in school* were: children's experiences in school, parents' knowledge of subject-Mexico, comparison Mexico-US, with older child, teacher support, communication with teacher, and supporting
teachers. See Axial Coding Chart (Appendix C) for the complete list of codes and subcategories under column 1, Theme I.

In the second theme describing status quo during their children's three years in ESL class, the following axial codes were used: experiences in school, parent responsibility, parental expectations of school, parental constraints, parent knowledge, elements of the ESL classroom, and parent participation. Dated entries from July, 1995, from the subcategories of experiences in school were: comparison Mexico-US, teacher support, communication with teacher, and supporting teachers. (For the complete list, see Appendix C: Axial Coding Chart, column 2, Theme II.)

For the third theme describing mainstream classrooms from the parents' point of view, I used data dated October, December, February, and April from the following axial codes: experiences in school, parent responsibility, parental expectations, parent participation and suggestions. (For the complete list see Appendix C: Axial Coding Chart, column 3, Theme III.)

Finally, the fourth theme of critically disrupting status quo emerged from a second critical analysis of the axial codes. Power issues became apparent that had previously been coded empowerment, equality, marginalized, differential treatment, hidden power, language practices that disguised power, and assumptions that inhibit, repress, or constrain. Codes that referred to empowerment or disempowerment were underlined in the Axial Codes and the Axial Code Chart (see Appendix C). Specific axial codes and subcategories regarding empowerment and disempowerment will be explained in more detail. The language barrier was described by the parents in experiences in school: connections with me; parent participation: language difference, suggestions; parent responsibility: who translates; differential treatment: race/language, language difference; and parental constraints: cannot
communicate with office. Evidence of marginalization emerged from experiences in school: isolation, what other parents know; parent expectations: not a part, doubts, rejection by teacher, rezoning; and differential treatment: isolation, discrimination, and race/language. Evidence of parents' personal limitations was described in parent responsibility: mom's background, blaming self; parental constraints: limited English, parent level of education, working parent, isolation, and cannot communicate with the office.

From constant comparative and later critical analyses of axial codes and subcategories, four major themes emerged. By clustering data from the subcategories across the three cases, parents' words intertwined to describe their perceptions of their own involvement prior to ESL, three years in ESL, one mainstream year, and circumstances or barriers that caused changes in their own participation.

Objectivity

In order to assure my own objectivity, a bilingual teacher, unfamiliar with my study, read coded subsets of the transcripts. Olga Urrea, originally from Colombia, lived in New York City and attended New York schools from kindergarten through graduate school. As a teacher new to the southwest and unfamiliar with Latinos of this area of the United States, who were predominately from Mexico, she did not hold preconceived notions about the outcome of my study.

In October, 1995, Olga reviewed coded segments of data. We discussed codes, definitions, and groupings and came to a consensus that the chain of evidence was logical before I continued. Again in December, Olga and I repeated the same process with subsets of data as described above. Our inter-coder
consensus concerning logical coding addressed the need for confirmability as discussed by Guba and Lincoln (1982).

Theoretical Sensitivity

Sources of my own theoretical sensitivity include knowledge of relevant literature, professional experience, and personal experience (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I have read much literature about parent participation, including specific literature related to school reform, working with Latinos, critical theory, and multiple case studies. I have taught twenty-five years in the southwest, and my classes always included a large percentage of minority and Latino children. During the last seven years, Latino children comprised about 90% of the population in my second language classrooms. My personal interests and experiences include living with an exchange student, a trip to South and Central America, a semester in college attending the Universidad de Costa Rica, and an undergraduate degree in Spanish. During the course of the study, I continued to develop theoretical sensitivity as the parents and I collaborated. As a result of our conversations in Spanish, my own Spanish proficiency increased.

Criteria for Goodness of the Study

According to Guba and Lincoln (1982), four criteria may be applied to judge the trustworthiness of findings and goodness of a study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In 1994, Guba and Lincoln added a fifth criterion: the extent to which research findings caused change in conditions. By addressing five criteria for goodness of the study, findings of qualitative research might be judged trustworthy and grounded in the data from people's lives (Guba & Lincoln, 1982).
To assure credibility, I used prolonged and persistent observations; triangulation; documentation such as audiotapes, artifacts and other materials; and member checking (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Credibility in this study was established by using multiple sources of data for triangulation. There were multiple informal conversations with parents. Audiotapes of all conversations were transcribed but not translated. I discussed transcriptions of the conversations and a rough draft of the study with each parent. Parents had an opportunity to verify their statements and make corrections or changes to ensure that quotes accurately reflected their intent (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Artifacts from conversations were included with the transcripts to confirm their accuracy. Other data such as the anecdotal telephone log listing parent contacts, my theoretical memos, my own journal of notes during the study, and my observation notes were collected and organized. These materials corroborated, enriched, and extended the data in the study (Yin, 1984).

To ensure transferability, participants were selected as representative of the population. Transferability was established by selecting participants according to the three criteria explained earlier. Transferability circumstances also exist if enough "thick description is available" (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 247) within the data. Coded transcript data provided thick, rich descriptions in the words of the parents. Other data sources supplemented narrative descriptions.

To be dependable, a study should be replicable in another setting and in another time (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). I have delineated all steps and decisions and provided access to all data, including my personal journal, theoretical memos, and observation notes, in raw and process stages. The context of the study was fully described along with the participants so the study would be replicable in another place and another time.
Confirmability was assured by using multiple sources of data concerning data, coding and clustering of data, and all findings could be traced back to the original data (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). I documented all reflective thinking in personal journals, theoretical memos, and observation notes. In addition, all coding was defined and described completely, and also verified by a second reader, so as to trace back to the original data.

Guba's and Lincoln's fifth criterion (1994) was used to examine the "extent to which the inquiry acts to erode ignorance and misapprehensions and the extent to which [inquiry] provides a stimulus to action... to the transformation of the existing structure" (p. 114). In this study, conversations with parents lessened my own ignorance and misconceptions about Latino parents while increasing parents' comfort level with teachers and schools and helping their children adapt to new school situations. In the process of building trust and increasing our own knowledge, parents made suggestions and discussed possibilities. By building trust and background information ("informed consciousness") informally through conversations, as co-participants within one study, parents identified and suggested solutions to problems that neither the parents nor I realized existed prior to the study. The fifth criterion described by Guba and Lincoln (1994) related to empowerment goals of critical theory by examining the enabling and constraining factors.

Assumptions and Limitations

The first assumption that I made in this study was that Latino parents have unique perceptions about their role in schooling and that their perceptions could affect their connections and commitments with schools. Observations of students and parents, along with research, further increased my awareness that parents and I held different views of parent involvement roles.
A second assumption was that it was possible to isolate segments of parent involvement. Through examination of transcripts of conversations and other data, I thought that the language and perceptions of the parents would reveal involvement. I also thought that Latino parents could articulate their own roles in relation to their children's education in order to benefit their children.

One limitation of this study is that all of the three Latino families immigrated from Mexico in the last decade. Recent Mexican immigrants' beliefs and expectations may differ from other Latinos. Groups not interviewed include recently-arrived parents from Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, or other Latin American countries with wide variations of educational levels and opportunities. Mexican-American parents who have lived in the United States for generations may hold still different beliefs about parent involvement in children's education.

A second limitation was the long-term parent-teacher relationship that developed prior to the beginning of the study. To replicate this study, other researchers, especially those who are not members of the Latino community, could seek introductions into the community in order to gain entry for legitimate reasons. Also, the number of plática conversations between participants and researchers should be increased in order to build initial trust and communication.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Chapter Four presents the findings of three families' perspectives of their parent participation at three different points in time. Through a dialogic process, Latino parents began to describe their children's educational experiences, intertwining experiential background knowledge in Mexico, previous connections with schools in the United States, and their parents' education in Mexico. Data analysis led to four themes. The first three themes described status quo at three specific points in time. The fourth theme emerged after a critical re-analysis of all data uncovered barriers to Latino parent involvement.

In the first theme, I develop a picture of status quo prior to ESL class. The first question focused on Rosario's and Marta's experiences with their older children in the United States and Mexico. Rosario and Marta also described their own educational experiences. Data collected with Rosa concerning her personal educational experiences were included in this section. Related responses from February and April concerning their own parents' educational experiences were also included in this theme. Data from the Axial Coding Chart (Appendix C, Theme I) are organized by roles in the United States and contrasted with roles in Mexico. Parents' life experiences and beliefs supported Theme I.
Repeated questions, multiple data sources, and informal conversations provided the data necessary to generate a picture of status quo in the ESL classroom. This description became the basis for the second theme. Data from the Axial Coding Chart (Appendix C, Theme II) are organized by parents' roles at home and school and is supported by parents' beliefs.

In the third theme, parents described their involvement during the year their ESL child was mainstreamed. In four separate conversations, Latino parents conveyed their personal image of status quo in mainstream classrooms. Data from the Axial Coding Chart (Appendix C, Theme III) are organized by parents' roles at home and school and supported by their beliefs. Data from conversations was supplemented by other data sources including my personal journal, field notes, log, and theoretical memos. Questions repeated over a period of 10 months led to parents' increased awareness of the nature of their participation.

The fourth theme evolved from a critical analysis of the previous three themes. By critically analyzing how parents described status quo related to their parent involvement both prior to and after their child was mainstreamed, the fourth theme established three barriers to parental involvement. These barriers were: (1) evidence of language barriers, (2) evidence of marginalization, and (3) evidence of parents' personal limitations. The fourth theme that emerged provided critical evidence that the Latino parents in this study encountered major barriers that limited their levels of parental involvement.
What Do Parents Do? Parent Involvement

Prior to ESL Class

I asked parents to describe their previous involvement in their older children's education. Parents began with descriptions of their roles when their older children entered schools in the United States. Since two families in this study had had prior parental involvement in Mexico, Rosario and Marta added more information. Although Rosa's children had been too young to attend school in Mexico, her sister was a teacher. Rosa had frequently organized and conducted Friday afternoon parties for her sister's class. In addition, parents offered further explanations of their own education, life experiences, and beliefs. Parents' information and other data contributed to the picture of status quo when their older children were mainstreamed.

Parent Roles in School: United States

Rosario and Marta briefly reflected upon parent involvement roles at the time their older children were mainstreamed. They said that they did not know the teachers and that they had been unable to communicate with them in English or Spanish. Marta described her own situation when her daughter was younger:

No tenía tantos niños. Tenía mucho tiempo para ella. Pero me sentía igual que ella, preocupada porque no le podía ayudar mucho... realmente, en las escuelas nunca estuve... nunca fui mucho.

[I did not have so many children. I had lots of time for her. But I felt like she did, worried because I could not help her much... really, in the schools I was never there... I never went much.]

As a result of language difference, Rosario and Marta reported that they were not involved in school beyond walking their children to school or to the bus.
Rosario described an in-school parent role that she encountered in the United States, intervening in her child's education. She related an incident that happened when one son was in junior high school in the United States. A student, who had frequently taunted her child, challenged him to a fight by calling him a "chicken." When Rosario met with the principal, she was accompanied by a translator. She said that she wanted to tell the principal to punish both students and the teacher who let the incident occur and had even thought of a suitable punishment. Because Rosario was unable to communicate directly with the principal and the translating friend refused to translate her suggestion for punishment, the principal did not learn of her suggestion. Her son was given the standard three-day suspension.

Rosario and Marta began working full-time outside the house shortly after moving to the United States. Both mothers said that they helped as much as possible at home but reached the limit of their English knowledge by the intermediate grades. Rosario said that her husband helped the children with homework but her own role was more limited:

*Bueno, si fueron en español, sí; pero en inglés, no. Porque ya no se leer ni que quiere decir. Sinceramente, no puedo ayudarlo.*

[Well, if it were in Spanish, yes; but in English, no. Because I don't know how to read or what it means. Sincerely, I cannot help him.]

Rosario said that her sons translated the homework questions for her into Spanish, she helped them figure out the answers, and then they translated to English. Marta and Rosa discussed similar ways to help their children with homework. At times, homework became a family and neighborhood problem. Rosario said that if the parents could not help, then the children asked for help from friends in class who lived nearby. Other times, adult neighbors explained the homework assignment or question.
Rosario and Marta reported limited roles due to language differences at school. If there was a need for a conference at school, parents provided their own translators. They continued to support their children at-home by helping with homework. By the intermediate grades, children had reached the limits of the mothers' English and found help from other people such as friends, neighbors, or teachers.

Parent Roles in School: Mexico

In contrast to Rosario's and Marta's descriptions of parent involvement when their children were mainstreamed in the United States, both mothers reported very different roles in Mexico. Rosario, a housewife in Mexico, described some of the ways she helped the teacher when her oldest son attended kindergarten:

*Yo participaba también. . . llevando material para que los niños recortaran y hicieran sus tareas. . . les hacen fiestas en la escuela. . . también participábamos en la escuela, llevando comida, fruta. . . ayudando a los maestros a organizar. . . también en los eventos sociales. . . como hora social en días de mayo. . . participan en bailabes, en poesías, en muchas cosas.*

[I participated also, taking materials for the children to outline and do their work. . . they had parties in school. . . also we participated in school, taking food, fruit. . . helping the teachers to organize. . . also in the social events. . . like the social hour in May. . . they participated in dances, in poems, in many things.]

In addition, Rosario worked with a group of parents who helped the teacher maintain the classroom by:

*Limpia el pizarrón, el escritorio de la maestra, recojía todos los papeles, llevaba el bote de la basura, y barrer.*

[I used to clean the chalkboard, the teacher's desk, I straightened all the papers, carried out the garbage, and swept.]

The group of parents described by Rosario also built and repaired classroom furniture as needed. Referring to Mexico, parents reported multiple parent involvement roles.
Both Marta and Rosario discussed weekly parent meetings that were held on Friday afternoons. Parents and teachers used the meeting for planning future events and projects for the classroom and discussing children's progress.

Marta said that parents who did not attend the meetings were charged a fine. In spite of the fine, there were some parents who did not participate. Rosario described them as:

Irresponsables. Personas irresponsables que sólo mandan al hijo con la libreta y su lápiz y allí se acomoda como pueda.

Irresponsible. Irresponsible people who just send their child with a book and a pencil and there they do the best they can.

In Mexico, Rosario and Marta were actively involved in the classroom for several reasons: the teachers asked for help, the mothers were not working, parents reported a sense of equality with the teacher, parents stated that their help was needed in their child's classroom, and Latino parents and teachers spoke the same language. Rosario and Marta were able to state their views and concerns and be involved in creating solutions to problems in Mexican schools. Their knowledge of parent involvement came from their older children's experiences, talking with teachers in Mexico, and from their own parents. Both Marta and Rosario reported that "siempre participamos, si no es _____(mi esposo), soy yo." [always we participate, if it is not _____(my husband), then it is I.]

Rosario and Marta's descriptions of parent involvement in the United States and Mexico clearly illustrate two different scenarios. In Mexico, both mothers were active in their children's education. In the United States, two factors caused a change. First, the language difference between school and home prevented parents from communicating in ways that they had described in Mexico. The second factor was that both mothers began working outside their homes and were no longer able to spend time in their children's schools.
If the Foundation Is Not Good: Parents' Own Educational and Life Experiences

Influenced Beliefs

Parents responded to questions about their roles (Appendix B) using their own background and experiences. Our plática conversations with digressions about topics related to the parents' lives built trust, common ground, and established equality with parents as the experts at the beginning of the study. The parents' life experiences paralleled those described by Reese and Gallimore (1995) as Ranch and Town generation families. For this summary of parent knowledge, I added Rosa's information even though she did not begin to participate until a month after the other two families. Rosa's data supplemented data from the other two families.

The parents in this study received their education in Mexico. Marta finished sixth grade, considered to be a suitable termination for many students in Mexico. Rosario finished secundaria, our junior high level, and Rosa finished preparatoria, our high school level. As members of the Town Generation, they took advantage of town educational opportunities. Their parents, from the Ranch Generation, had received little or no formal education. As an example, Rosario described her life on the ranch as a young child before they moved to town:

Como le digo yo no sentía pobreza porque nunca nos vimos descalzos, nunca anduvimos con ropa desgarrados, mugrosos, no. Siempre nos veíamos bien. Había gallinas, vacas. A las cinco de la mañana nos levantaban y nos daban un jarro y chocolate con azúcar y nos ponían el chocolate y nos mandaban al corral a llenar el jarro de leche de las vacas, y a tomárnosla caliente. Y luego, pues, como sembraban había elotes. Hacían tamales, hacían calabaza, la cocinaban con miel... y uno nunca tenía hambre. Sí, a veces tengo más hambre aquí.

[Like I told you, we didn't feel poor because we didn't see ourselves barefooted, never went out with torn clothes, filthy ones, no. We always saw ourselves well. There were chickens, cows. At five in the morning we got up and they gave us a jar and chocolate with sugar and we put the]
chocolate (in the jar) and they sent us to the corral to fill the jar with milk from the cows, and we drank it hot. And then, when they sowed it, there was corn. They made tamales, there were pumpkins, they cooked with honey... and one was never hungry. Yes, at times, I am hungrier here.]

For generations of life on ranches in Mexico, informal learning from parents met educational needs about how to take care of the animals and crops. Classroom education limited to basic reading and computation was deemed sufficient for the grandparents of the Ranch Generation. The Ranch Generation grandparents provided a model of parent involvement for the Latino parents in this study. Similar to findings described by Reese and Gallimore (1995), each Town Generation parent in this study came from the more classroom-educated generation themselves but were influenced by their own parents' Ranch Generation participation in schools.

Because the parents in this study considered themselves bien educado [well educated], they expressed the importance of building solid educational foundations. Rosario compared education to construction and told her children:

_I tell them, I tell them all, "You have to learn, you have to do your part. Because the school... teaching of the school is like a house that you build. The house needs a good foundation, if the foundation is not good, then when it is tall, a big wind comes and it falls down. I tell them, it is the same with you, when you are in a higher grade, if you don't have good beginnings, much learning, and you didn't learn well, then it won't work. Because you are going to have a problem that you don't understand, that you don't know, and you don't know why... Like last year they didn't learn well and then this year, and so on."
_

Rosario's house analogy demonstrated her verbal support and understanding of building educational foundations. In addition, she followed...
up on her analogy in practice. Rosario said that her children rarely missed school and they received good grades. Rosa and Marta also emphasized the importance of learning for future success. Parents' prior experiences and knowledge led to later interpretations of the educational system.

What Do Parents Believe? Experience and Knowledge Related to Roles and Expectations

The description of status quo outlined in this section was derived from data regarding parents' in-depth descriptions of experiences with their older children in the United States and Mexico. Parents' beliefs based on previous school experiences and knowledge about school led them to taking an interest in children's activities, knowing about their grades, and getting to know their children's friends.

Some conflicts arose between parents' knowledge and current approaches to teaching subject matter. Marta had been able to help her oldest child memorize facts and complete homework until about fourth grade. By third and fourth grade Marta's knowledge of English interfered with being able to help her older child. Jerry's sister remembered:

Yeah. Yo me acuerdo. [I remember]. . . in fourth grade. . . I would sit there like crying and like being upset 'cause nobody could help me. Like my mom, she couldn't help me, and I just sat there.

Marta encountered the differences in the approach to teaching multiplication from: "Tiene que saber toda la tabla de multiplicar" [She has to know the multiplication tables] to understanding "por partes" [the individual facts] the memorizing of tables for recall in Mexico or knowing individual facts. At about the same time, she found academic areas where she felt she could no longer assist directly:
Tenía que ayudarla con la tarea siempre. Y llorar junto con ella porque no entendíamos inglés.

[I used to help her often with her homework. And cried with her because we didn't understand English.]

Rosario described her expectations of teachers and schools:

Queremos tener confianza de Uds., sentir si tenemos algún problema, si tenemos una duda, podemos contar con Uds. Sobre todas darlos a ellos confianza de que ellos digan, —O, preguntarle a mi maestro o al principal, todo decir.

[We have confidence in you, that if we have a problem, if we have a doubt, that we can count on you. Above all, we give them confidence that they can say, "Oh, I can ask my teacher or my principal for everything."]

Latino parents' beliefs were built upon their background knowledge, prior knowledge, and expectations. Underlying beliefs formed the basis for parent involvement roles when the families moved to the United States. From their own education in Mexico, parents were involved and interested in what and how their children did in school. From their own background experience, parents also said that school personnel were working as partners in helping children.

Summary of Theme I: Prior Years: What Did Parents Do? What Did Parents Believe?

Latino parents in this study reported their early participation in Mexico and in the United States. They described their beliefs based on personal knowledge and supported this by defining their roles and expectations in their children's educations. Discussions centering around the early experiences allowed a picture of status quo for that point in time to be established. Early discussions set the stage for further conversations related to the three years their children were in ESL class and later when the children entered mainstream classrooms.
During our first conversation, parents began to examine issues of their own participation and made initial suggestions for change while dialoguing about their roles. Dialogue and other data resulting from our first plática conversation laid the groundwork for future discussions concerning the ESL classroom. Previous parent knowledge and experiences led to later insights, implications, and reflections.

Theme II: Describing Status Quo During ESL

What Do Parents Do? Parent Involvement

Roles in the ESL Classroom

Typically, ESL classrooms support both children and their families through the acceptance of the native language and inclusion of cultural values of cooperation. Classroom realia and curriculum reflect the many cultures and many languages of the families. Because of multiple languages in the classroom, instruction in ESL classrooms is in English. Many, but not all, ESL teachers speak other languages. Teachers in ESL classrooms welcome, initiate, and nurture family involvement. Frequently, ESL classrooms provide the main communication and translation between school and home. One negative note is that ESL classrooms can be overly protective and sheltering to the point of isolating ESL students and families from the rest of the school. Garcia (1995) described effective instructional practices with Latino children to include: maintenance of high expectations for children's success, innovation and adaptation of curriculum to meet children's needs, advocacy for children, and strong commitment to communication with the home. Learning style research describes Latino students as preferring to work in groups with concrete rather than abstract concepts; they are extrinsically motivated and work physically
closer to the teacher (Irvine & York, 1995). My classroom is only one example of the rapport built between an ESL teacher and students' families.

Within our dialogic framework, Latino parents described the three-year period their children were in my class. During the second conversation (see Appendix B), parents began to reflect upon their own personal experiences and earlier experiences of their older children while comparing the ESL classroom connection which had just ended. Frequently, parents juxtaposed past and recent experiences in their responses. Their responses and other data sources formed the description of status quo during ESL.

Dialogue, questioning, and reflecting are important components of the process of critical theory. Our conversations provided an opportunity for parents to think about questions that had been asked about their older child's mainstream experience and then compare those experiences to the three years that Selena, Jorge, and Jerry had been in my ESL classroom. Parents described their roles and responsibilities during the three years their child was in ESL. Several categories became evident in coding their responses. In the following section, I explore data categories discussed by the parents: at-home roles, at-school roles, other school roles, and expectations. Collectively, these categories recreate a picture of status quo in the ESL classroom. Finally, a summary of status quo during ESL is provided through parents' descriptions of their own involvement and other data sources.

Parents' At-Home Roles

In this section, parents described ways that they helped their children at home. Because of their educational backgrounds, parents understood many of the routines and requirements of their children's education. They could help children adjust to new classrooms. For example, Selena, as a first grader, had
some problems adapting to first grade. Her mother recalled that notes from me
had alerted her to the problem:

Rosario: *Qué problema, ¿se acuerda? Que la maestra no me quiere, que sólo
a mí me castiga, que no más esto, y que todos hacen y que no más a mí me
dieron.* . . .

LS: *Y quería jugar mucho, como en kinder.*

Rosario: *Sí, exactamente. . . a jugar, que no iba a tener responsabilidad de
tareas, no iba a tener responsabilidad de portarse mejor.*

[R: What a problem, remember? That the teacher doesn't like me, that she
only punishes me, only that, that everyone did it and only I got in trouble.

LS: And she liked to play a lot, like in kindergarten.

R: Yes, exactly. . . to play, that she was not responsible for homework, she
was not responsible about behaving better. ]

Selena's parents could tell her that she needed to listen to the teacher, not
push other students, or interrupt the class. They continued to repeat the same
rules, and as she improved in class, her parents could point out her improving
behavior on the notes, thus motivating her to continue.

With homework questions, Rosario said that her husband helped the
children a little because he spoke and read some English. She and Jorge's
mother both said that they could help with homework by asking their
children to explain the question or problem in Spanish. Together they worked
out the answer to the question and gave suggestions. Then the child translated
the answer to English and wrote what was needed. Rosario explained that:

*Pero casi siempre todo coincida las cosas en inglés y español, ¿verdad? Es
lo mismo estudio, no más el idioma diferente.*

[But almost everything coincides with things in English and Spanish,
right? It is the same subject, just the language difference.]

Rosario and Rosa both reported translating and helping in Spanish were
strategies that worked well for them.
Parents readily recalled specific homework assignments they had helped with: math, geography, science, and reading. Sometimes, parental help involved explaining a word or concept, describing the logic of a math problem, giving ideas, or practicing for a spelling test. If the parents had problems explaining, they wrote notes asking the teacher to explain the concept or directions again. Marta helped her child use a dictionary, and Rosa took her son to the public library.

If parents, older siblings, and extended family could not help, frequently children asked their friends and neighbors:

Rosa: A Jerry le preguntamos alguna cosita, pues, alguna cosa que a él se le haga olvidado o algo.

[We ask Jerry some little things, well, something that he (Jorge) might have forgotten or something].

Rosario: Aquí, la señora de abajo, Dianne. Es de nuestra "familia." Ella está estudiando y ahora ya es maestra.

[Here, the lady downstairs, Dianne. She is our "family." She is studying and soon will be a teacher].

Being working parents caused problems in the amount of help parents could give their children. Marta compared the seven years between Lisa and Jerry during which her own life changed. She could no longer walk her children to school and pick them up afterwards because, after Jerry was born, she began to work full-time. "Es otra vida, sí?" [It's another life, right?] "Cuando yo no necesitaba tiempo, necesitaba inglés." [When I did not need time, I needed English.] As a parent, she worried because she did not feel she could help her children enough and "Jerry y James necesitan recoger al bus sólo" [Jerry and James needed to get to the bus alone]. Marta and Rosario, both working parents, described ways that they helped their children at home.
Parent Involvement in the ESL Classroom

During our conversations all the parents recalled daily communication through the school note (see Appendix E for an example) that they reviewed and signed each day. As an example, Marta stated that:

Yo estaba muy contenta con la nota que tenía antes
LS: De su comportamiento y todo?
Marta: Sí, las notas.

[I was very happy with the note that he used to have.
LS: About his behavior and everything?
Marta: Yes, the notes.]

The daily school note form from my classroom was one piece of information parents received every night describing their child's day in school. However, frequently parents and I wrote many messages on the school notes. Longer messages became separate letters and notes or simply: Llámeme por teléfono en casa, por favor [Call me at home, please.] Parents often initiated communication on the school note with information about children's absences, said that they were pleased with or proud of their children's work, described questions about homework or explanations, or requested that I call them. The daily school note with added messages connected parents to the daily academic lives of their children during ESL class.

Other communication included many telephone calls and visits, initiated by myself or by the parents. Frequently the telephone calls followed up on a message from the school note. Formal and informal visits in the neighborhood led to chance or planned meetings with other parents. By having contacts with and connection to this school, parents felt more comfortable asking me questions in person. If I did not know the answer at the time, I called them or sent a note home with their child the next day.

Underlying our communication of daily school notes, telephone calls, and formal or informal visits, was that our communication was in the native
language of the parents. Although I am not a native speaker of Spanish, all
the parents in this study and a large majority of Latino parents with children
in my classroom during the last five years, discussed their child's academic
career in their native language. The majority of the parents' comments
centered on our communication:

LS: Hay interacciones.
Marta: Las conversaciones de nosotros... llamadas.
Rosario: La comunicación, lo mismo que usted ha estado haciendo siempre,
las notas, las llamadas por teléfono. Yo pienso que eso es muy importante.

[LS: There were interactions.
Marta: Our conversations...telephone calls.
Rosario: The communication, the same that you have always been doing,
the notes, the telephone calls. I think that that is very important.]

We built many conversational connections during the three years their
children were in my classroom. Rosario summarized her forms of
communication with me:

Bueno, por medio de conversar, las visitas a la escuela, de visitas para acá
usted, cuando puede. De hablar por teléfono, de mandar notas. Es una
forma de comunicar, pues a ver si las cosas andan bien o si andan mal. Si,
pues sí es algo malo, pues una nota o una llamada por teléfono. Si es algo
bueno, pues también una llamada por teléfono o una nota.

[Well, by means of conversing, visits to school, the visits that you make
here when you can. To talk by telephone, to send notes. It's a form of
communication, well to see if things are going well or if they are not. Yes,
then if something is bad, then a note or a phone call. If it is good, then also
a phone call or a note.]

Marta and Rosa remembered writing notes, telephone calls, and
conversations. Marta said that when Jerry was in Kindergarten, she had
"Antes, no, no tenía." [Before, no, no I had none. But during ESL, "He tenido
mucho contacto con la escuela, con usted." [I had many contacts with the
school, with you]. As a result of our many conversations, Lisa said that I was
the teacher that her mother knew. Rosa also included her visits to school as an
important communication with the teachers. Rosario summarized her vision
of home and school as:
Yo pienso que todos debemos estar como un triangulito, en continua comunicación.

[I think that we ought to be a little triangle, in continual communication.]

Rosario's description of the triangle of parent, teacher, and child illustrated parent involvement in the ESL classroom.

Of the three mothers, Rosa, a non-working parent, had time to participate in school. She and her husband drove the children to school three or four days a week and walked them to their classrooms. They also picked up their children most afternoons. Her husband arranged his work schedule between two jobs so that they could drive the children.

Rosa said that she thought she would be able to be involved in her daughter's kindergarten classroom when her son was in the third grade ESL class. Her only problem was the language difference:

En el kinder de ____, pues la maestra no habla nada de español. Y a veces íbamos pero no más estamos allí viendo lo que hacían. Pues no podíamos conversar como con usted. Y sí nos gusta a nosotros estar activos en la escuela porque ellos tienen más deseos de estudiar. Dicen, mi mamá vino, mi papá vino... he notado el cambio de ellos.

[In little sister's kindergarten, well, the teacher does not speak Spanish. At time we go but we cannot do more than watch what they are doing. Well, we could not talk like with you. And we would like to be active in school because they have more desire to study. They say, my mother came, my father came... I have noted the change in them.]

Rosa said that she knew active parent participation positively affected children's desire to learn. She also expressed interest in the PTA and was even a member, but she was unable to figure out from the notices in English exactly when and where the meetings were. She asked her neighbors, but they had not received the same notices and were not able to help her.

Rosa and her husband frequently bought ice cream and brought it to the class because

Los pone muy felices a los niños... Mucha energía quieren estudiar.
[It makes children happy... It takes a lot of energy to study.]
She said that Jorge wanted her to buy ice cream or cake everyday, but her answer was that the teacher might want to teach.

Rosa wanted to be involved in her child's kindergarten classroom and in PTA. She and her husband frequently had visited the ESL classroom and often brought ice cream for everyone. During the years Jorge was in ESL, Rosa had a young child and an infant to care for and had been unable to volunteer actively in school.

What Do Parents Believe? Parental Beliefs and Expectations

Latino parents in this study stated that, as parents, they believed they should be involved in their children's education. Rosario said that:

*Yo pienso que sí, sentimos derecho, siempre... cuando se relaciona con nuestros hijos. Soy parte de la escuela porque mis hijos están allí.*

[I think so, we always have the right... when it is related to our children. I am a part of school because my children are there.]

During the three years their children attended my classroom, parents frequently made suggestions and expressed their opinions both in writing and when they visited informally. In response to my question about suggestions being incorporated into the ESL classroom, Rosario said:

*Qué mis sugerencias fueron aceptadas? Yo pienso que sí. Porque la respuesta está muy clara, verdad, el cambio de Selena... Sí, u opinar. Y si toman en cuenta pues bueno, no hay nada perdido.*

[That my suggestions were accepted? I think so, yes. Because the answer is very clear, right, the change in Selena... Yes, to give an opinion. And if it is taken into account, then good, there is nothing lost.]

In matters that concerned her children, Rosario said that she believed that it was her right to become involved:
Well, the school is four walls but really you and the students are the soul of this school. I, as the mother or father of these children, well, I feel I have rights to express my opinion, to talk.]

Rosario also said that parenting was a long term commitment to children. In contrast, each teacher-student-parent connection was limited to the time the child was in one classroom. In August, she explained:

While they are in school we can influence them in one way or another, we are going to be present. Also with you, not because she is going to another school {but also} to another class, you and I are going to stop communicating.

In our conversations, Marta and Rosa did not elaborate beyond agreeing that they believed they had rights as parents in the ESL classroom. Latino parents expressed their beliefs that they actively participated and expected to participate in their children's education at home, through their connections with the ESL classroom, and in other school roles.

Summary of Theme II: Describing Status Quo in the ESL Classroom. What Did Parents Do? What Did Parents Believe?

Latino parents described their participation during the ESL years as continuing to build upon previous experiences in Mexico and early experiences with older children in the United States. At this point in time parents described their roles as similar to their experiences with their older children. They actively helped children at-home and they could communicate...
with the ESL teacher. However, some differences existed regarding their at-school roles in the ESL classroom because both parents were working or they had younger children to care for. For Rosa's family, there was more of a difference. Their daughter was in an English-only kindergarten so parents' at-school roles were limited to bringing treats. Rosa and her husband spoke limited English and, as a consequence, did not understand what the class was doing and were unable to communicate with the teacher.

All three parents expressed their beliefs that they should be involved in school and had specific rights as parents. Conflicts between parents' beliefs and actions were due to transportation difficulties, work schedules, and time constraints.

**Status Quo: Similarities between Parent Participation Roles**

There were many similarities between status quo of the prior years and the ESL classroom. A variety of factors enabled Rosa and Marta to be actively involved in and out of the classroom both prior to and during ESL class. In Mexico, the teachers asked for help, the mothers were not working, parents reported a sense of equality with the teacher, parents believed that their help was needed in their child's classroom, and Latino parents and teachers spoke the same language. Rosario and Marta were able to state their views and concerns and be involved in creating solutions to problems in the schools. Their knowledge of parent involvement came from experiences with their older children in Mexico. Both Marta and Rosario reported that "Siempre estamos participando" [Always we are participating]. Experience and knowledge enabled Marta and Rosario to be empowered by performing
helping roles in their children's education in Mexico and to some extent when they moved to the United States.

All three families continued to participate to the extent possible when their children were in the ESL class. Rosa and Marta's schedules limited them to at-home roles. However, the culture of the ESL classroom was similar to what they knew from their own background experiences in Mexico. All three parents expressed confidence in teachers and educational system. All three said they felt welcome to visit when they had the opportunity. Because parents could talk with me and, through interpretation, could communicate with the school, they expressed their sense of belonging to both the ESL classroom and the school. During three years in the ESL class, the language difference was not an issue.

In July, Marta said that she believed school staff and faculty made the right choices for their students: "Ellos están haciendo lo correcto. Y cuando se trate de una cosa que no me gusta, sí, voy a opinar." [They are doing what is right. And when they try something that I don't like, yes, I will express my opinion.] Rosario also expressed her confidence in the school system and decisions for children.

Rosa also predicted (in August) that by understanding the ESL classroom, her son would adapt:

Pronto se va a acostumbrar otra vez a la otra maestra, y a todo el sistema que tengan en ese salón, en esa clase.

[Soon he will be accustomed again to the other teacher, and the system used in this room, in this class.]

All the parents in this study expressed their beliefs that school personnel did their best for children. Based upon parents' prior knowledge and experiences, they stated (in August, 1995) that their children would adapt to the new classrooms and that they, as parents, would be able to help in the transition.
For the Latino parents in this study, parent involvement during their child's three years of ESL focused on at-home activities with frequent communication with the ESL teacher and school in the native language. Parents expected to participate when work schedules permitted. They expressed their trust in the district, school, and teachers to make wise decisions for all children, including their own. From this background of prior knowledge and experiences, Latino parents expected to be able to help their children make the transition to mainstream classrooms.

Latino parents actively participated in conversations concerning their own involvement during the last three years Jorge, Selena, and Jerry had been in ESL. They compared experiences from their own lives, their older children, and the children who had been in my class. Their reflections exemplified the dialogic process of critical theory. Our prior communication between school and home formed a part of building trust, common ground, and sense of community. Our conversations led Latino parents to further reflection as their children entered fourth grade in mainstream classrooms.

Theme III: Describing Status Quo in the Mainstream Classrooms

What Do Parents Do? Parent Involvement Roles in Mainstream Classrooms

The mainstream classrooms that Selena, Jerry, and Jorge entered differed in character from the ESL classroom. Garcia (1995) described mainstream classrooms as teacher-centered with competition-driven teaching styles and formal patterns of interaction that create cultural dissonance with minorites. Many mainstream teachers do not speak Spanish and are unable to support ESL
children and their families through Spanish. In some schools, English is the language of the office and, as a consequence, all communication is sent home in English. Because of larger class size, many intermediate teachers prefer meeting with parents by appointment during the school day. Intermediate curriculum demands are greater than in the primary grades and include both oral and written reports. During fourth grade, students are tested twice for a week each time. National exams are given in the fall and district exams are given in the late spring. As a result, fourth grade mainstream teachers who are pressured by already full schedules may not have time to provide sheltering situations for ESL children and their families.

In the next section, parents' descriptions of at-home roles, involvement in mainstream classrooms, and other areas are used to establish a definition of status quo, as related to parent involvement, during the mainstream year. Four conversations with each parent contributed to the overall description of status quo during the mainstream year.

Parents' At-Home Roles

As described by parents, many of the mainstream class routines and expectations paralleled the primary grades. Parents reported asking about homework, taking an interest in school, and knowing about their children's progress. Since children were now one year older, Rosario stated (in October, 1995) that fourth grade was the same but Selena was more responsible for doing her work and homework:

 Cumple con las tareas, le gusta ir a la escuela. . .Pero no ha necesitado ayuda. Ella sola hace sus tareas.

 [She finishes her homework, she likes to go to school. . . But she hasn't needed help. She does her homework alone.]
In our December conversation, Selena described the activities of her fourth grade classroom. Rosario reported that they infrequently helped her with math: "Es rara la vez que ella necesita ayuda." [It is very rare that she needs help.] In February, Rosario reiterating that Selena needed little help with homework, said that:

Con matemáticas a veces se le dificulta pero su papá le ayuda. Reconoce que no es lo mismo, pero su papá le muestra cómo él lo hace y le dice que ella lo haga como le muestra su maestra. En resumidas cuentas sale lo mismo. Pero ella casi no necesita que le ayude, ni en las tareas, ni nada.

[With math, at times, is difficult but her father helps her. We know it is not the same, but her father shows her how it does it and asks her to show him how the teacher demonstrated. In summaries of stories it is the same. But she hardly ever needs help, not in her work, or anything.]

For Selena, the transition to fourth grade work and homework was relatively easy, according to her mother. In April, Rosario noted that Selena no longer talked about school or what she was doing in class. She said that Selena still did her homework willingly.

Jerry's homework experiences did not go as smoothly as Selena's. Marta reported in October that:

No puedo ayudar mucho a Jerry ahora. Es más difícil para mí... me falta inglés y conocimientos también.

[I cannot help Jerry much now. It is more difficult for me... I am lacking both English and knowledge now.]

Prior to December's conversation, Jerry had gotten new glasses so for the first time all year he could see the chalkboard from his desk. His sister reported, that, "I just tell him to do his homework," and he does.

In February, I asked Jerry if he was doing his homework and his response was "Sort of." His mother added that:

Todos los días él dice que se le olvidó la tarea en la escuela. Tres días o dos esta semana.

[Every day he says that he forgot his homework at school. Three days or two this week.]
Shortly before our April conversation, Jerry had handed in a project on Egypt. The night before it was due, his brother broke the pyramid, so Jerry and his family built another one of cardboard. Our conversation focused on his grades for the project, report, and food representing the country. His contribution to his classroom multicultural luncheon was a fruit salad. His mother said “Es muy flojo” [He is very lazy] because Jerry had not copied an Egyptian recipe from his teacher. Jerry and his mother rationalized that people in many countries eat fruit so they invented an Egyptian salad:

Jerry llevó la ensalada de fruta. Dijo que eso comían los Egipcios. . . de frutas naturales, piña, uvas, peach, peras. . . coco rayado. . . porque comen en todas partes del mundo.

[Jerry took in a fruit salad. I told him that this is what the Egyptians ate... natural fruit, pineapple, grapes, peach, pears... coconut... because these are eaten in all parts of the world.]

Marta also reported that:

Esta haciendo la tarea más rápido porque le dije que si él sigue con mentiras, que no tiene tarea y que la tarea se le olvidó y todas esas mentiras que dice se va ir a Mexico... [para vivir] con abuelita... Y que no tiene comida. Va a comer sólo frijoles, no corn flakes.

[He is doing his homework faster now because I told him that if he continues with the lies, that he does not have homework and that he forgot his homework and all these lies, I said that he is going to go to Mexico... [to live] with his grandmother... and she does not have food... He is only going to eat beans, no corn flakes.]

In April, Marta described her own limits to helping with homework:

Llega a un término que yo no los puedo ayudar. Ya pasan mi límite de conocimiento, en inglés y en algunas materias. Por ejemplo, en matemáticas, ellos hacen diferentes problemas. Los problemas como decir "division" lo hacen muy largo.

[It has reached the end that I cannot help them. They have already passed the limit of my knowledge in English and in other areas. For example, in math, they are doing different problems. The problems like division that they are doing are very large.]

For Marta, Jerry's fourth grade year was not easy. Ongoing telephone conversations recorded in my journal (e.g., 10 conversations from August 31 to September 20) reflected Jerry's on-going challenges. By April he was
beginning to do his homework, so perhaps his mother’s threat of sending him
to Mexico to eat beans with his grandmother had been effective.

Jorge’s fourth grade experiences were positive like Selena’s. Rosa reported
that, in October, everything was fine:

Yo pensé que iba a estar un poco más difícil. Pero está bien. . . Jorge sabe
muchas cosas que yo, unas cosas no las sé escribir como se escriben y él las
escribe bien.

[I thought that it was going to be a little more difficult. But it is okay. . .
Jorge knows more than I, some things that I don’t know how to write, he
can write them well.]

In December, Rosa said Jorge continued to do his homework even though:

Es un poco difícil pero él, sí, puede. . . casi sólo. Cuando es darle ideas de algo
de preguntas, de los abuelitos, de uno si le ayudamos. Pero cuando él puede
hacer la hoja sólo, él lo hace sólo. Ya "big boy," él ya es grande.

[It is a little difficult for him, yes, he can . . . almost alone. When we give
him ideas about the questions, about the grandparents (letter), we help
him. But when he has to do the paper alone, he does it alone. Already he is
a "big boy," he is big.]

In February, Rosa explained that the teacher told Jorge to do a specific
assignment: "Haz ésto, Jorge, y Jorge lo hace" [Do this, Jorge, and Jorge does
it.] Fourth grade classwork and homework were more difficult. There were
times that his mother reported she was unable to help because: "Es otro
sistema" [It is another system]. She said Jorge did the best he could and she
followed up by asking him specifically how he and the class had done on that
question. Frequently he told her that everyone had problems with the
question, "Entonces es normal" [Therefore, it is normal]. In April, Jorge wrote
a report on Peru:

Casi practicamente él lo hizo sólo. Nosotros muy poquito le auydamos. Yo
pensé que iba a ser más laborioso para nosotros.

[He practically did it by himself. We helped him very little. I thought it
was going to be much harder for us.]

For Jorge, el trabajador [the worker], homework and school projects were a
challenge, but he was able to do most of them alone. His parents continued to
support him. They helped him when they could and followed up on the previous night's homework. In addition, Jorge's parents were frequent visitors both in the morning and afternoon.

Parents' at-home roles during the mainstream year focused upon supervising homework more often than helping directly with homework questions. Parents also took an interest in what children were doing and learning in school. Parents in this study were aware of and described their children's progress in the mainstream classroom.

**Parent Involvement Roles in Mainstream Classrooms: Communication**

For the parents in this study, daily parent involvement roles in mainstream classrooms were limited to receiving and responding in some way to written communication received from the teacher. During our conversations, parents did not describe direct involvement in the classroom either on a formal schedule or informal basis.

For fourth graders, there were two forms of written communication between teachers and home: a homework slip and weekly progress report checklists. As daily communication with parents, the fourth graders filled out a daily homework slip with three columns. In the middle column, the student wrote assignments and then made a check mark in the left column when the work was completed or in the right-hand column if that particular assignment needed to be finished as homework. For the parents in this study, there was some confusion about this form, and I was asked to explain it several times to Jerry's mother and once to Rosa. Parents were expected to follow through at home.
On Fridays, teachers gave each child a progress report checklist in English. Teachers listed incomplete and missing assignments, along with a circled behavior grade (excellent, satisfactory, needs to improve). The parents in this study reported that homework slips and weekly progress reports were the main forms of communication with the teachers.

From the teachers' standpoint, the daily homework slips and progress report checklists served to communicate information to parents about children's work in class. For the Latino parents, though, the homework slip filled out by their children and the weekly progress checklist were impersonal. Two of the three parents in this study discounted the teachers' efforts as communication between teachers and families.

Only Marta, of the three parents in this study, found the homework slip and weekly progress checklist to be helpful. In October she said:

*Las notas que me mandan están ayudando. Si para yo mirar que él está haciendo la tarea y no está mintiendo. Sí, ayuda mucho la nota. Yo estaba muy contenta con la nota que tenía antes. Había mucho más comunicación cuando estaba en ESL*"

[The notes that they send are helping. If I see that he is doing his homework and he is not lying. Yes, the note helps a lot. I was very happy with the note that we used to have [in ESL class, see Appendix E]. There was much more communication when he was in ESL].

For Marta, if there was no bad news from school, in February she said that she assumed that:

*Cuando hay un silencio, yo pienso que todo está bien y posiblemente todo no está bien.*

[When there is a silence, I think that everything is okay and possibly it is not.]

The teachers communicated with parents through the homework slip and weekly progress report in English. Rosario said that "*Yo pienso que si algo hubiera mal, ella hablaría o vendría*" [I think that if something were wrong,
she would talk (to me) or would come]. In our October conversation, Rosario summarized overall teacher-to-parent communication by saying:

_Nunca me ha mandado una nota por escrito. Nunca, ni para bueno ni para malo._

[Never has she sent me a written note. Never, either for good or bad.]

Again in December, Rosario said, "_No hay notas. La maestra no manda notas._" [There are no notes. The teacher does not send notes.]

When their children were mainstreamed to regular classrooms, both work schedules and language differences caused a separation between parents' homes and the classrooms. Written communication was sent home each night. For the parents in this study, their most significant role was to respond in some way to the nightly homework slip and weekly progress report.

At this school, mainstream teachers communicated with parents during school hours in English. Because of work schedules, Latino parents were unavailable during school hours. However, Latino parents in this study, through past experiences with schools, continued to support mainstream teachers and respond to their communication.

**Parents' Other At-School Roles**

Parents frequently have reasons to visit school to solve problems between children, ask questions in the office or cafeteria, or talk with teachers. During the mainstream year, Latino parents encountered difficulties in communicating with the non-Spanish speaking school faculty and staff. In February, Rosa reported that other parents had told her:

_Pues mucha gente sabe de usted yo digo que habla y pregunta. Pero dice que les han dicho que no que no hay nadie en español. Entonces ya no pueden decir lo que iban a decir. Porque hay mucha gente que no pueden ir como yo. . . Yo digo deberían de mandar más noticias, si se puede en español._
[Well, many people know you and I told them to talk to you and ask you. But they say that they were told that there was no one who spoke Spanish. Then they cannot say what they were going to say. Because there are many people who cannot go like I can... I say they ought to send more notices, if they can in Spanish.]

Parents in this study considered me as one liaison in the school between mainstream teachers and themselves. Other liaisons included their children and friends/neighbors who accompanied parents or drove them to school.

Referring to Selena's fourth grade teacher, Rosario said (February, 1996) that:

*No hemos tenido mucha comunicación entre nosotros. Pero puede ser que a través de los niños que lo interpretan.*

[We have not had much communication between us. But it could be through the children who interpret.]

Only Rosa, who babysat and had almost daily transportation to school, reported attempting in-person school connections. In February, she compared her frequent drop-in visits to my ESL classroom in the past to the limited conversations with her younger child's ESL teacher and Jorge's fourth grade teacher:

*Yo a veces voy al salón de M— y llevo candies, pero no es lo mismo.*

[I, at times, go to M-'s classroom and take candies, but it is not the same.]

and

*Yo digo que no es tan igual como que hablarán ellas también un poquito, aunque fuera un poquitico. Pero poquito nosotros inglés y poquito de ellos español ya nos comunicaríamos.*

[I told you that it is not the same, like they will talk a little, but only a tiny bit. But our little English and their little Spanish, already we will communicate.]

Even though Rosa and her children's teachers were limited in English, Rosa regarded their efforts as communication.

Parents in this study found communication difficulties limited their contacts and other roles within the school. Telephone and in-person
connections depended upon an interpreter. Rosa summarized by saying that
her communication was not the same as it had been when Jorge was in ESL.

What Do Parents Believe? Expectations
and Rights in Mainstream Classrooms

Latino parents expected to take part in their children's education. They
continued to express their confidence with teachers' decisions and wanted to
take more active roles in meetings. They worked with the teachers by writing
notes that their children translated, by making telephone calls to me or to the
school and asking for me, and by visiting school when necessary.

In October, Rosario said that her children were reaching the age that:

Necesitan de más cuidado, de más consejos, más de todo, por eso pienso es
más. Conforme ellos van creciendo tanto en la edad como en grados escolares uno va ayudándoles un poquito más.

[They need more care, more advice, more of everything, for this I think is
more. In accordance with this, they are growing to an age, as in school
grades, where one is going to help them a little more.]

Parents in this study said that they expected to take part in their children's
education.

Rosa best described why active parent participation in classrooms was
important. She said that she wanted to be involved because:

Nos gusta a nosotros estar activos en la escuela porque ellos tienen más
deseos de estudiar. Dicen, mi mamá vino, mi papá vino... he notado el
cambio de ellos.

[We would like to be active in school because they have more desire to
study. They say, my mother came, my father came... I have noted the
change in them.]

Underlying Rosa's desire to participate was that she believed her children
would be positively affected. In December, Rosa said she wanted to know
everything about school and "Me gusta cooperar en todo lo de la escuela
porque allí están enseñando a mis hijos " [I want to cooperate with everything
at school because there they are teaching my children]. In our October, December, and February conversations, Rosario expressed her beliefs that she actively participated in her children's education:

_Siempre participamos, si no es ____ [mi esposo], soy yo... nosotros podemos ayudarla dentro de nuestras posibilidades... Siempre hemos estado participando, entre una manera u otra pero siempre hemos estado participando._

[We always participate, if not ____ [my husband], then it is I... we are helping her within our possibilities. We are always participating, in one way or another, we are always participating.]

Marta's in-home involvement met her children's and her personal working-parent needs. Through their efforts, described in their own words, Latino parents expected to and believed they had the right to participate in their children's education. Latino parents expressed their belief that they were participating fully in their children's education.

**Beliefs and Expectations: School Communication in Spanish**

All parents in this study believed that it was their right to know about school in their own language. Most frequently, Rosa reiterated the importance of school communication in the native language of the parents. Both Rosario and Marta encountered letters and information written in English but had older children to help them. The year he was mainstreamed, his sister also attended another first grade ESL classroom that sent home information in English. During all conversations, Rosa expressed her right to know about school in her native language: _"No hay notas en español" [There are no notes in Spanish.]

As examples that further illustrated her insistence that she had the right to know in her native language, Rosa said:
(October, 1995) Sí, yo digo que en eso sí es diferente en que pues por la comunicación que la maestra sabe nada más inglés y nosotros muy poquito inglés. Y sé en eso sí es diferente, que con usted nos enterábamos pronto.

[Yes, I say that in this it is different in that, well, for the communication that that teacher knows nothing more than English and us, little English. And I know in this, yes it is different, that with you, we were informed quickly.]

(October, 1995) Aunque dan mucha información de los hijos, pero, pues, nunca es suficiente, más que tuvieran. Y un poco más así, de asistencia en español.

[Although they give much information about children but nothing is sufficient, more than we had. And a little more, help in Spanish.]

(December, 1995) Traducir las notas de la escuela en español.

[Translate the notes from the school in Spanish.]

(February, 1996) El idioma, las notas en español, o así traduciendo así de alguna manera. Si es bueno tener información... Pero se me hace no sé, que hay menos confianza... No hay ese lazo bien, no hay... la primera es la comunicación.

[The language, the notes in Spanish, or translate in some way... It is good to have information... But what to do, I don't know, there is less confidence. There is not a bond, there is not... the first is communication.]

(April, 1996) Yo digo deberían mandar más noticias, si se puede en español.

[I say that there ought to be more notices sent, if they can in Spanish.]

In every conversation, Rosa expressed her right to be informed in Spanish. By February, she said that she was losing confidence in the school and that she did not feel there was a bond between the teacher and her family. Rosa also wanted to take an active part in both her children's classrooms and parent groups but the language difference limited her in participating in classrooms:

(February, 1996) Porque hay muchas cosas que uno tiene sobre la escuela, sobre los alumnos, sobre el comportamiento de los niños. Preguntas inclusive de las clases, de las materias. Pues, con usted yo puedo,
entenderme. Pero a lo mejor con una maestra que no habla español, que yo no hablo inglés, no más veo los (niños).

[Because there are many things that one has about school, about the students, about the behavior of children. Questions including about classes, about subjects. Well, with you (we) can understand each other. At best, with a teacher who does not speak Spanish, and I don't speak English, I can do no more than look at the (children).]

Rosa's words described the change in her own attempts to be involved. For her, the language difference thwarted her efforts.

Latino parents believed it was their right to communicate with school personnel in Spanish. Parents in this study expressed their right that schools should accommodate language differences in order to allow all parents to participate to the extent they chose.

Beliefs and Expectations:

Participation in School

Rosa said that parents had the right to be involved at the school decision-making level. Rosa explained that she saw more Latinos entering schools in this district and said that parent participation positively affected children's performance in school. To represent all Latino children, she wanted to be active.

Rosa had received letters from the PTA but:

A veces el problema es ese exactamente que cuando va uno a las conferencias todo lo dicen en inglés.

LS: Pero si usted quiere ir a estas juntas, voy a estar con usted para traducir si usted quiere.

Rosa: Sí, gracias. Pues, yo sí pensaba si que íbamos a participar y todo eso. Y sí, yo sí pensaba que íbamos a participar así en la escuela... Y sí nos gusta a nosotros estar activos en la escuela porque ellos (los niños) tienen más deseos de estudiar... Aquí pues ya hay mucha gente latina.

[At times the problem is this exactly that when one goes to the meetings everything they say is in English.]
LS: But if you want to go to these meetings, I can be with you to translate, if you wish.

Rosa: Yes, thank you. Well, yes, I was thinking that if we were participating and all that. And yes, I was thinking that we were participating like that in the school... And yes, we would like to be active in school because they (children) have more desire to learn. Here there are already many Latinos.

Beliefs and Expectations: Communication

With the School District

Parents also believed that the school district and school board should communicate with families in their native language. Rezoning the cul-de-sac was an example of misunderstood communication from the district. Ten thousand students in the southwest zone of the district, including the children in this study, were moved to other schools for the purposes of re-aligning school boundaries. For the children in this study, this would be their third school change that was caused by district level decisions rather than parents' decisions to relocate.

The school board decision was made without Latino understanding or consent because all maps and information had been sent to the families in English. Shortly before our February conversations, children took home information, in English, concerning the possibility of rezoning the cul-de-sac and surrounding area to a different elementary school. The school was slightly closer to the cul-de-sac, but the distance would still require bussing children. During our conversations, two parents were noncommittal about the possible change of schools. They remembered seeing a map but did not understand the implications of the move for their children. The parents did not question whether ESL and bilingual programs were available in the new school.

Rosario was unconcerned about the change and said that:
A mí, lo que me interesa no es la escuela, sino, mis hijos, los alumnos, y los que hacen la escuela.

[To me, the school is not what interests me, but my children, the students, and those who make the school.]

If Rosa's children were rezoned, she and her husband would continue to drive them to the new school that was a fraction of a mile closer to their apartment. In other schools where parents protested at the school board meeting, zoning changes were reconsidered and did not go into effect. The school district assumed that if there were no protest, then parents were in agreement with the rezoning decision. The district did not take into account that Latino parents were silent because they did not understand, in their own language, what was being proposed. As a result, the decision was made. Afterwards, every parent in the study stated that they were unhappy and/or confused about the school and its schedule and questioned why the change had been made.

During the mainstream year, Latino parents expressed the belief that they wanted to continue to be involved in their children's education. It became evident to the parents that both the school and the district were not communicating with all parents. The language difference contributed to parents' beliefs that they were not an active part of the school community.

Summary of Theme III—Describing Status Quo in Mainstream Classrooms: What Did Parents Do? What Did Parents Believe?

During the mainstream year, Latino parents said that they did not change in their own efforts to participate in school. Parents reported that they continued to support children through at-home roles. Parents still reviewed homework but found that children did not need direct assistance as often as
when they were in the primary grades. Rosario and Rosa did not find the homework slip helpful for parent information. However, once Marta understood the homework slip, she used it to keep track of Jerry's progress.

Parents wanted to be actively involved in classrooms because, as Rosa believed, children noticed and tried harder to do their work. But mainstream teachers were less accessible through language, which created a major communication barrier for the Latino parents. Fourth grade teachers were also available only during school hours, which conflicted with Rosario's and Marta's work hours. Rosa continued to attempt in-school connections but said that it was not the same because her own English was limited. In spite of the language difference, parents continued to work with their children at home. Latino parents continued to express their belief that they were actively participating both at home and in school although their own participation changed in several ways. During the mainstream year, parents frequently said that they had the right to learn about their children's education in Spanish and the right to participate in school decision-making. For increasing numbers of Latino children, parents suggested that schools should accommodate parents' needs.

Theme IV: Critically Disrupting Status Quo

Did Parent Involvement Change?

Themes I, II, and III emerged from data collected during the study. Latino parents described what kinds of involvement they had had in the prior, ESL, and mainstream years. Concerning each time period, parents described their parent participation roles and their beliefs. Parents stated that they believed parent participation positively affected children's performance in school. Parents wanted to know, in as much detail as possible, how their children were
progressing in class. In several conversations, parents explained that they were actively involved in their children's education to the best of their ability. Parents' notions concerning their own parent roles did not change during the year their child was mainstreamed. Recognizing the increasing numbers of Latino students, all the parents commented upon the impact that incoming Latino children will have on schools in the future. As part of a rapidly growing minority, parents in this study strongly believed that schools should address the needs of the Latino population. To help other Latinos through changing school policy/tradition, parents frequently made suggestions during our conversations.

During the mainstream year, parents encountered problems that inhibited the level of involvement that could be realized in the classroom. When parents identified an area of concern, they generally offered multiple suggestions for improving or minimizing it. Other suggestions from parents during conversations for Themes I and III, prior years and mainstream, dealt with curriculum and administrative issues. Marta was concerned about health classes offered for sixth graders and said that she did not agree with the district policy. Rosario stated that schools should include "cosas de moral" [moral issues] within the standard curriculum for older students. Rosa and Rosario were concerned about school security issues. They suggested that locking all exterior school doors would enable school personnel to monitor visitors and that required uniforms would identify children who belonged at the school, particularly at the junior high school level. For Theme II, parents' suggested changes within the ESL classroom. Rosa suggested that children use chairs instead of sitting on the floor close to the teacher. All three parents recalled writing notes to me asking for homework to be explained again, solving a problem, or reminding me that their children did not speak English.
During the critical data analysis, three specific barriers emerged. Collectively, these barriers provided critical evidence that the mainstream classroom did little to accommodate the needs of the Latino parents. The first barrier was the language difference. The second barrier was marginalization through which parents believed they were not a part of their children's school experience. The third barrier was parents' personal limitations. Theme IV discusses each of the barriers encountered by the parents in this study.

Evidence of Language Barriers

The first barrier that the Latino parents encountered was language. Prior to the mainstream year, Latino parents were largely unaware of the English-only policy/tradition of the school and classrooms other than some of the ESL classrooms. The language barrier consisted of both written and verbal communication.

Evidence of the Language Barrier:

Written Communication

Within the classroom, ESL students translated written school information such as notices and letters concerning up-coming school and PTA events. For three years, the parents in this study received classroom and school information translated into their native language. Children copied short translations. Long translations were typed in the classroom and copies were given to students. Parents had not been aware, it seemed, that the ESL students within the classroom translated school messages for their parents.

When their children entered fourth grade, the abundance of school information continued but was available only in a language that the parents did not know. Rosario and Marta's high school age children translated letters...
for them. Rosa was dependent upon Jorge's fourth grade knowledge of English to translate adult writing. For Rosa, the mainstream year was the first time she had received all information in English. As a result, she expressed her frustration with the English-only school policy/tradition during every conversation. In response to my repeated questions about what the school could do to help her as a parent, her immediate suggestion was always that the school should communicate with the Latino families in Spanish. Marta and Rosario's responses were similar.

Written communication from the mainstream teachers was also misunderstood by the Latino parents. Parents expressed their belief that the homework slips and weekly progress checklists were impersonal and did not add to parents' knowledge about children's progress. Both Rosario and Rosa dismissed the teachers' communication as ineffective ["No hay notas." There are no notes.] and frequently misunderstood the teachers' intent. Only Marta found the homework slips helpful.

Evidence of the Language Barrier:

Verbal Communication

In addition to the written communication barrier at the school and classroom levels, Latino parents were also unable to initiate conversations with office personnel and teachers. Parents described their own limited conversations with the office. They cited experiences reported by friends of being told by telephone that no one at school spoke Spanish. Parents recalled short conversations with little to say to teachers. Because of language barriers, they said that visiting classrooms was not the same as during the three years of ESL where direct communication took place. During the mainstream year, parents observed children, as Rosa said, but did not always
understand what or why children were doing particular activities and were unable to ask. In contrast to parents' active in-school participation in Mexico and informal visits during ESL class, Latino parents said that limited communication in a foreign language prevented their in-school involvement when their children were mainstreamed.

As a result of language barriers, Rosa did not understand communication sent home with her children, Marta was unable to talk directly with Jerry's teacher, and Rosario could not talk to or write notes directly to Selena's teacher. All three families encountered language barriers that inhibited them from gathering information that might help them become more involved with their child's education.

Through the dialogic process associated with critical theory, Rosa had a multitude of suggestions to decrease both the written and verbal language barriers. She recommended receiving more information about her children's activities and progress (October, 1995). She asked that more people who spoke Spanish be available in the school (October, 1995; April, 1996) and that information and letters from the office (December, 1995; April, 1996) be sent to Latino families in Spanish. She wanted to be able to communicate directly with teachers in Spanish (December, 1995; February, 1996; April, 1996) so that she could be certain about what they were saying. Rosa offered these suggestions for change within our conversational dyad but did not attempt to initiate changes herself at the school level.

Evidence of Marginalization

Parents also felt they were marginalized by both the school and district. Mainstream teachers were more formal and less accessible than ESL teachers. Teachers requested that parents make formal appointments through the
English-speaking office personnel. Scheduled conferences replaced informal drop-in visits. As Rosa reported, the teacher seemed too busy to talk. Formality took the place of ESL sheltering, leaving Rosa, especially, with less confidence and less connectedness to her children's education. Her frustration led to her self-expressed isolation from her children's education. She concluded that she did not believe that she was a part of the school any longer.

The district decision to rezone the cul-de-sac directly affected and caused feelings of marginalization for the families and children in this study. In our February conversations, I asked parents about the zoning change and they were noncommittal. A majority of our conversation concerning rezoning took place in April, after the decision had been finalized. Marta had had prior experiences with the proposed school because her older daughter had attended it when she was younger. She said that:

*Pienso, pero yo no sé, que están discriminando los latinos en esta escuela.*

[I think, but I don't know, that Latinos are discriminated against in this school.]

From previous experience, Marta saw rezoning as causing potential discrimination problems for Latinos but did not elaborate during our discussion or subsequent conversations.

When the rezoning decision was finalized by the school board in March, Marta called me, demanding to know whom she should contact to protest the change of schools and a new issue for her, the year-round calendar. Our April conversations focused on all the parents' questions about the school change, the school calendar change (from nine-month to year-round schedules), and the five track system of the new school. Marta described the complications in her own life caused by this district level decision. Rosario and Rosa expressed their concerns and asked many questions about organizational changes and scheduling as a result of the district decision.
The written and verbal language barriers, combined with marginalization, became problematic to parental involvement in the mainstream classroom. Latino parents also became aware that district decisions were made for their children without parental input. Despite verbal disagreement, anger, and helplessness expressed during our conversations, parents did not directly challenge marginalization by the school and district. For Marta, protesting the district rezoning decision appeared to be the beginning of further effective protests at the school (August, 1996) and district (February, 1997) levels (discussed in Appendix G: Marta's Empowerment).

Evidence of Parents' Personal Limitations

The last barrier encountered by the parents was multi-faceted. First, parents in this study recognized that their children's at-home needs were changing when they were in fourth grade. In response, parents' roles became more limited. Secondly, Latino parents also encountered their own limits in helping children in a language they did not know. Finally, Latino parents identified their own constraints in helping with subject matter that they, themselves, had not learned in Mexico.

Changing Nature of Children's Needs

In the primary grade ESL class, children learned about school and how to complete homework. During the primary grades, parents took direct responsibility for both the process and the content of homework assignments. Parents took active roles in helping with homework and verified that it was completed and handed in. In fourth grade, parents' roles became more limited. Rosario said the Selena understood the process of the homework assignments and became responsible for the content of her own answers. All the parents
reported few instances of actual help and review of assignments. They asked children if homework was complete and followed up if it was not. By fourth grade, children's needs regarding homework changed, and all the parents responded by adapting and limiting their own roles.

Recognition of Language Limits

Secondly, parents recognized their personal limitations in helping children in a foreign language. In the primary ESL class, Marta reported that she helped Jerry with sentence writing by looking up words in the Spanish-English dictionary for him. Rosario and Rosa helped with ideas in the native language, then Selena and Jorge translated the ideas to English. By fourth grade, the English content of the homework was beyond the limited English reported by the parents. As a result, parents became supervisors in monitoring that homework appeared to be completed rather than taking their previous roles as co-workers and collaborators in the homework process.

Recognition of Education Limits

In the last area, Latino parents became aware of their own limitations with the subject matter. Marta, with a sixth grade education in Mexico, said that Jerry’s division problems were complicated and that she did not always explain math the same way as the teacher. Selena's mother encountered the same problems in math and, in the primary grades, solved it by writing me a note to please re-explain the problem to Selena. When Selena was in fourth grade, Rosario said that she wrote a note to the teacher for Selena to translate, asking for another explanation of a concept. Rosa's limitations, from her vantage point of completing high school with a math emphasis in Mexico, focused on problems with the language difference rather than helping in math. Parents'
levels of education increasingly influenced the amount of assistance they could give their fourth graders during the mainstream year.

Summary of Barriers That Disrupted Status Quo

The Latino parents in this study identified three barriers that suggested that the mainstream classroom and school environment did little to encourage Latino parent involvement. The first barrier was the language difference, both written and verbal, which served to isolate parents from the daily events and activities of the school and classroom. The second barrier was marginalization, which resulted from mainstream classroom differences and district rezoning decisions. Latino parents believed that there was no longer a strong bond between school and families. The last barrier encountered by the Latino parents was recognizing their own limitations in helping their fourth grade children. Parents were no longer needed as collaborators in assignments but as supervisors, parents' limited English prevented them from participating in the second language, and parents' educational backgrounds did not always include the content being taught in the classroom. These three barriers inhibited Latino parents from active involvement in their children's education.

Summary of Themes

In the first three themes of describing prior, ESL, and mainstream experiences, parents reported how they were involved in their children's education and described their beliefs about parent involvement at three points in time. Prior to and during ESL class, Latino parents explained their active at-home roles to help their children. They communicated with the school and with the teacher in Spanish or through interpreters. Parents received much
of the school information in their native language. During the mainstream year, parents expressed frustration with the English-only policy/tradition of the school. At that point, parents continued with at-home roles, and their beliefs remained unchanged based upon prior educational experiences.

However, a critical analysis of all data uncovered the fourth theme. Parents identified three major barriers that prohibited their continued active at-home roles: evidence of language barriers, marginalization, and personal limitations. These three barriers disrupted status quo and negatively impacted their parent involvement. For the parents in this study, their own involvement in school became less personal. Parents were limited to monitoring homework within a language and in content areas that were unknown or unclear. Information from the school, in a foreign language, increased parents' beliefs that they were marginalized.

During the 10 months of this study, parents examined existing situations. Within our conversational dyads, extensive dialogue occurred while parents compared and contrasted their patterns of involvement in the ESL and mainstream classroom. As Rosario said, we exercised our freedom of speech:

*Para mí, es lo más importante, puede haber diferentes opiniones.*

[For me, it is the most important, that one can have different opinions.]

Rosa noted during the course of our conversations "*Puede... expresar... sus ideas y ser oído*" [One can... express... one's ideas and be heard.]

Concerning the final result of our conversations, Rosario said that on our days off: "*Hacemos un esfuerzo por la mejoría de la escuela y de los alumnos* [We made an effort for the betterment of the school and the students]. By continuing our previously established personal connection in Spanish, Latino parents described their own parent involvement during their child's first year of mainstreaming.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study investigated three Latino families' perspectives about their own parent involvement in school. Framed by critical theory, this study applied the dialogic process by asking Latino parents to describe their parent involvement roles and beliefs at three different points in time. All data were coded using the constant comparative method and critically analyzed for enabling and constraining factors. This chapter begins with a summary of the major findings of this study in light of the research questions. Next, recommendations for school reform will be presented and summarized. Finally, directions for future research with language-different parents are presented.

Summary of Study

In this multiple-case study, three families' perspectives of prior, ESL, and mainstream parent involvement in school were presented. Rather than considering each family as a separate case, data were interwoven into four themes. Framed by critical theory, related questions uncovered past experiences of older children in the family and ESL experiences for one child. This allowed a descriptive definition of status quo related to prior parent involvement and the ESL classroom to be generated. After establishing a definition of status quo at different points in time, it became evident that the level of parent involvement within mainstream classrooms changed. Using all
data sources, parents' and children's experiences described the transition from ESL to mainstream classrooms. Interview questions focused on parent involvement roles in children's education, but parents supplemented their responses by describing their own experiences and beliefs. Data from conversations were supplemented by my coded journal, field notes, log, and observation notes.

I used the format of the plática conversation, a relaxed, informal way to build and extend community. Plática interviews (Sherradan & Barrera, 1995) led to rich description and, as Rosario noted, increased la amistad [the friendship] between participants and researcher. Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1991, 1992, 1993), Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991), and Trueba et al. (1990, 1993a, 1993b) also emphasized the importance of "personalizing a formal institution" (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991). Plática interviews allowed the necessary personal contact and informality for encouraging honest and complete responses.

Data from several sources were collected during and after multiple conversations focusing on different children in the family concerning parent involvement aspects of their education. The time period of the study allowed parents the opportunity to reflect about prior experiences and add those insights to later conversations. Parents became increasingly aware of their own experiences and knowledge that they employed each day in order to help their children in school. Parents identified helpful areas such as their own similar educational experiences, active at-home roles in helping children, and their personal commitment to addressing children's needs.

Four major research questions were used to investigate parents' perceptions of their participation. Each of the questions will be briefly discussed below, along with findings from the study and related research literature.
Research question 1: How did working-class Latino parents describe their involvement in their children's education prior to ESL?

Our conversations and other data sources formed Theme I as Latino parents examined their prior knowledge through their own lives as parents in two different countries. In Mexico, Rosario and Marta were actively involved and empowered to help in and out of the classroom for several reasons. Rosario and Marta reported a sense of equality with the teacher, Latino parents and teachers spoke the same language, and neither mother worked outside the home. Both mothers described ways they participated in Mexico and in the United States. In Mexico, Rosario and Marta stated their beliefs, views, and concerns while being involved in creating solutions to problems in their children's schools. Research studies by Zelazo (1995), Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1991, 1992), Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991), and Zuñiga-Hill and Alva (1995) corroborated the effectiveness of parent involvement when both parents and teachers spoke the same language. All data from prior to ESL became the basis for Theme I, Describing Prior Status Quo.

Research Question 2: How did working-class Latino parents describe their involvement in their children's education during three years of ESL class?

All data sources relating to three years of ESL formed Theme II. Parents actively participated in conversations concerning their own involvement during the last three years Jorge, Selena, and Jerry had been in ESL. They compared experiences from their own lives, their older children, and the children who had been in my class. Parents identified their at-home roles and described ways in which they participated at school through written notes, informal visits, and telephone calls. At times, their beliefs of caring and concern paralleled those held by middle-class parents (Heath, 1983; Taylor,
At other times, their beliefs concerning the school's role as educator and trust in school decision-making were most like those reported by Lareau (1987, 1989), Heath (1983, 1986), and Anderson and Stokes (1984). Our prior connection of school and home communication formed a significant part of building trust, common ground, and community. Data from all sources describing how parents participated and what constituted their beliefs formed the description of status quo in Theme II. At the same time parents predicted what their involvement would be when their children made the transition to mainstream classrooms.

Research Question 3: How did working-class Latino parents describe their involvement when their children entered mainstream classrooms?

During four conversations and supplemented by other data sources, Latino parents described their roles in mainstream classrooms. As working parents, Rosario and Marta described at-home roles, but Rosa discussed both at-home and informal classroom visits. Latino parents in this study modeled their at-home parent involvement on their parents' Ranch Generation (Reese & Gallimore, 1995) roles. Parents also described communication from the school, school office, and district. Frequently, Rosa suggested that communication with the school would be more effective in the language she knew.

Throughout our conversations, parents expressed their rights and expectations to be a part of their children's education. Data containing parents' reflections during their child's mainstream year became the basis for Theme III, Describing Mainstream Classrooms.

Overarching question: Do barriers exist that inhibit parent involvement as students make the transition to mainstream classrooms?

Through critical analysis of data, I addressed the overarching question. In the first theme, a picture of status quo was established based on data where
parents described their experiences prior to ESL class. A second picture of status quo was derived from data concerning ESL classroom experiences. During the mainstream year, parents described at-home roles but identified several barriers which suggested that the mainstream classroom often did little to encourage parental involvement. The first barrier was the language of the school, English, used in all written and oral communication. The second barrier was parent marginalization by the school’s formality, language, and inaccessibility. Marginalization led to parents' beliefs that they were isolated. The last barrier consisted of three facets: (1) parents at-home roles changed, (2) parents encountered personal limits to helping their children in a foreign language, and (3) parents became aware of their own educational limitations. Zelazo (1995) and Abramson (1994) discussed language barriers. Other research confirmed marginalization in other groups but suggested ways to overcome the problem through pro-active means (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991; Zelazo, 1995, Reynolds, 1992; Klimes-Dougan et al., 1992). For the third barrier, children's changing needs were not discussed in parent involvement literature but there were brief references to language limits (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991) and knowledge limits (Zuniga-Hill & Alva, 1995).

For this particular group of three families in one specific 10 month period, this study established status quo for three specific times. Latino parents' educational experiences in Mexico gave them a basis for understanding schools in the United States. During the time of the study, parents did not reach out to the school or district to offer their suggestions. They did not involve their friends in resolving problems. In this study, parents' suggestions and solutions remained within our conversational dyads. This particular group of Latino parents did not impact a school in ways reported by Cummins (1989), Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1991, 1992), Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba

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(1991), McCaleb (1994), and Zelazo (1995). Only Marta, with more children, less time and money as a newly single-parent, less education, no transportation other than buses or taxis, and no close-knit family/friends for support, applied her knowledge of parental rights and educational experience to later challenge school and district decisions (See Appendix G: Marta's Empowerment).

Implications and Recommendations For

School Reform: Lessons From Latino
Parents Framed By Critical Theory

An increase in the number of minority students and families is one aspect of education that is driving school reform. As equal partners in the educational process, parents and educators share many common concerns and solutions for children's educational futures. To include increasing numbers Latino parents who historically have not participated in school, restructuring the current educational system is needed. Educational reform literature suggests that schools should be restructured in ways that meet incoming families' needs.

The goal of critical theory is to empower participants. By applying critical theory to the study of minority parents and educators, problems can be isolated and targeted for school reform. At the same time suggestions are implemented and adapted, on-going dialogue continues to define and resolve differences. As a dialogic process, critical theory offers one way to reform schools by involving minority parents. As suggested by Reavis and Griffith (1991), restructured parent roles should include changing culture, organization, decisions, curriculum, and ideas about meeting school needs. By giving Latino
parents a stake in education through the dialogic process, the school reform movement would benefit.

This study is an example of critical dialogue between one teacher and three Latino families. Parents identified three major barriers that prevented productive levels of involvement between the school and Latino homes: (a) language barriers, (b) marginalization, (c) parents' personal limitations. The language barrier contributed to, but was not the only component, that led to parents' beliefs of marginalization. By comparing this study's findings to parents' suggestions and the research literature, each finding is discussed in terms of what could be done to increase the school and Latino home connection. Findings and recommendations are presented as lessons for school reform literature.

**Lesson One: Evidence of a Language Barrier**

In this study, Latino parents identified the language barrier that existed between themselves and one school. Prior to their children's mainstream year, communication with the school and ESL classroom had been in Spanish. Latino parents expressed their surprise and frustration when they became aware that school communication was in English. In addition, Rosa attempted frequent in-person contacts with her children's teachers but was able to say very little. In every conversation with me, parents suggested that the school must address the Latino parents' needs. During the year the children in the study were mainstreamed, parents in this study found language was a pervasive barrier that prevented them from participating in their child's in-school life.
Recommendations: Minimizing the Language Barrier

Rosa's suggestions included hiring Spanish-speaking staff to translate school information and interpret in person for Latino parents. Another suggestion to increase opportunities for communication is modeled upon the adult tutoring sessions organized by Rosario for her cul-de-sac. Both parents and teachers could offer small group classes at school with teachers teaching English to parents and parents reciprocating by teaching Spanish to teachers. In this way, parents and teachers could learn each other's languages while building a foundation of trust and connection with another culture. This small-group tutoring in a second language gives status to both languages and utilizes local resources. Similar program models have been described by Ada (1988), Cummins (1989, 1993), Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1991, 1992), and Zuñiga-Hill and Alva (1995).

Existing research has reported examples of parent empowerment. When Latino parents were included through a common language, they became involved at the school and district levels (Ada, 1988; Cummins, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1992; Edelsky, 1986; Zuñiga-Hill & Alva, 1995). Other researchers have addressed patterns of discourse that led to empowerment (Cummins, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1992). Zelazo (1995) extended basic written communication to include the oral language of the families used by both faculty and staff in both formal and informal ways. Powerful collaboration occurred when both parents and educators communicated, identified, planned, and implemented solutions together. Research by Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1991, 1992), and Ada (1988) exemplified home-school collaboration. One of Epstein's (1992; Hidalgo, Bright, Siu, Swap, & Epstein, 1995) five types of parent involvement included the school's responsibility for
communicating with families. According to the Latino families in this study, their child's school did not fulfill its obligation. Research literature, however, has not reported language as a barrier, perhaps because participants directly accessed schools through their native language. Research studies by Bermúdez (1993), Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1991, 1992), Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991), Edelsky (1986), Epstein (1987), and Zelazo (1995) did not focus on language difference because the barrier did not exist. There might be other situations where language differences constrained groups of people, but research literature did not corroborate this.

When children in this study entered mainstream classrooms, Latino parents found strong evidence of a language barrier between themselves and the school. Latino parents in this study did find ways to circumvent the barrier, including the use of interpreters, but it was the parents themselves, rather than the school, who addressed the language difference.

Lesson Two: Evidence of Marginalization

Marginalization (Harding, 1991; hooks, 1984; Weis & Fine, 1993), a term used to describe social groups who are outside the powerful controlling center, was also a barrier identified by Latino parents in this study. They believed that they did not have a part in their children's in-school lives during the mainstream year. For these parents, marginalization was caused primarily by the language barrier and also by the formality and larger classes of the intermediate mainstream classrooms. Work schedules and transportation difficulties made it difficult for the Latino parents to talk directly with their children's teachers during school hours. Marginalization, for Rosa, caused isolation. The school district contributed to marginalizing Latino parents by
rezoning school boundaries and moving children to three different schools between kindergarten and fifth grade.

**Recommendations: To Decrease Marginalization**

Parents in this study suggested that conferences should be available at least one evening after work. They also recommended that parent conferences should be offered at the end of each grading period so that all parents would have more opportunities to communicate directly with teachers. Another suggestion was weekly after-school class meetings, modeled on what parents remembered from Mexico. Latino parents described the importance of schools meeting the parents' work schedules so they could attend programs, functions, conferences, meetings, special classes for children/families/adults, and visit classrooms. They also recommended that home-to-school telephone calls needed the same kind of time flexibility.

The central question of decreasing marginalization, discussed in Nieto (1995), is how must schools change to support families? Zelazo (1995) found that inviting parents, providing a parent and family gathering space in the school, and offering transportation increased parent involvement. Reynolds (1992), Klimes-Dougan, Lopez, Nelson, and Adelman (1992), and Gotts and Purnell (1987) recommended that schools should become more pro-active in involving parents. By extending more written and verbal invitations, parents in this study said that the bond between home and school would be strengthened. Davies (1993) and Abramson (1994) corroborated that positive home-school communication in the native language increased ties between school and home.
In order for working parents to become more visible in schools, adjustments could be made for parents' schedules. Multiple conferences and meetings could be held at various times, not just during the school day, enabling greater numbers of parents to attend. In Epstein's (1987) survey, more than half of the mothers worked but believed parent involvement was important. In other studies, 38% of Hispanics agreed that working parents did not have time to be involved in school activities (Chavkin and Williams, 1993) but were concerned (Ritter, Mont-Reynaud, & Dornbusch, 1993). Therefore, other means and times are necessary so that a rapidly growing segment of incoming school population could be reached. Zúñiga-Hill and Alva (1995) described neighborhood classes designed by parents, initially for parent learning, demonstrated positive effects on children: watching their parents go to school encouraged children to do better in school and to remain in school longer. Adult and family-centered classes (López, 1993) with pro-active outreach by school personnel (Klimes-Dougan, Lopez, Nelson, & Adelman, 1992) offered at various times to meet parents' work-schedules, enhanced the school's basic obligation to communicate with families.

To increase the bond between school and home, teachers introduced families to at-home learning activities within the school setting (Epstein, 1992; Hidalgo, Bright, Siu, Swap, & Epstein, 1995). Through informal meetings or gatherings, teachers demonstrated what parents could do at home that extended classroom work. Much of the information was useful across grade levels from pre-school to high school. The weekly meetings or other gatherings focused on activities that parents could do with their children (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1992; Graue, Weistein, & Walberg, 1983; Moles, 1982; Reese & Gallimore, 1995). Zelazo (1995) described informal unscheduled visits in a comfortable school environment that encouraged the kind of

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communication between parents and teachers that Latino parents in this study seemed to prefer. Parents in this study recalled the ESL daily school note as an important way to build a sense of belonging to their children's classrooms. Parents suggested that Spanish speakers, whether children or adults, could assist in translating but said that using a translator was not as effective as direct discussion between parents and teachers.

Training parents to be effective volunteers in school was suggested as another way to incorporate parents in schools (Epstein, 1992; Hidalgo, Bright, Siu, Swap, & Epstein, 1995). Working parents in this study described beliefs similar to those expressed by working-class parents in Lareau's (1987, 1989) studies who said that the school's responsibility was to educate. Of the Latino parents in this study, only Rosa had time to participate. The other two parents and even Rosa, with her frequent visits, were for the most part, unaware of the active roles upper middle-class parents played at the particular school in the study. The parents in this study modeled their own participation on that of their Ranch Generation parents' at-home roles. Their participation paralleled those described by Reese and Gallimore (1995). During three years that Jorge was in ESL and there was no language difference, Rosa had a young child and frequently babysat for other children. She was not able to volunteer in the classroom, and she did not see mainstream parents actively assisting in other classrooms, office, cafeteria, playground, and teachers' workroom. Rosa was confined to at-home roles similar to her parents'.

Some researchers found that by strengthening the school-home bond at the school level, parents have become participants in decision-making, governance, and advocacy (Epstein, 1992; Hidalgo, Bright, Siu, Swap, & Epstein, 1995). Rosa, the only non-working mother in this study, was very interested in being a member of PTA and was willing to represent Latinos on the
Learning Improvement Team (LIT). However, since she was unable to figure out when and where the PTA met and the LIT team was already formed for 1995-96, Rosa was unable to be an advocate for Latino children in either governance group. Schools such as those described by Zelazo (1995) or Delgado-Gaitan (1990, 1991, 1992) would have met Rosa's needs and included her immediately as an active participant with time, education, experience, knowledge, and *ganas* [desire].

**Lesson Three: Evidence of Personal Limitations**

During the mainstream year, parents identified three areas in which they personally felt limited. Their fourth grade child's needs changed and, as a result, parents adapted their roles. During the year, Latino parents became aware of their limited English and limited content area knowledge. Two of the limits found by parents are not discussed in research literature.

**Changing Needs. Parents' Limited Roles**

During the mainstream year, parents became aware of and described the changes in their own roles in children's homework. They found that direct help was needed less often in fourth grade than when children were in primary grades. Parents were no longer collaborators in homework activities but became monitors and supervisors during fourth grade.

Research did not describe a particular developmental time frame or role change in which parent support adapted to fit children's changing needs. Instead, research related to parent involvement focused on three areas. The first area described the correlation between active parent participation and children's success in school (Azmitia, Cooper, Rivera, Dunbar, Lopez,
Gaúimore, Ittel, & Garcia, 1995; Chavkin & Williams, 1993; Dornbusch & Wood, 1989; Epstein, 1992; Goldenberg, 1992; Heath, 1986; Moles, 1982). The second area discussed middle-class and working class parent participation (Azmitia, Cooper, Rivera, Dunbar, Lopez, Gallimore, Ittel, & Garcia, 1995; Becker & Epstein, 1981; Chavkin, Williams, & Stallworth SEDL studies, 1980-1987; Epstein, 1987; Lareau, 1987, 1989; Moles, 1982). Finally, planning and governance roles in schools were desired by some social groups but not others (Chavkin & Williams, 1993; Lombana, 1983; López, 1993; Williams & Stallworth, 1982; Zelazo, 1995). Parent involvement research did not report the role change found by parents in this study.

It is recommended that further research should be conducted in the area of developmental role changes to determine if other parents adapt to their children's changing educational needs.

Parents Reached the Limits of Their English

During the mainstream year, parents recognized their personal limitations in English. Both Rosa and Marta reported that they were unable to help children in a language they did not know. The content of the curriculum and homework was beyond the limited English reported by the parents. Only Selena could ask her father for homework assistance because he, according to Rosario, knew English.

Several researchers described support groups that assisted parents when children needed help. Zuñiga-Hill and Alva (1995) described institutos organized by the parents for teaching each other skills but included neighborhood support for problem solving within the informality of the classes. Minami and Ovando (1995), supported by Moran and Hakuta (1995), described a multi-faceted approach to parent and community education that
included both education and counseling services for families. Delgado-Gaitan (1991, 1992) reported informal conversations between COPLA members to help with homework and school program placement. Support groups such as these would have helped the parents in this study when they encountered their own limitations in English.

Research did not address the issue of parents reaching the limits of their English knowledge. It is recommended that further research be conducted with other groups of language-different parents to confirm or challenge the finding in this study.

Parents Reached Limits of Their Own Knowledge

This finding is related to Latino parents' levels of education and their relationship with school. Rosario, remembering her early childhood on a ranch, reported that her parents and her husband's parents had received limited education. Both Marta and Rosa, in describing their Ranch-level educated parents, had themselves taken advantage of further opportunities for education as members of the Town Generation. Marta finished sixth grade, considered to be a terminal grade for many students in Mexico. Rosario completed secundaria, our junior high, and Rosa finished the U.S. equivalent of high school, preparatorio, with an emphasis on math and bookkeeping.

Research described that, in addition to the amount of education Latino parents received in Mexico, Latino philosophies about teaching and learning also contribute to the conflict with current practices in the United States. Goldenberg, Reese, and Gallimore (1992) described parents' own educational experiences of literacy, based on rote memory using the syllable/phonics approach to reading found in Latin America. As a result, Latino children
enter kindergarten with few storybook reading experiences prior to school. When their older children entered school, parents learned what teachers expected. For example, Marta said she knew what to do to help her younger children before they started school. As a part of working with parents, whether formally or informally, parents stated that they would like specific information about behavior and academic progress as suggested by Rosa and outlined by Chavkin and Williams (1993).

Research has reported and described parents' levels of education but has not yet focused on parents' own perceptions of their limits and how to overcome them. *Institutos* (Zuñiga-Hill & Alva, 1995) along with support groups (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991, 1992) have addressed the issue informally but have not focused on the parents' views. Further research is recommended to ascertain parents' perceptions and devise programs to help parents.

**Summary of Lessons Learned**

Three lessons related to school reform were learned during the critical dialogic process. Marginalization is the only lesson that has been documented in research. In the literature, language difference has not been identified as causing a major barrier. In research studies, perhaps once language is identified, appropriate measures were implemented to reduce the oral and written language barriers. The last lesson, parents' personal limitations, was not documented in research; therefore, further research is needed.

**Future Research Directions**

1. Conduct a study over a longer period of time and focus on parents' participatory roles in at-home activities.
2. Identify and explore parents' limitations in English and their compensatory actions.

3. Replicate this study in another setting with the participant observer actively working as a change agent in areas of language barrier, marginalization, and parents' personal limitations.

4. Conduct a longitudinal study of five to ten years, following up on parent involvement as Latino children progress from grade to grade and school to school.

5. Using quantitative measures, conduct a larger study with more Latino parents representing each terminal level of education from Mexico: primaria, secundaria, and perparatorio; and include other variables: middle-class professional Latino parents, recent immigrants, those who have lived in the United States for a decade or a generation; parents from other Latino countries and cultures; single-parent and two parent families; median family income; and types of employment held during the time of the study.

6. Apply other research methodologies (e.g., ethnography, single case study, survey, experimental) to investigate participant-researcher discussions, the problems participants face, and how conflicts are resolved.

Conclusions

For more than a decade, parent involvement has been linked to children's success in school. Existing research identifies ways parents help children both traditionally and non-traditionally. Researchers have suggested that most parents wanted to be involved in a variety of ways. For this study using critical theory as a dialogic framework, data analysis revealed parents' knowledge and beliefs during prior experiences and formed the first theme. Knowledge and beliefs from three years of ESL class were the basis of the
second theme. In the third theme, parents described their knowledge and beliefs concerning parent involvement during the year their fourth graders were mainstreamed. Critical analysis of the descriptions of status quo in the first three themes uncovered the fourth theme, barriers Latino parents encountered during the mainstream year. Of the three barriers that were identified, marginalization has been discussed in research literature. Language barriers and parents' personal limitations have not been documented.

Largely because of language difference, few research studies have been conducted with Latino populations, and fewer still have asked Latino parents what they thought about their children's education. This study explored parent participation from the perspective of one group of Latino parents and found that specific barriers prevented involvement in their children's education during the mainstream year.
TO: Linda Skroback-Heisler
FROM: Dr. William Schulze, Director, Office of Research Administration
DATE: 23 December 1993
RE: Status of Human Subject Protocol entitled: "Empowering Latino Parents as Active Collaborators"

This memorandum is official notification that the protocol for the project reference above has been approved. This approval is for a one year duration. At the end of the year, you must notify this office if the project will be continued.

If you have any questions or require any assistance, please give us a call.
DATE: January 5, 1995
TO: Linda Skroback-Heisler (ICS)
FROM: Dr. William E. Schulze, Director
RE: Status of human subject protocol entitled:
Empowering Latino Parents as Active Collaborators
(311s1293-342)

The protocol for the project referenced above has been reviewed by the Office of Research Administration, and it has been determined that it meets the criteria for exemption from full review by the UNLV human subjects committee. Except for any required conditions or modifications noted below, this protocol is approved for a period of one year from the date of this notification, and work on the project may proceed. This is an extension of the first year request.

Should the use of human subjects described in this protocol continue beyond a year from the date of this notification, it will be necessary to request an extension.

cc: Marilyn Ohlhausen (ICS)
DATE: March 5, 1996

TO: Linda Skroback-Heisler (ICS)  
M/S 3005

FROM: Dr. William E. Schulze, Director  
Office of Sponsored Programs (X1357)

RE: Status of Human Subject Protocol Entitled:  
"Empowering Latino Parents as Active Collaborators"

1st Year OSP #311s1293-342  
Renewal OSP #311s0396-155e

Your request for extension of a period of one year for the  
subject protocol has been received and processed in our office.  
This protocol is approved for a renewal period of one year from  
the date of this notification.

Should the use of human subjects described in this protocol  
continue beyond a year from the date of this notification, it  
will be necessary to request an additional extension. You will  
be contacted at the end of this period for status of the project.

cc: M. Ohluhausen (ICS-3005)  
OSP File
Informed Consent Form

Title: Trabajando juntos: Empowering Latino parents as active collaborators in one classroom

Titulo: Trabajando juntos: Una colaboracion de padres latinos en una clase

Purpose: I am asking you to participate in my research study. I hope to learn about the progress of the collaboration between one teacher and a group of parents.

Intencion: Estoy preguntando que Ud./Uds. participa/n en una investigacion. Espero que podemos aprender sobre el progreso de nuestra colaboracion entre una maestra y un grupo de padres.

Subjects: The Latino parents of children in my classroom.

Las personas: Uds. son los padres de alumnos en mi clase.

Procedure: If you agree to participate, we will talk informally about the education of your son or daughter. The questions we will discuss are:

What do you know about the school system in the United States?
What do you want to know about the educational system?
How do you perceive your role in parenting as related to the school system?
What can the school community do to improve teacher-parent communication?
What can parents do to improve parent-teacher communication?
How do you interact now with respect to school?

What are the differences in this answer between January and May?

In order to remember your answers, I am going to use a tape recorder. I will transcribe our conversations from the cassette. I will ask you to verify your exact quotes. At this time, you can also edit and change what you said.

Procedimiento: Si Uds. deciden a participar, hablaremos informalmente sobre la educacion de sus hijo/hijas. Vamos a discutir:

Digame sus experiencias con el sistema escolar en los Estados Unidos.
Que clase de informacion quiere Ud. saber el sistema escolar?
Describe su parte como padre en relacion al sistema escolar.
Que puede hacer la comunidad escolar para mejorar la comunicacion entre las escuelas y los padres?
Que puede hacer los padres para mejorar la comunicacion entre los padres y la escuela?

Ahora, que clase de interacciones tienen su familia con la escuela?

Hay una diferencia en la respuesta a la ultima pregunta entre enero y mayo?

Para recordar todo, voy a usar una grabadora y despues voy a copiar todo del cassette. Después, Uds. pueden chequear y cambiar sus palabras escritas.

Alternatives: none

Las alternativas: ninguna
Risks: None. None of your comments will affect the grades of your children in my classroom. They receive ESL with comments at the present time.

Los peligros: Ningunos. Ninguna de sus comentarios van a afectar las calificaciones de sus hijos/hijas en mi clase. Ahora reciben ESL con comentario.

Benefits: When we are discussing the questions for the study, we will also be able to discuss other concerns that you have. Moreover, our communication will lead to increased collaboration between the home and school.

Los beneficios: Cuando estamos hablando a respecto a las preguntas oficiales, también podemos discutir sus asuntos. Además, nuestra comunicación va a aumentar la colaboración entre la casa y la escuela.

Confidentiality: In order to maintain confidentiality, I will change the names of all participants. I will also delete any personal details. My committee at the university will read my study and one copy will be placed in the university library. When I have finished, I will give you, the participant, a copy of the completed study.

Para tener confianza: Para mantener su confidencia, voy a cambiar todos los nombres de las personas quien estan participando. Además, voy a omitir detalles personales. Mi comite de profesores en la universidad van a leer el estudio. También, una copia del estudio va a estar en la biblioteca de la Universidad de Nevada, Las Vegas. Cuando termine, voy a dar una copia del estudio a Ud.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw: You may refuse to participate in this study. You may change your mind about being in the study and quit after the study has started. If the study design or use of data is changed, I will inform you and reobtain your consent.

El derecho a refusar o retirarse: Ud./s puede/n refusar a participar en ese estudio. También, Ud./s puede/n retirarse después del estudio empiece. Si yo cambio estudio o el uso de la informacion, voy a hablar con Ud./s y les preguntare por su permiso otra vez.

Questions: If you have questions about this study, please call me at home (658-1785) or at school (799-5950). In addition, you can send a note to my home address: 6653 Pleasant Plains Way, Las Vegas, NV 89108.

Si hay preguntas: Si Ud./s tiene/n preguntas sobre ese estudio, por favor, llámeme por teléfono,658-1785 en casa o 799-5950 en la escuela. También, puede/n mandar una nota a mi dirección, 6653 Pleasant Plains Way, Las Vegas, NV 89108.

You will receive a signed and dated copy of this form to keep.

Ud./s va/h a recibir una copia de esa forma, firmada con la fecha para guardar.

Date __________________ Signature of Participant ____________________________
fecha firma del padre
Date __________________ Signature of Investigator ____________________________
fecha firma de investigador

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Mainstream Experiences With Older Child-Summer 1995
Questions that will guide conversations

Research Question 1: How do working class Latino parents
describe their previous involvement in their older children's
education, including mainstreaming experiences?

I. Interactions between parents and child

1. Talk about _____'s school experience when he/she entered a mainstream classroom.

2. How were you able to help your child? Was anyone else involved in helping? How were you unable to help?

3. What are your expectations of your older child? Short term, long term. Have your expectations changed during the last few years and why?

II. Parents' knowledge regarding participation in schools

4. What did you think would be your role as a parent when your older child made the transition? What skills did you think you would need?

5. What did you learn about schools and your role as involved parents in the U.S. through your older child's experiences? Were there other sources that added to your knowledge of parent participation? What skills/knowledge did you gain during the transition of your older child? Explain how you applied this knowledge.

6. Did you feel you had a voice (or could have had a voice if you chose) in your older child's education during the period of transition? Explain.

7. If you had concerns about the classroom, to whom did you talk/write notes? If you talked/wrote the teacher or administrator, did you feel that your suggestions were included in school decisions? Did you feel that your concerns and advice were taken seriously and given respect?

III. Interactions between parents and teachers

8. What was your actual role in interacting with the teacher? Was it the same as your perceptions? What specific ways did you interact with your child's teacher?

9. What could the school and/or teacher have done to help you, the parent?
ESL Classroom—Summer 1995 Conversations

Research Question 2: How do working class Latino parents describe their involvement with their children's schooling during the three year period their children attended an ESL classroom?

I. Interactions between parents and child

1. Talk about _____'s school experience when he/she entered my classroom three years ago. Talk about the last three years that your child was in my classroom.

2. How were you able to help your child? Was anyone else involved in helping? How were you unable to help?

3. What are your expectations for _____? Short term, long term. Have your expectations changed during the last few years and why?

II. Parents' knowledge regarding participation in schools

4. What did you think would be your role as a parent when _____'s entered first grade in my ESL classroom? What skills did you think you would need?

5. What did you learn about schools and your role as parents in the U.S. through _____'s experience in ESL? Were there other sources that added to your knowledge? What skills/knowledge did you gain during the last three years? How did you apply these (specific situations)?

6. Did you feel that you had a voice or could have a voice if you chose in the classroom during your child's three years in ESL? Explain.

7. If you had concerns about the classroom, to whom did you talk/write notes? If you talked/wrote to me, did you feel that I included your suggestions in school? Did you feel that your concerns and advice were taken seriously and given respect?

III. Interactions between parents and teachers

8. What was your actual role? Was it the same as your perception? In my ESL classroom, what specific ways did we interact that added to your knowledge of schools in the U.S.?

9. What could the school/I have done to better help you, the parent?
IV. Predicted parent involvement

10. Are there specific interactions from the ESL classroom that you predict will help your child's transition as he/she is mainstreamed?

11. Talk about communicating with the mainstream teacher. Do you think it will be the same or different than communicating with the ESL teacher. How, specifically?

12. Can you predict whether you will be able to have an influence on the mainstream teacher's classroom? How, in what ways, for what reasons?

Mainstream Classroom --September 1995 to April 1996

Research Question 3: How do Latino parents describe their involvement in their children's education during the first year of mainstreaming into regular education?

I. Interactions between parents and child

1. Talk about _____'s school experiences in his/her new classroom.

2. How are you able to help your child? Has anyone else helped? How are you unable to help?

3. What are your expectations for _____? Short term, long term. Have your expectations changed during the last year and why?

II. Parents' knowledge regarding participation in schools

4. What did you think would be your role as a parent when your child made the transition into a mainstream classroom? What skills did you think you would need? [added 2/96: What are you finding now?]

5. What are you learning about schools and your role as parents in the U.S. through _____'s mainstream experiences? Were there other sources that added to your knowledge? What skills/knowledge have you gained from your child's mainstreaming experience? Explain how you have applied this knowledge.

6. Do you feel that you have a voice (or could have a voice if you choose) in the mainstream classroom? Explain.
7. If you had concerns about the classroom, to whom did you talk/write notes? Did you feel that the teacher included your suggestions in school? Did you feel that your concerns and advice were taken seriously and given respect?

III. Interactions between parents and teachers

8. What has your actual role been? Was it the same as your perception? In what specific ways do you interact with your child's new teacher?

9. What could the school/teacher have done to help you, the parent?

IV. Predicted future involvement

10. What specific interactions from the mainstream classroom are helping make the transition? Do you remember any specific interactions from the ESL classroom that are helping your child make the transition?

11. Talk about communicating with the mainstream teacher. Is it the same or different than communicating with the ESL teacher? Explain.

12. Can you predict whether you will be able to have an influence on the mainstream teacher's classroom? How, in what ways, for what reasons?

13. Where do you think your skills/knowledge will lead? How will it affect your older and younger children as they continue/enter school?

14. Looking back, describe how your involvement in school has changed over time with each of your children. Why?

[Added to Question 3, Feb. 17, 1996:

El año que entra, van a estar más estudiantes en la situación de , moviendo de una clase de ESL a las clases regulares. ¿Qué puede Ud. sugerir a los otros padres para que ellos puedan ayudar a sus hijos e hijas?

¿Habían estrategias que sirven bien?

¿Habían estrategias que no ayudan bien?

En su opinión, ¿Sus estrategias sirven para mejorar la situación/adaptación de todos niños o solamente niños latinos?
Si Uds. tienen preguntas sobre la clase, las reglas, la tarea, el trabajo de su hijo/a, ¿Ud. está preguntando a quién para ayudarse?

¿Y esas preguntas y respuestas (diálogo) están causando acción? ¿En cuáles maneras? notas, llamadas

Si habían conexiones, ¿Causaban más poder en la parte de Uds.?

¿Había problemas el la escuela/con la escuela que podemos resolver?

.....que no podemos resolver?

¿En su opinión, en cuáles maneras pueden los maestros y los padres trabajar juntos?

¿Cual es su definición personal de participación de los padres?
¿En cuáles maneras podemos trabajar juntos para ayudar a sus niños efectivamente?

¿Como maestros, en cuáles maneras podemos aumentar la participación de los padres latinos?

Added to April 1, 1996 questions:

Dígame sobre la educación de sus padres y la educación de los padres de su esposo.

Un autor dice que en México los padres no visitan en la escuela a menos que los niños no estaban estudiando o no estaban responsable. ¿Es la verdad o no?

En las escuelas en México, había Institutos Familiares? Cual tipo de cosas enseñaron, dónde, porque, cuántas veces? Con/sin dinero, etc.
APPENDIX C AXIAL CODING AND DEVELOPMENT

Axial Coding

experiences in school TS
- kid experiences in school
- ESL
- communication with school
- teacher support
- parents knowledge of subject-Mexico
- last parent connection

misc. questions TS
- grados vs calificaciones
- different methods
- need to work
- adult classes

parent responsibility TS
- ways parents help
- support: friends, family
- grades and interest
- children's friends
- children's activities
- during transition
- meetings and fiestas
- Hugo's picnic
- value education
- house analogy
- what parents learned
- changes
- work ethic
- abilities needed

suggestions TS
- meetings
- uniforms
- call for bueno
- teach values
- communication
- include Spanish
- chairs
- weekly juntas-Mexico
- communication & tarea

biculturalism TS
- vivimos aqui
- la oportunidad latina
- un Mexicano que no habla espanol

la fuerza latina TS
- strong women
- la justicia
- intervenir
- more Latino students

parental expectations of school TS
- confidence
- parental rights
- a part of school
- influence
- triangle
- parent involvement
- me da verguenza
- Mexican schools are more advanced
- not a part
- conflict
- haciendo lo correcto
- doubts
- rejection by teacher
- communication with teachers

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experiences in school TS
kid experiences in school
ESL
communication with school
teacher support
parents knowledge of subject-Mexico
last parent connection
kid exper. prior to school
helping problem solve
comparison Mexico - US
voice of parents
with older/younger kid
re zoning
prob. solving
isolation
kid responsibilities
communication w tchr.
connections w me

Parent responsibility TS

ways parents help
support: friends, family
grades and interest
children's friends
children's activities
during transition
meetings and fiestas
Hugo's picnic
value education
house analogy
what parents learned
changes
work
abilities needed
w older children
helping younger children
Information
homework
visit school
motivating kids
who translates
parent-kid talk
world/local news
family involvement

Parental expect. of school TS
confidence
parental rights
a part of school
influence
triangle
parent involvement
me da verguenza
Mexican schools are more advanced

aspirations TS
children's futures
home TS
kids' responsibilities
family life
description
mistakes TS
misc. TS
chismosas
vocab
high school classes
contraband book
teaching
family photos
school parties
information re tax use
information
info re college
college
welfare
helping
describing school
family & school
kid responsibilities
despair
hope
connections w community
la Migra
our school experiences
visiting me at school
driving
dog
delicados
school attendance

Kid voices TS
larea help
transition
understanding
class activities
misc. concerns
rdg progress
doors & safety
parent participation TS
changed
provide cosas

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underlined codes or subcategories reveal empowerment, disempowerment

experiences in school TS
kid experiences in school
communication with school
ESL
teacher support
parents knowledge of subject-Mexico
last parent connection
kid exper. prior to school
helping problem solve
comparison Mexico - US
voice of parents
with older/younger kid
re zoning
prob. solving
isolation
kid responsibilities
communication w tchr.
connections w me
kid experiences in transition
supporting teachers
re zone-transportation
now
home reading
what other parents know

Parent responsibility TS
ways parents help
support: friends, family
grades and interest
children's friends
children's activities
during transition
meetings and fiestas
Hugo's picnic
value education
house analogy
what parents learned
changes
work
abilities needed
w older children
helping younger children
information
homework
visit school
motivating kids
who translates
parent-kid talk
world/local news
family Involvement
family
find a way
kids growing up
blaming self
help from me
mom's background
connections with me
translation
strategies for all
strategies that don't work

Parental expect.of school TS
confidence
parental rights
a part of school
influence
triangle
parent involvement
me da verguenza
Mexican schools are more advanced
not a part
conflict
haciendo lo correcto
double
rejection by teacher
communication with/by teachers
what parents want
rapport
strong woman
building community
working together
in Mexico
uniforms
change
other parents communicate
tarea
know the tchr.
alma de la escuela
how school could help
ways to include
misunderstands diff. in schools
schools are NOT equal
re zoning

Misc. questions TS
grados vs calificaciones
different methods
need to work
adult classes
holiday & schedule
Spanish speakers in school
dance classes
CTBS scores
grades

Suggestions TS
meetings
uniforms
call for bueno
teach values
communication
include Spanish
chairs
weekly juntas-Mexico
communication & tarea
speak Spanish
notes
notices in Spanish
mandate conferences
to increase parent part.
time
misc. TS
chismosas
vocab
high school classes
contraband book
teaching
family photos
school parties
information re tax use
information
info re college
college
welfare
helping
describing school
family & school
kid responsibilities
despair
hope
connections w community
la Migra
our school experiences
visiting me at school
driving
dog
delicados
school attendance
el fuego
family
school
life
kids growing up
transportation
sentido de community

Kid voices TS
tarea help
transition
understanding
class activities
project help
grades/test scores
notes from teacher
misc. concerns
rdg progress
doors & safety

parent participation TS
changed
provide cosas
want to
w other child
sugg to PTA
LIT team
options available
we should change
lang. diff.
sugg. re notes
sugg.
definition
fire??
we are

biculturalism TS
vivimos aqui
la oportunidad latina
un Mexicano que no habla espanol

la fuerza latina TS
stong women
la justicia
intervenir
more Latino students
find interpreter

parental constraintsTS
limited English (inc. lang.)
multiple schools
different methods (of tchg)
parent level of ed.
working parents
responsibility
transportation
lang. diff.
kids take advantage of
isolation
can't communicate w office

Observation TS
cada generacion
parents learning

predictions TS
school success
communication with teacher
parent involvement
for younger
rezoning

aspirations TS
children's futures

home TS
kids' responsibilities
family life
description

mistakes TS
predicted
Mexico
to increase
conflict w working parents

Latino community TS
no contact outside
ways parents help

conferences TS
tchr to tchr
principal & tchr

elements of ESL classroom TS
that help now
that helped then
that would help now

Differential Treatment TS
isolation
discriminacion
race/lang
lang. diff.
working parents

Equality TS
parents & tchrs
mediators
todos

Empowerment TS
together
because of me
ways to include
dialogue

Change TS
cambios positivos
conexiones
communication
visiting
could do more
this year

Parent knowledge TS
what the know
what they know-Mexico
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<td>la vida aqui TS</td>
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APPENDIX D FLOWCHART OF DATA ANALYSIS

STEP 1: As audiotaped conversation transcript was typed, I began making a master list of codes (Constant Comparative).

STEP 2: With printed transcript/s, I examined, marked and recorded subcategories (CC) as I encountered them. I added them to the master list of codes.

STEP 3: I re-read printed transcript/s, added, deleted, and changed codes (CC) on written transcript. Any new codes? If so, I added to my master list.

STEP 4 on computer: On HyperQual (computer program), I selected segments, phrases, sentences, and blocks of sentences for subcategories (CC). These codes were similar but not always identical to codes on written text. Changes in coding reflected my increased experience with the data. All text from every conversation was coded.

STEP 5 on computer: HyperQual asked for category (conceptual label) when saving subcategories. At this point, Axial Coding began by grouping in similar categories (CC). Data saved on computer as category files could be printed individually.

STEP 6: New conversation?

No

STEP 7: Focus of Study: I analyzed all data in transcripts for emerging empowerment codes of critical theory.

STOP
## APPENDIX E DAILY SCHOOL NOTE FOR ESL CLASS

**Second Language Program**

**SCHOOL NOTE**

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<th>Subject</th>
<th>Work during class - el comportamiento y la estuerrza durante la clase</th>
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<tr>
<td>Math (matematicas)</td>
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<td>English: Individual reading &amp; writing (Ingles: lectura/escritura individual)</td>
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<td>Lunch / recess / bus (comportamiento durante lunch, recreo, en el bus)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.E. / Art / Music / Library (las clases especiales de educacion fisica, arte, musica, y en la biblioteca)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers / Spelling (la clase de computadoras, su trabajo durante deletreando)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science / Social Studies (ciencias y ciencias sociales son la fundacion de los temas)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments (Commentario):**

---

Every day your child needs the following in his/her backpack:
- this school note signed
- purple folder
- pencil
- school crayons
- homework
- the book that he/she borrowed

Cada dia su hijo/ha necesita la siguiente en la mochila:
- esta "school note" firmada
- su "purple folder" (el cuaderno morado)
- un lapiz
- los colores de la escuela
- su tarea
- el libro que presto

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Parent Signature (firma de los padres)

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APPENDIX F: CODED SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPT

Salena’s mom 12/23/95 3/10/96

hecho kinder antes.

LS: Y su participación durante kinder y su parte de primero? Si, porque necesitamos algunas habilidades para ayudar a los niños. Entonces Hugo es el primero de usted.

SM: Mire, cuando estaba en kinder los tres meses que el estuvo, yo participaba también llevándolo, este, usted sabe lo que es el kinder con los juegos, pues, llevando material para que los niños recortaran y hicieran sus tareas. Les hacían fiestas en la escuela pues, también participábamos en la escuela, llevando comida, fruta, o este, ayudando a los maestros a organizar. En primero, pues, también en los eventos sociales que hacen aya les festejan . . . hacen como hora social en día de mayo, que es el día de la madre. Ellos participan en bailes, en poesías, en muchas cosas.

LS: Y usted tiene amigas que tienen otros hijos o hijas en kinder también, entonces cuando está platicando puede ayudar a . . .

SM: Sí, ayudantes de las maestras, con las demás mamás de los niños. Aquí se forma los comités de padres de familia, pues, con el idioma no puedo participar, pero casi siempre andaba metida.

LS: Y frecuentemente estas conferencias están a las 3:00 p.m. Frecuentemente hay dos o tres en la noche.

SM: Para mí sería difícil esa hora.

LS: Sí, yo entiendo. Usted se siente que usted puede comunicar con la maestra si necesita?

SM: Con la de Virl ahora, con la actual? Yo pienso que así, directamente no porque muchas cosas no lo entiendo. Pero no me hace difícil nada. Si yo no sé lo que diga, como le dije no ha habido mucha necesidad este año. Pues, ella no se comunica mucho con nosotros. Es diferente.

LS: Hey, isolation?

SM: Parece que sí, yo no se sí con todos los alumnos o será que ella . . .
Appendix G

Marta's Empowerment

The conversations during this 10 month study set in motion Marta's later transformative empowerment when she challenged both district and school level decisions. Two instances of parent empowerment occurred after the data collection for this study ended. In the first (August 1996), Marta directly challenged a decision made at the district level concerning bus transportation to the new school for her children and the children in the cul-de-sac. If the children walked the 1.93 mile distance to the new school, there were areas without sidewalks and two major intersections for the children to cross. Marta had received a letter from the school district transportation office concerning the decision to eliminate bus transportation for the cul-de-sac. When she questioned their decision at the district level transportation office, the route was declared hazardous. Bus transportation was re-instated for the children in her cul-de-sac. Marta's protest changed the district level transportation office decision.

In the second instance (February 1997), Marta interceded in a school-level decision on behalf of an ESL student who was placed in a regular classroom. Explaining that his parents had just arrived from Mexico and did not know how to "...defender sus derechos...o pelear por sus derechos..." [...defend their rights...or fight for their rights], she contacted the school. A pull-out ESL teacher was provided to serve the child's needs.

After the data collection for this study, Marta challenged decisions and caused change to happen outside of our conversational dyad. She gained "access to and control over her resources" (Cochran & Woolever, 1983; Cochran & Dean, 1991) by using the system (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Marta contacted her personal translator who relayed Marta's concerns about the decisions to the
district and school offices. She applied both her knowledge of parental rights and experiences with education to change two situations through voicing her opinions at the district and school levels.
REFERENCES


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