SYNCRETIZING STUDENTS’ SPHERES OF INFLUENCE: 
A NARRATIVE PORTRAIT OF PARENT AND TEACHER EXPECTATION ALIGNMENT

by

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DEDICATION

In all the world of nuclear families, mine is able to produce fusion. This work, and the work that yielded this work, could not have happened without the energy provided by that fusion. Therefore I dedicate this document and the energy behind it to my parents, for the team-keeping, laundry-washing, and homework support; to my children, for giving me all the reasons in the world to use that energy for good and not evil; and to my husband, for giving me all the pieces to build it for myself.

Additionally, I dedicate this work, the work which yielded it, to the teachers and parents who inspired the effort at improving communication between them. May incremental change be made with this new layer of knowledge in the archaeology of educational evolution.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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One does not complete this type of work in isolation. The constellations in my universe which stimulated, catalyzed, and fueled this work are diverse. My cohort, each member a supernova in their own right, cooperatively created a space where we could each shine. The colleagues at work who called me doctor before it was earned to show how destiny can be manifest, and acknowledged the challenge and necessity of the effort manifesting it requires. The village which nurtured in my place, held together the pieces, and justified the effort with their own pressing questions. Especially, I must acknowledge the storytellers who shared with me, for themselves and for the community members who may be impacted by the results of their stories. Isabel Hernandez Marsh will always hold not just a place in my text but a place in my heart.
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ABSTRACT

CATHERINE TRAVELUTE
SYNCRETIZING STUDENTS’ SPHERES OF INFLUENCE:
A NARRATIVE PORTRAIT OF PARENT AND TEACHER EXPECTATION ALIGNMENT
Under the direction of DR. WILLIAM O. LACEFIELD, III, Ed. D.

The Spanish-speaking Hispano-Latino diaspora demographic is the largest and fastest-growing English-learning population in the United States. In response to the needs present in these student demographics, two Spanish-speaking mothers and two English-speaking teachers participated in semi-structured interviews regarding their purposes and priorities for English-learning students’ reading in English. Similar themes across all groupings included individualized interest in the student/child and high expectations for academic success. Differences in priorities for topical knowledge, purposes for knowledge acquisition, and guiding motivations for learning indicate effective communication between English-speaking teachers and Spanish-speaking mothers must focus on bridging these differences to support academic growth. Addressing common challenges to communication about differences guides professional development recommendations for in-service and pre-service teachers.
CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND CONTEXT

All problems are contextualized to a given situation. The situation of the problem identified herein relates to the multiplicity of identities each person inhabits as a member of a community, environment, relationships, and so on. The problem may be the same for a large number of people, but the manifestation of that problem will be unique due to each person’s unique context. This text explores how a similar problem exists in multiple contexts, illustrating those contexts for participating individuals.

Preface

Danny and Helen march ahead of us toward the community park for the weekly afternoon dog walk. The dogs feign indifference to each other while the kids follow behind, heads inclined slightly toward each other in conversation. Luz walks with me in companionable silence. The language barrier between us has never been enough to prevent our children from each other’s company, nor to stifle the genuine care and comfort between us as mothers. We sit together on a shaded bench while the dogs and children run unfettered in otherwise empty ball fields.

“How is Danny doing in English class? Has he been seeing the ESOL teacher?” I ask. Last week’s conversation included concern on Luz’s part that the language learners in their first grade class were not receiving enough help to stay on grade level. She knows I teach ESOL, and that I’m friendly with most of the teachers at our kids’ school.
“Si, but no enough. Danny say only one, two times in the week. He read, read with Helen, with other childrens, but no much time with teacher.” Luz shakes her head and looks frustrated.

“And the other boys? Are they getting good grades in English?” I’m particularly concerned about Cristo, her oldest son, who is in 9th grade and recently exited the ESOL program. His first year out of active service at such an important grade is a significant test of his language independence. Nico, in 7th grade, exited the year before, much to his brother’s dismay. He tests at a higher competency level but seems indifferent to bringing home grades that would suggest his language ability.

Luz brightens. She smiles slightly as she says, “Cristo, no problem. Work hard, gets all A’s.” Her eyes darken, and she shakes her head again. “Nico, no so good. Nico so silly, so playing, no serious for school.” I know that she sounds angrier than she is about Nico’s characteristic shenanigans. For every serious, studious, hardworking bone in Cristo’s body, Nico has a funny bone. Danny, the youngest by more than 6 years, is a typical baby brother, all sweet nature and parent-pleasing irritation to his brothers. This is his second year sharing a classroom with my daughter, and they have become good friends over their shared love of their dogs. Between the three of boys, Luz spends more than ten hours each week at their schools, always attentive to potential pitfalls and failures, always visible to them and to their teachers.
“What do you want from them when they learn English? What do you think they need to be doing?” I worry that my question is too oblique for her limited English skills, thinking quickly to rephrase, or mine my limited Spanish vocabulary for a mixed-language way to ask again. Instead, I’m greeted with a far-off, wistful look and a moment’s silence.

“I want read for good grades, for good scores. I want read because teachers say read. I’m not care what they read. That is for teachers,” she waves her hand as if dismissing a fly. “I want Cristo to learn read for business. Nico, he read for stay out of trouble. Danny, I don’t know, maybe read for be Padre, work in church. But that a long way, mucho tiempo.”

I chuckle to myself, thinking how quickly mucho tiempo seems to go. The kids are wandering back, hot and tired, with equally hot and tired dogs panting behind them. As we turn to head home, I stop Luz for one more question. “What do you want them to read?” I ask, watching her face and waiting for her response.

“No sé, me da lo mismo [I don’t know, I don’t care.] I want they read la Biblia at home in español. In ingles, no care.” Luz shrugs her shoulders, smiles, and turns to catch up with the kids. The simplicity of her response baffles me. I’m eager to know more.

From one of the iconic streets in this large Southern town, our neighborhood begins between two popular fast-food restaurants and slides downhill away from a flagship grocery and a major national bookseller. Lining the drive down that hill are rows of densely populated apartment homes fading into low-end condominiums. From
these apartments and small condos unfurl immigrant families, predominantly Spanish-speaking, with 3, 4, and even more children hustling to the local public schools. The parents are frequently employees at the aforementioned grocery, or proximal restaurant and retail establishments, and aspire to the opportunities that may exist beyond the predictable pathways of public education. Some have applied to local charter schools or any few scholarship opportunities at the private institutions a stone’s throw from these humble homes, sending those off like errant eyelashes wished into carrying hopes and dreams for their children’s futures.

The Reyes family lives in one of these small apartments. I visit there occasionally, trading off children for the dog walks. Of the three boys, the older two were granted lottery-assigned seats at a local charter school. Cristo excels in ninth grade, even earning a seat in the tenth grade math section. Nico struggles with composition but maintains otherwise passing grades and a thriving social life in their new school. Luz is an employee at the fast-food restaurant less than a block from their home but drives them four miles away each morning because no transportation is available for the charter program. First in line for the drop-off most mornings, she races back to within two blocks of her apartment to drop off Danny, in first grade at the neighborhood school. She hopes for him to be admitted to the charter for the next school year. Since her husband has long since left for work, she uses her short time at home alone each morning to tidy their few creature comforts and eliminate the debris of a busy morning. She walks up the
hill to work, preferring to leave her hard-won minivan in the relative safety of the apartment parking lot. With both parents working, the boys’ afternoon safety and supervision is assured by an after school program which will transport them away from school to be picked up later by one parent or another.

Luz is a member of the fastest-growing demographic segment of the United States’ population. A 48% increase in the Hispanic and Latino population in the United States between 2000 and 2011 is expected to be replicated or increased for the congruent period ending 2021 (Pew Research Center, 2013). These are native Spanish speakers claiming origins from throughout the Spanish diaspora, representing Central and South America and the Spanish Caribbean, and dominated heavily by emigrants from Mexico like Luz and her husband (Pew Research Center, 2013). However, this growth in population is largely domestic, as self-identified Mexicans are often natively born, even second-generation, and all Puerto Ricans are born citizens (U. S. Census Bureau, 2013). Luz’s boys were born in the United States and have been educated in English throughout their academic careers while growing up in a culturally Mexican, Spanish-speaking community.

In the greater perspective of each boy’s social group they have nothing to identify them visibly as different from their peers. However, these boys are a rare breed, unique for their competence at academics, and reading in particular. They are second-language learners, students of English without being native speakers. By
stereotype, they should be classic low achievers, with test scores and academic achievement below the school and national average. These boys are instead academic leaders. Their grades trend toward A’s, even outside the shelter provided by ESOL programming. They continue to achieve while learning new vocabulary on a daily basis (L. Reyes, personal communication, March 13, 2015). I asked Luz why she thought her boys were so successful at school. Her self-deprecatingly composed answers were vaguely indicative of the boys’ intrinsic abilities or the grace of her faith. Although the depth of our conversations is often challenged by limited proficiency in each other’s languages, the shared context of caring for our children, and their assistance and participation in brokering those conversations, add richness, depth, and understanding to the subtext of her answer. As I have come to know her older boys, however, it is clear that their success is more than inborn intelligence or divine intervention. There is something about the expectations their parents have for their achievement that motivates, encourages, or strengthens the boys to greater success.

English Language Learners (ELLs) like the Reyes boys are a large and diverse group. One unifying characteristic of this group is the challenge of learning to do competent academic reading in English, the primary language of instruction. Like all other students, ELLs are influenced by explicit and implicit parental messages about the value and purpose of academic reading. These messages convey parents’ expectations of
student learning and achievement in the school environment. Gathering information about these messages and how these messages coordinate with those communicated by teachers may guide teacher and school communication with parents of language learning students. Teachers equipped to support standards-based instructional practices in a culturally responsive manner may be more likely to see ELLs achieve greater gains when evaluated through those standards.

Introduction to the Problem

Honoring home culture is a primary responsibility of teachers in an increasingly diverse student population. The modern United States includes speakers of many languages, with estimates that the national English-learning population at all ages includes nearly 400 different languages (United States Department of Education, 2015). With linguistic diversity comes cultural diversity, including home behavior and educational practices unlike the anticipated cultural standard which guides public education policy in the United States. Teachers cannot meet their obligation to honor students’ home cultures, languages, and practices without adequate professional education, including methods for effectively communicating with those students’ parents. Part of this teacher-to-parent communication must include a comprehensible explanation of content standard expectations and assessments to garner support for the expectations of standards-based instruction.
Background of the Problem

Myriad laws and regulations at multiple levels govern public education in the United States. Federal law includes the provisions set forth after legal decisions addressing civil rights conditions for racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities. These decisions, including but not limited to Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954), ASPIRA v. New York Board of Education (1974), Lau v. Nichols (1974), and the first amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1966) define the educational opportunities which must be provided to all enrolled public school students, regardless of demographic origin (“ASPIRA v. New York City Board of Education (1972-1974),” 2006, p. 69; Gutek, 2013; Hill, 2001). Title III, the federal funding program which provides educational support to language learning students, mandates specific services offered to these students and their families (United States Department of Education, 2015). Federal Title III funding is used for a variety of purposes including planning, faculty development, and student service programs designed to improve academic success, administrative management, and development and improvement of academic programs. Programs designed under the provisions of Title III must include specific opportunities which “help retain students and move the students rapidly into core courses and through program completion, which may include remedial education and English language instruction” (United States Department of Education, 2015). The United States Department of Education holds as a major goal that “Parents, families, and communities should be able to expect a set of educational rights for
all students that prepares them for success in college and careers and as engaged and productive citizens” (2015).

Beyond the specific guidance for demographic minorities, public education in the United States has seen a focused turn toward standards-based education, a direct result of the 2002 update to the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) commonly referred to as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (Klein, 2015). Governing entities generally known as state and local boards of education and other similar education-governing bodies adopted definitions of content to be systematically delivered to students and followed by standardized achievement assessments. These standards vary from one governing entity to another across the country and reflect local values and priorities while striving to meet nationally-defined assessment measures.

More recently, President Obama approved the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, modifying the stringent testing requirements of NCLB while supporting consistency of instruction across governing entities (United States Department of Education, 2015). The potential for consistent instructional goals and practices is possible through the Common Core State Standards Initiative, a cooperative project initiated by state leaders participating in the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2016). The goal of the Common Core State Standards Initiative was to utilize best educational practices emphasizing “the value of
consistent, real-world learning goals and launch this effort to ensure all students, regardless of where they live, are graduating high school prepared for college, career, and life” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2016). Although not all states or localities have adopted the Common Core Standards in whole, the concept of a codified set of standards to guide educators has become the general *modus operandi* for most governing entities guiding educational practices.

The national Common Core State Standards Initiative organization has put a focus on educating parents about the standards their children will be educated to and assessed on in the public school systems. The website provided through the Common Core State Standards Initiative organization includes a parent information page in both English and Spanish, as well as video support and links to external sites with more extensive information, with more state-specific adoption status and usage. However, there is no mandate that parents be educated to or understand these standards upon enrolling their child in a public school in the United States. Also, adoption of these standards does not mean all organizations or educational entities in that state will utilize these standards in whole, or with fidelity. Finally, providing the standards, adoption information, and other data in English and Spanish does not necessarily provide access to all parents of public school students. Families without access to English or Spanish, parents with limited formal education and literacy, families in lower socioeconomic situations without reliable internet access, and families with limited cultural exposure that may not know to seek the
information are effectively cut out of this component of their children’s education. As a result, parents may not be aware of the standards, the content and intent of those standards, or the obligation teachers have to teach and assess to those standards. Parents also may not have knowledge of the educational process, the school structure and function, and differences between expected and real outcomes toward meeting mandated standards.

Statement of the Problem

At the intersection of federal guidance regarding educational access for diverse demographic populations and federal guidance regarding educational content and outcomes measurement is a potential void in parent knowledge. Including children in the public school environment separates parents from their children, potentially leaving parents uninformed about the activities of their time apart. Conversely, the teachers supervising and educating those children in their parents’ absence are frequently unaware of the home culture and lifestyle those children return to at the end of the school day. Differences in the language and culture of the home from the language and culture of the school provide a potential for disconnect in messaging to those children about the expectations from their instruction. Within this potential for a disconnect is the opportunity for children to receive messages from their parents regarding their investment in language learning at school which may conflict with the messaging teachers are providing to their students.

One remedy to this potential disconnect is greater teacher education regarding the home language and culture of their students. A primary challenge to educators is
difficulty communicating with non-heritage English speakers, particularly when interpreters or bilingual instructors may not be available or are untrained in the “teacher talk” which characterizes teacher-to-parent communication (Howard & Lipinoga, 2010). Instead, teachers should be provided training and strategies to think more broadly about how parents may need information provided about standards-based education. Teachers may need opportunities to educate parents about the methods and purposes the school has for educating their children. Parents can more effectively encourage and support the kind of learning teachers are endeavoring to nurture when they have information about how the classroom instruction is designed and measured. Aligning teachers’ messaging with parent messaging could provide for more positive, productive, and beneficial outcomes for student-children without deleterious implications for home cultural practices, including parent transmission of heritage language and culture.

Purpose of the Study

To better prepare pre-service and practicing teachers for the continuing growth of demographically diverse populations in public school environments, the messaging parents have toward their children about school expectations for learning must be better understood. Illuminating parental messaging will help teachers to communicate more effectively with parents about the expectations of standards-based educational models which may not be in alignment with home culture transmission models. Informing the
parents, encouraging their support for the school’s expectations, and aligning school and home messages about those expectations may lead to greater investment and achievement from students. The purpose of the study is to learn more accurately how parental messaging from Spanish-speaking mothers about reading in English may or may not align with the school’s expectations from standards-based instruction for reading in English.

Research Questions

1. What do the Spanish-speaking mothers of English learners say they communicate to their children about their expectations of students’ reading in English?

2. How can this information shape teacher education about teacher-parent communication regarding the expectations of standards-based education?

Significance of the Study

The significance is in partially remedying a potential disconnect between what teachers tell their students they expect of reading in English is to English learners and what the parents of those children tell them, or not, about their expectations of reading in English. This information can help guide pre-service and practicing teachers toward more effectually conveying to parents the purposes of standards-based education and assessment. Better informing parents of the school’s educational practices has the potential to increase parent and student investment in the school’s educational efforts, leading to increased assessment measures and higher achievement for language-learning students.
A focus specifically upon the Hispano-Latino diaspora gathers information germane to the current largest demographic minority in the United States. Understanding issues related to this particular demographic group expands the potential of resulting conclusions to reach a large body of teachers and their students. The proposed study may bear additional significance for unifying multiple theories with a conceptual framework which serve to operationalize revealed information in a practicable way. This empowers teachers and other school representatives to make research results actionable, shortening the time between results and application to practice.

Definition of Terms

The term *Hispano-Latino diaspora* was coined for the purposes of the proposed study, and participating respondents will be recruited from this demographic body. The demographic group is a heterogeneous body of immigrants, migrants, and native-born United States citizens for whom a form of Spanish is the *lingua franca* (Machado-Casas, 2009). The loose definition of this demographic group is independent of national, social, cultural, religious, or racial delimiters; inclusion is based entirely upon home language usage. The origin of the term Hispano-Latino diaspora is to recognize the breadth of co-occurring identifiers for members of this group; there is no single term which inclusively identifies this group. *Hispanic* refers to individuals who trace some portion of lineage to Spain or Spanish colonial occupation. Members of the Hispano-Latino diaspora may not be heritage Spanish-speakers but in fact bi- or tri-lingual through indigenous languages
representing the multiple groups from throughout Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Central Africa. Hispanic is a manufactured word used by the United States government to identify this geographically-oriented ethnic group, rather than a term arising organically from the people it purports to identify (Carteret, 2011). As a result, the Hispanic referent is culturally repressive and may be resisted by self-identified members of non-Spanish origin ethnic groups.

In ethnographic use, other identifiers are more closely tied to race, geography, or ethnicity. *Latino or Latina* refers primarily to those individuals tracing some portion of lineage to the geography known as Latin America in Central and South America and some portions of the Caribbean. Latino or Latina is also an exclusive term, failing to represent members of the Spanish-speaking populations from the United States, Europe, and Africa. More exclusively, the term *Chicano or Chicana* is primarily used for bi-cultural Mexican-origin peoples living in whole or part outside their geographic Mexican community. Brown and Souto-Manning (2008) identify individuals from Mexico and similar geographically proximal origins who speak Spanish with *Latin@s*, integrating both genders in a single identifier (e.g. external O and internal a indicated by the @ symbol). Brown and Souto-Manning’s (2008) indicator is an original, as-yet-uncommon reference with highly specific purposes.

Endeavoring to be as inclusive in the demographic group as possible without overtly perpetuating the oppressive, imperialist view which pervades the subtext of the
currently accepted defining vocabulary, the term Hispano-Latino diaspora recognizes the
dispersion of the Spanish language, in all forms, throughout the globe. Diaspora bodies
are those communities collected around a single shared characteristic of great
significance but separated from a historically indigenous home (diaspora, n.d.). It should
be noted that the use of the –o ending is not indicative of gender, but is an English
convention; no implication of gender or status stratification is intended.

*Standards-based education* is the implementation of instructional goals and
assessments based on a set of defined standards established by the governing entity of the
operating educational authority. Standards-based education is a result of the 2002 update to
the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) known as No Child Left Behind
(NCLB), and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 (Klein, 2015; United States
Department of Education, 2016). Standards vary from one governing entity to another across
the country and reflect local values and priorities. Potential standards consistency is possible
through the Common Core State Standards Initiative as created by the National Governors
Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School
Officers (CCSSO) acting cooperatively with state government and education leaders
(Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2016). Not all states or localities have adopted the
national Common Core Standards in whole; a formalized set of state or local standards guide
educators in most educational entities. For the purposes of this study, included for
consideration will be English Language Arts 6-8 reading-explicit standards from the Georgia Standards of Excellence, adopted by the Georgia Board of Education in 2015.

Additional Vocabulary

Context-specific definitions:

BICS: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills, Cummins’ (1979) description of one of two named major functions of language, day-to-day communication to participate in a social environment.

CALP: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, Cummins’ (1979) description of one of two named major functions of language, the four-mode competency of language use necessary to be successful in a learning environment.

comparative resource contribution theory: the more resources an individual brings to a situation the greater the power that individual wields in determining the use of those resources (Lee & Beatty, 2002).

component model analysis: content or concepts dismantled into interrelated components for more coherent comprehension with appropriately paired contextualizing cues or strategies (Mellard & Fall, 2012; Mellard, Fall, & Mark, 2009).
comprehensible input theory: unifies Krashen’s (1982) five hypotheses: The input hypothesis (input “i+1”, where “i” is the learner’s interlanguage and “+1” is the next stage of language acquisition); The acquisition–learning hypothesis: strict separation between acquisition and learning; The monitor hypothesis: learned language is used to monitor output not as a source of unprompted speech; The natural order hypothesis: language is learned in a defined order; The affective filter hypothesis: a learner’s language acquisition is limited by negative emotions (fear or embarrassment).

dichos: popular Spanish-language sayings (Sánchez, Plata, Grosso, and Leird, 2010).
differentness: students’ experience, due to the diversity of the Hispano-Latino Diaspora, an amorphous definition of race, culture, and ethnicity and perceive discrimination due to social, physical, and linguistic difference.
error: ignorance of the codified structure, grammar or form of a language (Corder, 1967, p167).
interlanguage: the interplay and interruption of one language to another during the acquisition process leading to controlled fluency pioneered by Selinker (1972).
Erzeugnisse: cultural products from Wundt’s 1897 Völkerpsychologie.
familismo: Durand’s (2010) concept of familia or family in Spanish-speaking communities.

funds of knowledge: inclusive education and communication strategy conceived by academics attempting to further the efforts of social justice and defeat deficit model concepts of Latino families including the most elemental practices in the home culture and knowledge of daily family practices; anthropological in nature, the theory is used to shape multicultural education practices (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2006; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992).

geistig: spiritual; from Wundt’s 1897 Völkerpsychologie.

geistiges Gesamtleben: of the totality of spiritual life as defined in rules of psychological function of the individual; specifically, language, art, myth, and custom from Wundt’s 1897 Völkerpsychologie.

gestalt: situates an object of interest in a field of ambient information; the whole (Koffka, 1922).

habitus: Bourdieu’s theory of perpetuated, codified, and systemic culture as used by Podesta (2014) to explain reproduced class advantages.

hegemonic multiculturalism: (Garza & Crawford, 2005) grounded theory characterized by disunion between the multicultural ideology and a pervasive agenda of assimilation.
Hispano-Latino diaspora: the inclusive linguistic community of Spanish-speaking people in the United States (phrase created by the author; see above).

interpreter: individual providing the oral/aural transmutation of one language to another for the purpose of information exchange.

LatCrit: critical race theory discourse issues facing members of the Latino/a community, intended to subvert the deficit-model thinking of bilingual and bicultural orientation.


schema: prior knowledge which informs both the content of and broader associations with an object’s or concept’s greater whole (Koffka, 1922).

Sitten: culture or social positioning from Wundt’s 1897 *Völkerpsychologie*.

syncretic analysis: determining pieces of thought, knowledge, or theory which can be assembled into a “best practices” whole from all included thoughts, information, or theories.

translator: an individual providing written word transmutation from one codified linguistic form to another.

*Völkerpsychologie*: Wundt’s 1897 reconceptualization of psychology to include human culture and nature, manifest in language and its use in religion, mythology, and “folk-thinking.”
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions must begin with a description of the author’s voice as a conduit for and filter to the data which are both the purpose and result of the proposed research. The individuals from whom stories, experiences, and perceptions will be collected are members of a particular demographic identified by a shared heritage language. This heritage language is not shared by the researcher, necessitating the assistance and co-creation of meaning through an interpreter. The researcher is also not a member of the social culture of these invited storytellers, which dramatically influences the potential influence upon any points of data collected. The interpreter does share much of the social culture of the invited storytellers; it is assumed that shared characteristics such as heritage language and racial and ethnic identifiers (e.g. physical characteristics, religious affiliation, and family position) will ameliorate some of the anticipated relational distance with the researcher (Cortabarria, 2015; Wallin & Ahlstrom, 2006).

The researcher’s voice is, however, the most representative of communication with and for these invited storytellers as a representative of the educational environment their children enter without them in school settings. Recent data published through the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (2015) in the United States Department of Education indicate approximately 7.8 percent of the teachers in the United States are self-identified Hispanic, with that proportion even smaller in some minority-majority states. Issues of language difference are the primary challenge facing
teachers attempting to communicate with members of the Hispano-Latino diaspora, but so are issues of class and education difference, issues of power perceptions and institutional trust, and issues of diverging expectations (Adams & Forsyth, 2006; Adams, Forsyth & Mitchell, 2009; Adams & Christenson, 2000).

The researcher must, and does, acknowledge the affective filters which accompany racial privilege, socioeconomic class, an exceptionally high level of education, and the potential influence of power which accompanies each of these challenges. Acknowledgment informs the reader and shapes the recitation of information which comes from the invited storytellers’ responses in interpreted conversation. Acknowledgment also contextualizes the purposes and intents of the study; it is individually beneficial to the professional practice of the researcher to unveil the home communication practices of language-learning families. It is the researcher’s personal goal to better articulate information which should be provided to these families.

Limitations of the study begin with all the previously mentioned issues related to the mechanics and politics of communication. Details specific to issues of communication limitation are found in the literature review regarding interpreted communication. Additionally, this study seeks to gather and interpret the stories told by only a few members of a vast and diverse population. Multiple variations of these stories may exist and the limits of this study prevent inclusion of all these variations. Sources of variation include parental exposure to formal education, national and cultural origin,
motivations for residency in the United States, and any unrevealed factors which may not arise in the course of story collection.

Likewise, the stories will be gathered from only members of this demographic community. Delimiting the storytellers allows the researcher to develop a greater rapport and better working pattern with the interpreter, one of the key practices indicated in the review of literature (Andrews, J., 2013; Cortabarria, 2015; Hwa-Froelich & Westby, 2003; Leung, 2014; Wallin & Ahlstroom, 2006). It also allows for fewer variables in the constant comparison analysis of the storytellers’ experiences and opinions. Stories from any other demographic group or community cannot be considered under the same analysis, nor can conclusions drawn from this study necessarily be applied in a generalized way to individuals beyond these specific cases. The limits of this study are in fact an invitation to researchers and teachers-as-researchers alike to consider how hearing, understanding, and utilizing the stories of linguistic minorities represented in the public school population of the United States may be beneficial to improved communication practices for all families.

Conclusion

Preparing teachers to effectively communicate the expectations of educational standards to parents and the expectations these engender in teachers should be part of a teacher’s pre-service and professional education. This includes learning useful, specific strategies for communicating with the parents of non-heritage English speakers. Teachers can more effectively align their classroom communication style with the
communication style parents use at home with their children when they know about the home communication modes related to education. This study seeks to discover the home communication about mothers’ expectations of reading in English among Spanish-speaking families in order to reveal potential points of intersection with teachers’ standards-based expectations in schools.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature regarding organic systems theories, modes and fields of influence, the Hispano-Latino diaspora, and issues of multi-lingual communication predominate this literature review. One division in the literature review will reflect the proposed reporting participants as storytellers in the research study as a heterogeneous demographic group defined largely by linguistic characteristics rather than social or cultural practice. Germaine to identifying the Hispano-Latino diaspora is an acknowledgment that the researcher must utilize the assistance of a language interpreter and translator, a factor which includes this individual as a co-creator of meaning and understanding throughout the data collection process. In addition to the demographic group of proposed storytellers is a general discussion of the current status of teacher communication research and practice, particularly as related to communication with non-heritage English speaking families. Additionally, the theoretical framework of this study is constructed to illuminate the logic behind the chosen methodology for data collection and analysis, especially in light of the multi-voiced communication through which those data will be collected.

Search Description

Literature review began in the professional files the author has collected over 15 years of education practice in second language acquisition. From these professional
archives, a list of topics, keywords, and recurring authors was generated. Beginning upon enrollment in the Philosophical Doctor of Curriculum and Instruction (Ph. D. C. & I.), these keywords were utilized in recursive database searches through the Mercer University Library system. Particular care was taken at each search opportunity to use the maximum number of databases to add depth and breadth to keyword pluricentricity. Little systemization was used at this time; searches were motivated by newly revealed meanings, authors, and concepts. In addition, as required, supplemental, and interest-motivated readings were collected, and the relevant or associated information was utilized as confounding variables in further, unsystematic searches.

In partial fulfillment of the course requirements in multiple classes of the Ph. D. C. & I. program, previously collected articles, books, and other sources of data were compiled in an alphabetized spreadsheet. An original abstract, personal notes or keywords, or summary was attached to most bibliographic entries, as well as subjective evaluation of the usefulness and accessibility of the information. This bibliographic data collection has expanded in nonlinear fashion since forming in June 2014 and continues in anticipated perpetuity. The lack of categorization and cross-referencing made this database unwieldy for use, so subsequent database searches included haphazard attempts at combining keywords from the spreadsheet with literature review. Regular references to the Matrix Method (Garrard, 2007) for literature review by a variety of authors through the course of this non-systematic search compelled a specific search and acquisition of
the Matrix Method text itself. More systematic choices of databases were made for all subsequent searches. The most frequently utilized choice list (in contrast to the “all” choice) is included as Appendix A. Likewise, keyword search terms were refined, resulting in the list attached in Appendix B.

Guided by familiarity with basic dissertation literature review instruction (Randolph, 2009) and information collection protocols outlined for the Matrix Method (Garrard, 2007), the existing spreadsheet was coded for topics and themes in chronological order. Topical or thematic correlates were copied to subsequent pages and named, keeping intact the searchable whole. References acquired during the process were added to both the larger whole (in chronological order) and to their thematic or topical correlate group (in alphabetical, then chronological order). Secondary and tertiary analyses refined thematic groupings and revealed missing information. These later analyses also indicated the permutative category quality of the named themes as symmetric and morphologically monoidal groupings with the potential for infinite loop space search options (Shulman, 2012).

Writing from these thematic groupings guided text segmentation. Where themes or authors overlapped, decisions were made regarding readability, comprehensibility, and narrative flow for the reader. Additional influences on choices related to source use, sequencing, and readability included the language of the guiding inquiry, and the graphical representation included as Appendix B. Finally, this work attempts to address issues of
validity and reliability through the four-phase model of scientific inquiry designed by Kirk and Miller (1986). While the data are archival and static by nature and the “field” is databases and libraries, “the problem of validity is handled by field research” (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p. 73). Reliability is addressed through ethnographically-motivated decision making, particularly as related to portrait construction.

Conceptual Framework

Collaborative relations of power, while not the original idea of Jim Cummins, is a concept which connects Frierian (1994, 2000) ideals of liberation with actionable behavior for educators. Cummins (2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2011) juxtaposes collaboration in the creation and distribution of power with coercion of minority or marginalized groups into subsuming their personal power to the greater hegemony of dominant society. To collaboratively create and perpetuate power, educators must subvert the expectation of a dominant social or cultural majority by fostering relationships of equitable reciprocity with students, their families, and their home culture. This study proposes to create a collaborative power structure by providing access to language and knowledge characterized by codified jargon through communicative reciprocity.

Seeking, hearing, and repeating the lived stories of Spanish-speaking mothers raising children in an English-dominant culture illuminates a portion of marginalized minority culture. This can be instructive to teachers’ efforts at productive communication with those mothers. Working to understand those stories from an
outsider perspective, even when the “outside” is the majority experience, enables transmission through modified communication strategies which can effectively mirror the mothers’ modes and methods of communication to reinforce home culture practices with parallel school culture practices (Cummins, 2000, 2001b). Additionally, adopting procedural change to align communication strategies reflects support and respect for a minority home culture, supporting parents and students in developing efficacy with home-school communication (Cummins, 2001a, 2001c).

Theoretical Framework

The interaction between parents and teachers is a critical component of the educational process. Legal mandates define communication from teachers to parents regarding students’ academic progress at increments throughout the school year; there are no similar mandates regarding communication from parents regarding children’s home life conditions or changes. However, decades of accumulated empirical and anecdotal reports reinforce the benefit to students when a communicative and positively participatory relationship exists between the formative adults at home and the formative adults at school. This dual mutuality can be represented by a dyadic, interconnected ecological systems model as defined by Bronfenbrenner (1994, 1998) in concentric, expanding spheres of proximal influence.

Ecological systems theory postulates understanding children’s development necessitates behavioral observation in natural settings that include interaction with adults in
familiar relationships which develop each individual’s psychology over extended periods of time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994, 1999; Bronfenbrenner, & Morris, 1998; Moen, Elder & Lüscher, 1995). Bronfenbrenner describes ecological systems as “a theory of environmental interconnections and their impact on the forces directly affecting psychological growth” (1979, p. 8). The network of concentric spheres of proximal influence is unique to each individual but the pattern of spheres is consistent between human cultures, permitting social scientists to make comparative analysis between these spheres in a group-wise fashion.

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory applies to the current study because he specifically states, “a child’s ability to learn to read … may depend no less on how he is taught than on the existence and nature of ties between the school and the home” (1979, p. 3). This acknowledgement of the connection, or need for a connection, between the ecology of the school and the ecology of the home as formative to children’s acquisition and utilization of academic reading skills fails to operationalize the formation and perpetuation of that connection. For home-sphere members like parents, effective communication with the school-sphere representatives requires shared understanding of the language, including specialized vocabulary for each sphere. When the lingua franca of one sphere differs significantly in form from that of another, communication cannot be effective. For Bronfenbrenner’s development of the systems model theory, the differences in sphere were between lived experience and laboratory settings, which he believed consistently maintained differences of behavior. “These differences in turn illuminate the various meanings of these
types of settings to the participants, as partly a function of their social background and experience” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 5). Addressing differences between the spheres of influence children experience, differences in communication in each of the dyadic relationships children experience, and exploring remedies to differences in those dyads has the potential to develop opportunities for clarity of expectations for children.
Table 1

Representative studies which have utilized Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system theory for comparative analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bartlett, Raskin, Kotake, Nearing, &amp; Easterbrooks, 2014</td>
<td>multivariate factor analysis</td>
<td>adolescent mothers’ likelihood of being a perpetrator in a substantiated case of neglect against their firstborn infants (n = 383, M = 12 months)</td>
<td>to inform efforts to prevent child neglect</td>
<td>factors analyzed have particular salience to policymakers’ and practitioners’ efforts to identify high risk families and to intervene during the earliest months of life to prevent child neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cala &amp; Soriano, 2014</td>
<td>Photovoice was used as a methodological tool, with results analyzed using Atlas-Ti 7</td>
<td>30 adolescents (14 male, 16 female) aged between 14-17 from Romania and Almeria</td>
<td>to collect the different variables involved in the conceptualization of health among adolescents from different SES groupings</td>
<td>differences in lifestyles between those participants whose parents are business owners versus those whose parents are employees; common environmental elements and differences in the way they may affect, influence, or be valued by adolescents in health contexts</td>
</tr>
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Table 1 – continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Galindo &amp; Sheldon, 2012</td>
<td>multivariate factor analysis</td>
<td>nationally representative sample of kindergartners, n=16,425 students from 864 schools</td>
<td>to examine school and family connections and their relationships to family involvement and students’ achievement gains</td>
<td>schools’ efforts toward communication and engagement with families predicted greater family involvement in school and higher levels of student achievement in reading and math at the end of kindergarten; family involvement at school and parents’ educational expectations were associated with gains in reading and math achievement in kindergarten</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hawley &amp; Williford, 2015</td>
<td>articulate theoretical views from social psychology, social work, and organizational science; literature analysis</td>
<td>singular paper collection (Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology)</td>
<td>to focus on the mechanisms underlying attitudes and behaviors of constituents related to bullying within a school’s ecology and communities where the school is embedded</td>
<td>strengthening mechanisms of ecology stimulate dialogue among interventionists to improve the policy and practice response to bullying behavior among children and adolescents</td>
</tr>
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<td>Citation</td>
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<td>Lang, Tolbert, Schoppe-Sullivan</td>
<td>individual, semi-structured qualitative interviews using iterative,</td>
<td>10 parent–teacher relationships where parents</td>
<td>to examine the key dimensions of parent–teacher, or co-caring relationships, in early childhood education, evidence for positive co-caring interactions, especially positive communication that related with effective care coordination</td>
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<td>&amp; Bonomi, 2016</td>
<td>inductive, and deductive analysis</td>
<td>received subsidized, center-based childcare for</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>their infant or toddler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liao, 2016</td>
<td>literature review and synthesis</td>
<td>36 empirical studies on post-permanency</td>
<td>to develop promising post-permanency services for adopted children with special needs and their families</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>adjustment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lickenbrock &amp; Braungart-Riekerb,</td>
<td>longitudinal study of factors; factor analysis of descriptive statistics</td>
<td>data points reflecting early infancy on infant–</td>
<td>to examine antecedents of infant attachment with mothers and fathers</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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<td>mother and infant–father attachment security, n =</td>
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<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rodrigues, Campos, Chaves &amp; Martins, 2015</td>
<td>an exploratory, cross-sectional study of descriptive statistics</td>
<td>convenience sample of 119 parents, 22 kindergarten teachers and 168 students</td>
<td>to identify and to interpret parents, teachers, and students’ opinions concerning parental involvement and participation in their children’s school life</td>
<td>it is up to school to assume coordinating with the families, outline the objectives of the intervention and strategies to enable the increasing participation of families, and implement policy so all stakeholders (parents, students with special educational needs, and teachers) feel more included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowea, Zimmer-Gembecka &amp; Hooda, 2016</td>
<td>completed questionnaires and interviews at age 10 (T1) and at age 12 (T2); hierarchical regression analyses</td>
<td>representative sample of Australian early adolescents, N = 3797, 51% boys</td>
<td>to identify what factors at each ecological level were associated with adolescents’ change in difficulties over time</td>
<td>highlights the significant unique roles that proximal and distal social contexts play in the development of emotional, conduct, social, and academic difficulties</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Identifying and articulating potential remedies to communication differences is the operationalization of ecological systems theory. By inquiring of mothers what they expect of their children’s English reading, it “translates into operational terms a theoretical position often lauded in the literature of social science but seldom put into practice in research. … what matters … is the environment as it is *perceived* rather than as it may exist in ‘objective’ reality” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 4). Mothers may articulate messages they expect the researcher wants to hear, but that is the mother’s perceived reality. Understanding mothers’ perceived reality makes possible more effective communication from teachers about their expectations by reflecting what mothers communicate; essentially, mirroring the mothers’ own language patterns to create understanding.

Purposeful communication with mothers is oriented toward support for the student-child. Teachers and mothers frequently occupy parallel positioning in a student-child’s life as the primary mediating adult in expanding, separate spheres of influence. The student is positioned at the center of the expanding spheres, with spheres expanding in diverging directions to include the family-sphere and the school-sphere. The first externally concentric sphere is inclusive of those influences most immediately perpetuating interactional reciprocity with high frequency over lengthy periods of time. This sphere, identified by Bronfenbrenner (1994) as the *microsystem*, must include specific developmental interaction with the environment, directionality, power, content, and definable forms of interaction, and considered outcomes of development. The
familial microsystem would include the immediate family members, (siblings, parents, other cohabitants) and frequently interacting relationships (nanny, grandparents, second-generation family members). The educational microsystem does not enjoy the same intimacy of relation, being defined by the teacher, classmates, and other frequently involved instructional players (special session teachers, paraprofessionals). In most students’ educational lives, there is very little connection between these two microsystems. Depending on the student’s individual affect toward their home and school lives, these two microsystems may have differing proportions of influence at any given time; students tied strongly to their family structure might value the family microsphere at 70% of their developmental influence while a student with a deep sense of connectedness and identification with the classroom environment and participants might value the school microsphere at 60% of their developmental influence.

The division of influence is of particular interest in a study of parent-teacher communication intending to coordinate messaging between the two spheres because clarifying the power, content, directionality, and interaction of each sphere can reveal potential points of coordination (Lasky, 2000). In addition, points of non-coordination in ever-broader proximal influential spheres like the mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems of the student’s family life and school life might be more coordinated through professional development opportunities for the student’s teachers as the potentially more empowered participants.
Within the family-sphere portion of the spherical dyad are components such as home cultural observations regarding race and gender, sociocultural practices of language and religion, economic security, and sociopolitical identity (legal or illegal, migrant, immigrant, or mixed status). Each less-proximal sphere diminishes the potential for coordination with the school-sphere due to increasingly tenuous connections and dilution of specific identity markers. The school-sphere includes components of educator-generated school culture, legal and political influences, community cultural practices of hegemonic language and religious observation, and dominant culture behavior expectations unique to that environment.

Bronfenbrenner posits that “the ecology of human development lies at a point of convergence among the disciplines of the biological, psychological, and social sciences as they bear on the evolution of the individual in society” (1979, p. 13). An individual’s social evolution includes acquisition and effective use of the language conventions in their social spheres, with greater or lesser expertise relative to their development within that sphere. Through an individual’s lifespan, acquisition and development of language content and meaning facility expertise in multiple spheres reflects their diverse exposures and experiences. Greater facility of language conventions can be expected in the life-sphere, particularly as related to family and culture expectations, than in discrete domain spheres which may include school disciplines, diverse social groups, specialized employment situations, and other defined-content domains of learning or knowledge.
Teachers wield primary influence in the school-sphere through instructional delivery and climate-setting. In a standards-based instructional model, this influence is intended to produce standard-meeting assessment outcomes. For English language learners, this outcome is achievement of competence with their new language sufficient to participate with heritage English users at common levels of performance. All readers, regardless of their heritage language, reach competence as part of a life span developmental model articulated as a “journey from acclimation to proficiency” through “the development of expertise” (Alexander, 2003, 2005). The life span Model of Domain Learning (MDL) is a fluid assessment of language usage, characterized by comprehension and applicability skills in a particular topic or domain of knowledge. Readers begin at a stage of acclimation to the conventions of reading and speaking, and limited metacognition regarding the process of integrating input into knowledge. Proceeding from acclimation, learners move to a period of competence. Changes in knowledge are both quantitative in learned vocabulary and qualitative in skills like inference and extrapolation. The competent learner has created a foundation of knowledge about their target domain with specific contextualized structure and cohesion of concepts. Nearing exit from the competence stage of development, learners have internalized common problems from the domain of knowledge, utilizing both deep- and surface-level strategic processing with greater personal, intrinsic interest and motivation. Transition to proficiency or eventual expertise in comprehending knowledge input in a domain can be identified by problem-seeking or
problem-identifying behaviors, demonstrated breadth and depth of knowledge in the target domain, and contributions of new concepts or ideas to the domain. The expert of domain knowledge is actively utilizing deep-processing strategies during most interaction with the domain and persists at this level due to a specific, personal or individual interest (Alexander, 2003, 2005).
Table 2

Representative studies which have utilized Alexander's Model of Domain Learning.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athanasou &amp; Langan, 1999</td>
<td>pre- and post-test recall score assessment, correlation</td>
<td>Students (n=17) at two levels in a postgraduate music therapy course</td>
<td>to evaluate the roles of interest, knowledge, and learning strategies on recall within a specific subject domain at an early stage of learning</td>
<td>failed to support the knowledge component in a model of domain learning in music therapy but supported the minor influence of individual interest and strategies together with a social disposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farouk &amp; Elfateh, 2016</td>
<td>experimental model with control, pre- and post-test</td>
<td>n=48 female students (age 17.8 +/- 1.9 years)</td>
<td>to describe the effects of eight weeks of generative learning model on strategic thinking skills and learning level of offensive fencing basics</td>
<td>significant improvement in strategic thinking skills and learning level of fencing basics (offensive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hershenson, 2001</td>
<td>research literature review</td>
<td>MDL adaptation to represent rehabilitation counseling competencies</td>
<td>to create relevant teaching-learning models to facilitate the transmission of rehabilitation counseling content to persons entering and practicing the profession</td>
<td>each topic in each CORE=designated domain within the field of rehabilitation counseling can be located and approached for teaching-learning within this framework</td>
</tr>
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<td>Citation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kulturel-Konak, Konak, Kremer &amp; Esparagozza, 2015</td>
<td>rubric development; assessment framework of professional skills</td>
<td>authors’ theoretical presentation</td>
<td>to demonstrate how a theoretical learning model can be utilized in order to gain better insights about students’ professional skills development</td>
<td>assessment tools for professional skills should be designed and collected assessment data should be analyzed based on the same theoretical framework to gain deeper insights on students’ performance, leading to improvement interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langan &amp; Athanasou, 2005</td>
<td>participant response to presented video data</td>
<td>Music therapy students compared with music students and other therapy students, n=79</td>
<td>a measure of the effectiveness of music therapy education by testing it against a proven educational model</td>
<td>the results indicate efficacy for the music therapy education investigated with a video and the effect of the independent variables on recall at two points in time were examined, pre- and post-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawless &amp; Kulikowich, 2004</td>
<td>domain matrix analysis</td>
<td>the scores of 267 undergraduate and graduate students representing a variety of majors and programs</td>
<td>to identify several important issues regarding the dynamic interplay of domain knowledge and individual interest within and between domains and across developmental stages</td>
<td>domain knowledge and individual interest are related differently for statistics and psychology; the relationship between domain knowledge and interest changes as an artifact of both students’ level of preparation and their specialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murphy &amp; Alexander, 2002</td>
<td>multivariate analyses and path modeling</td>
<td>n= 77; 56 females and 21 males (college students)</td>
<td>to explore subject-matter knowledge, strategic processing, and interest on college students’ educational psychology learning</td>
<td>students’ subject-matter knowledge, strategic processing, interest, and interactive knowledge significantly increased after a semester of domain instruction</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schrader, Lawless &amp; Mayall, 2008</td>
<td>matrix analysis of survey responses</td>
<td>unspecified</td>
<td>highlight how a theoretical framework can help clarify questions, define variables, and ease interpretations of research on navigation</td>
<td>focus was not data-driven but to present a theoretical framework for clarification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shen &amp; Chen, 2007</td>
<td>hierarchical cluster analysis</td>
<td>n=177 sixth-graders from three middle schools</td>
<td>to examine the extent of learners’ initial learning profiles from previously acquired knowledge, learning strategy application, and interest-based motivation influenced learning</td>
<td>individual learners could be classified into subgroups with distinctive learning characteristics; learning in physical education is a progressive process that involves both cognitive and affective dimensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson &amp; Lathey, 2013</td>
<td>systematic review of research studies</td>
<td>cognitive development, learning theory and information science literature</td>
<td>presents an integrated micro-model of information literacy</td>
<td>how teaching techniques can be improved to enhance the development of information literacy skills for online searching and information evaluation and to foster greater domain learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang, Liu, Cole &amp; Belkin, 2015</td>
<td>regression modeling analysis method</td>
<td>40 participants searching on task topics in the domain of genomics</td>
<td>to determine if user domain knowledge can be predicted from search behaviors</td>
<td>highlights three behavioral variables as domain knowledge level predictors: the number of documents saved, the average query length, and the average ranking position of the documents opened</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
True expertise in a domain or topic is rare; aspiration toward expertise is equally rare. Instead, high competence in a chosen domain is both desired and admirable and frequently observed in working professionals or devoted hobbyists. The applicability for teachers is the intended outcome of competence with academic domain knowledge as defined by the standards the teacher’s instruction is tailored to meet. Teachers intend that students should be able to demonstrate competency in each academic domain on standardized assessments to demonstrate acquisition of operational knowledge and vocabulary in each of those domains. Such academic competence should enable an individual to expand their knowledge voluntarily, beyond those academic domains, utilizing acquired academic knowledge to self-scaffold acquisition of knowledge from other domains for personal or professional edification. Similarly, parents should be able to reach a minimum level of competency with general academic domain references relative to standardized instruction and assessment in order to support students’ growth toward proficiency.

Alexander (2003, 2005) illustrates the MDL with a line graph across a field progressing from acclimation through multiple stages of competence to proficiency and expertise. However, for inclusion to the concentric ecological spheres, the MDL is represented as a screw, with a greater breadth of knowledge corresponding with increasing proximal distance in spheres of influence. This illustration is included in Figure 1, demonstrating the potential for intersection and interaction between diverse spheres of influence. Simply, the narrower the field of knowable things, the finer, and therefore more
limited, the domain knowledge and vocabulary. Young children rarely know much beyond their immediate family, most common caregivers, and the practiced culture of those formative figures. As a result, their domain knowledge is focused specifically on the exposure to concepts provided by that limited domain. As children age and correspondingly expand their field of experience, so does their ability to develop expertise in items they have accumulated more and greater experience and knowledge with and about, by comparison to the new information provided in the widening spheres of influence.

![Figure 1](image.png)

**Figure 1.** Visualization of spheres of influence for a single student-child’s ecological system, overlaid with a corresponding illustration of MDL correlation.
The ecological systems theory is applied to studies in education to identify and articulate interaction between participants in dyadic and N + 2 relationships (Bartlett, Raskin, Kotake, Nearing, & Easterbrooks, 2014; Cala & Soriano, 2014; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Hawley & Williford, 2015; Lang, Tolbert, Schoppe-Sullivan & Bonomi, 2016; Liao, 2016; Lickenbrock & Braungart-Riekerb, 2015; Rodrigues, Campos, Chaves & Martins, 2015; Rowea, Zimmer-Gembecka & Hooda, 2016). Comparative analysis of topically relevant studies is included in Figure 1. Of particular interest relative to the current study, Galindo and Sheldon (2012) explored how family involvement and connection to the school influenced students’ gains on achievement measures in reading and math. This exploration was bi-phasic, finding that school efforts at communication could predict higher levels of family involvement, which yielded a secondary result of greater achievement in reading and math; correspondingly, family involvement and high expectations of educational achievement yielded a similar secondary result (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). This study was conducted with a representative sample of kindergarteners from the United States, n=16,425 students, representing 864 schools, illustrating only quantitative correlation. In addition, the purposefully representative sample was demographically heterogeneous, failing to account for significant differences in human cultural variation. Attending to this qualitative need, Lang, Tolbert, Schoppe-Sullivan, and Bonomi (2016) conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with individuals and analyzed them using iterative processes with both induction and deduction to reveal that a “co-caring conceptualization offers a practical framework to support strong
parent–teacher relationships and a theoretical tool” to examine those relationships. The “co-caring conceptualization” affects a joint between the child’s family mesosystem and the student’s classroom/teacher mesosystem as sharing in caring activities for and about that student-child (Lang, Tolbert, Schoppe-Sullivan, & Bonomi, 2016). However, defining care remains ambiguous due to differences in participants’ affective filters and cultural sphere affiliation.

Avenues of care are generalized across educational situations, but are more acutely defined when addressing education for members of special populations. Although language learners are not included in the special needs paradigm for the purposes of public education, legal and programmatic concerns are similar between students in special education and students in second language education. Rodrigues, Campos, Chaves, and Martins (2015) concluded that, in relationships between the family of a special education student and the school serving that student the school must actively cultivate the role of coordinating with the family, outlining objectives and associated strategies to increase family participation, and implement policies which allow all relevant stakeholders to feel included (Semke & Sheridan, 2012; Sheehey, Ornelles & Noonan, 2009). Similar actions must be taken on behalf of relationships between the family of a language learner and the school serving that student. Negotiating the differences between a child’s family mesosystem and a student’s classroom mesosystem requires deriving educational models which reflect the student’s and family’s worldview, generally reflective of their familial context (Cala & Soriano, 2014). Cultivation and negotiation of relationships between
diverse systems challenges all participants in the relationships to identify and honor
domain-specific knowledge as well as discrepant levels of knowledge in those specific
domains. Results from ecological systems studies place the onus of that awareness upon
schools and school-representing entities, challenging them to make accessible proficiency-
and expert-level concepts to communicants operating at acclimation-level competency
when considered on the MDL scale for academic domain knowledge (Alexander, 1993,
2007; Alexander, Jetton & Kulikowich, 1995; Alexander & Judy, 1988; Alexander, Sperl,

Alexander’s MDL (1993, 2007) is explicitly conceived as a representation of
learning, and therefore connects deeply with discussions of academics and education. The
MDL is more illustrative of pedandrological purposes and applications than the more
sociological concept underlying Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory; this does not
diminish the value in application to the current study. Similar studies of participants’
developing familiarity with topic-specific concepts span domains of jargon-heavy
language and highly contextualized understanding (Athanasou & Langan, 1999; Farouk &
Elfateh, 2016; Hershenson, 2001; Langan & Athanasou, 2005; Lawless & Kulikowich,
2004; Murphy & Alexander, 2002; Schrader, Lawless & Mayall, 2008; Shen & Chen,
analysis includes concepts as diverse as fencing (Farouk & Elfateh, 2016), information
technology (Thompson & Lathey, 2013; Schrader, Lawless & Mayall, 2008; Zhang, Liu,
Cole & Belkin, 2015), music therapy (Athanasou & Langan, 1999; Langan & Athanasou,
and counselor education (Hershenson, 2001). Evaluation of each participant’s familiarity with the domain-specific concepts and language is the first step in a collaborative power model which provides access to the knowledge. Teachers are, by nature of their work, more likely at the executive proficiency level of domain knowledge in education. Executive proficiency includes functional use of domain-specific conceptual jargon, language which would include the performance and assessment descriptors of standards-defined learning targets for instruction. Few parents from any demographic group who are not professionally affiliated with an instructional body would have even competency status with domain-specific jargon regarding the performance and assessment descriptors most standards-based instructional programs mandate; this is compounded for mothers without academic competency or proficiency in colloquial or social English. In addition, the educational domain in the mothers’ heritage language and culture potentially includes concepts which are decidedly different from those of the dominant educational culture of public schools in the United States generally or in state-specific contexts, as in the current study. Acclimation or acculturation to a new social and political structure does not necessitate familiarity with all the sub-cultures of that greater social culture; these mothers may not have had access or exposure to the educational culture of their children’s school environment. Application of the MDL for the purposes of assessing mothers’ familiarity with the content of an educational domain is especially valuable when considering the accommodation required by teachers to present the information in a way the mothers can understand. Empirical study determining the relative level of professional
skills in different disciplines determined the MDL framework is applicable and advantageous for integrating skills as learning objectives similar to teachers’ integrating educational domain knowledge as learning objectives in communications with mothers (Kulturel-Konak, Konak, Kremer & Esparagozza, 2015). This is not to imply teachers are responsible for explicit instruction to mothers, but to assist teachers in recognizing the disparity in familiarity with the concepts and language and appropriately scaffold language for the mothers’ understanding.

Review of Research

The Review of Research will include identifying the influences upon context for the problem explored herein. This includes detailing the sociocultural influences upon definitions of context, the defining qualities of people included in these various contexts, and how defining context and personal qualities can influence the multiplicity of identities participating in the creation and resolution of the identified problem.

The Spanish-Speaking Hispano-Latino Diaspora

The modern United States includes speakers of many languages, with estimates that the national English-learning population includes speakers of nearly 400 different languages (United States Department of Education, 2015). Students from each of these diverse languages bring different prior knowledge and educational experiences, familial and cultural background and educational goals and purposes (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The largest language minority is currently the Spanish-speaking Hispano-Latino diaspora, a heterogeneous ethnic group of people representing a variety
of social and legal status conditions (Gándara, 2010; Langdon, 2008; Manguel Figueroa, 2011; Marteleto, Gelber, Hubert & Salinas, 2012). In this text, the term *Hispano-Latino diaspora* created to specifically identify the linguistically unified but culturally heterogeneous community of Spanish-speaking people. This identification is in differentiation to individual ethnic or racial groupings related to the geographic origin, biological phenotype, or other human identification factors. Terms such as Hispanic, which is used by some groups from the Central and South American sub-continents, or Latino and Latina, more frequently used by similar groups, are exclusive of Spanish-speakers from other geographic or national origins. Brown and Souto-Manning (2008) choose to identify these diaspora members as Latin@s, integrating both genders in a single identifier (e.g. external O and internal a indicated by the @ shape), but acknowledge these are predominately individuals from Mexico and geographically proximal origin. Within this diaspora are those who have recently immigrated to the United States by legal or illegal means for a variety of purposes, as well as families that have striven to preserve culturally relevant practices while residing for generations in mainstream American society (Badillo, 2013; Marteleto, Gelber, Hubert & Salinas, 2012). Noguera (2008, p. 47) describes this population as “a people whose gaze is so firmly affixed on the promise of a better life that it becomes possible for them to endure a host of hardships and inconveniences that might set others back completely.” Visible differences between social and national groups include characteristics as visibly obvious as religious affiliation and practice and as potentially invisible as parenting warmth and
style (De Von Figueroa-Moseley, Ramey, Keltner, & Lanzi, 2006). Disparities between parental immigration status and children’s immigration status may require negotiation of identity markers between family members, altering the inter-familial relation dynamic in a way that appears unique to members of the Hispano-Latino diaspora community (Mangual Figueroa, 2011). This broad diversity among a linguistically unified demographic illustrates the challenge in addressing the culturally relevant educational goals of parents bringing their children to public schools in the United States. These children are provided a compulsory education in a language and culture that is not entirely their own, nor their parents’. Discontinuities between a student-child’s received home culture messaging and school culture messaging require negotiating the separate influences of home culture values and school culture values. The potential differences in values for standardized skills in each world influences these student-children’s experience and potential achievement in the school’s standard of measure.

Identifying the Diaspora

The largest group within this linguistic demographic by identification of national origin is currently Mexican (United States Census Bureau, 2013). Due to close geographic proximity and established patterns of access, Mexican immigrants make their way into the United States and settle throughout the country (Chapman, Laird, Ifill & KewalRamani, 2011). The Pew Research Center (2015) maps indicate heaviest concentrations of Spanish-speaking communities in the southern- and eastern-most arc of the continental United States, stretching from California east across the southern national
border through Florida and then north in varying densities to the northernmost reaches of New England. These communities are often heavily Mexican in origin, which does not eliminate the influence of other Hispano-Latino diaspora countries. In addition to Central and South America, Puerto Rico and other points in the Caribbean are represented (Lipski, 1975), as well as small numbers of nationals representing non-Hispanic Spanish-speaking African nations (Pew Research Center, 2015). Communities characterized by concentrated linguistic unity illustrate the human tendency to gather with others sharing a common communication, despite the differences in other cultural practices (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993; Heller, 2006). This tendency, coupled with educational zoning which replicates neighborhood concentrations into schools, can explain differences in Hispano-Latino diaspora student enrollment numbers from one school to another.

Heritage Spanish-speaking Hispanic students are one group included in the Hispano-Latino diaspora demographic, and have reported feeling unprepared to function with adequate linguistic competency in English-oriented academic settings; their responses better characterize the experience as “survival” (Schwieter, 2011). Although individual experiences vary, some students report their exit from ESL programs left them without sufficient academic language skills to succeed or advance in educational situations. Their experience led to a sense of simply surviving in the school environment until an exit opportunity such as employment or relocation allowed them to leave school. These feelings are reported as amplified for migrant students experiencing negative social and cultural pressures in both the school and community, subsequently diminishing
efforts by school or community agents to develop educational engagement. Students become aware that acculturation to the dominant culture can diminish a sense of “differentness” at the potential cost of their social and ethnic identity (Schwieter, 2011). However, pressure from home to maintain the heritage language and culture practices that tie to a particular identity pushes against the school’s message of acculturation. For some students, greater alignment with home culture identification precludes acquisition of English-language literacy skills beyond the acclimation stage (Alexander, 2003, 2005). When these students move out of the formal school environment by graduation, or more frequently by self-exclusion, limited English-language literacy skills become fossilized due to a lack of formative input (Krashen, 1982).

One portion of “differentness” these students experience due to the diversity of the Hispano-Latino Diaspora is the amorphous definition of race, culture, and ethnicity. Students perceive discrimination due to social, physical, and linguistic differences which often impact their academic achievement even when academic language competency is not their primary challenge. During longitudinal study, including 221 self-identified Latino/a students, male students were found to be particularly susceptible to the adverse effects of perceived discrimination, choosing to separate from the source of discrimination (e.g. dropping out of school) rather than persevering to completion (Alfaro, Umaña-Taylor, Gonzales-Backen, Bámaca, & Zeiders, 2009). These students may be Spanish-speaking, but with a quasi-Anglo appearance or a quasi-African appearance, are accepted in no particular social peer group. Bhabha identifies this as
being “beyond,” and notes, “being in the ‘beyond’ of culture is to inhabit an intervening space” (2013, p. 108). Sociocultural theory posits individuals with a hybrid identity as being “in-between” or as occupying a “third space” at the intersection of social, racial, and cultural organizations (Bhabha, 1994, 2013; Hutcheon, Bhabha, Boyarin, & Golz, 1998; Newton, 1997, p. 294-295). Bhabha addresses the challenge of occupying this “third space” as a concern about identification, particularly as individuals attempt name themselves or their grouping within or in differentiation from the geographically-formed identity of others occupying the same space. In this perspective, individuals perceiving themselves as different from the majority experience a particular anxiety regarding their representation and valuation in the greater social structure and strive to achieve their perception of appropriate representation by naming each identifying portion of identity in such a way that the act of naming itself becomes burdensome to understanding the complexities of identity. As a result, the members of that grouping so named do not experience the empowerment of recognition which would validate their sense of differentness or of occupying that “third space” but instead forego opportunities to emphasize their individuality within the minority and majority groupings.

The anxiety of displacement that troubles national rootedness transforms ethnicity or cultural difference into an ethical relation that serves as a subtle corrective to valiant attempts to achieve representativeness and moral equivalence in the matter of minorities. For too often these efforts result in hyphenated attempts to include all multiple subject positions—race, gender, class, geopolitical location, generation—in an overburdened juggernaut that rides roughshod over the singularities and individuations of difference. (Hutcheon, Bhabha, Boyarin, & Golz, 1998, p. 34)
Students with these identity and recognition challenges are likely to perpetuate the “immigrant paradox” of failing to achieve at the levels seen in earlier generations of immigrants because they are without close association with their heritage culture or a supportive, identifiably similar social group (Aretakis, Ceballo, Suarez & Camacho, 2015; Perreira, Fulgni, & Potochnick, 2010). Coincidentally, the lack of support is also perceived in teacher affect, with Hispano-Latino diaspora students’ perspectives of teacher interest and esteem for them as learners perceived as low by comparison to students in other ethnic, racial, or cultural groups (Perreira, Fulgni, & Potochnick, 2010).

The Challenge to Schools

For school administrators and teachers, the breadth of cultural diversity in this linguistic demographic presents multiple challenges. First, the practice of language instruction to English learners currently remains consistent with broad instructional theory (see discussion below) independent of the students’ home or origin language (Cummins, 1986, 2014; Cummins, Chow, Schecter, Yeager, 2006; Cummins, Mirza & Stille, 2012). However, within language acquisition theory is an imperative that instruction be culturally sensitive and relevant rather than dogmatically adherent to theory-based processes, particularly when considering discrete language-specific groups (Branum-Martin, Mehta, Carlson, Francis, & Goldenberg, 2014). The vast differences between cultural identities among speakers of a common language increase the difficulty of that challenge. Instead of teaching in a culturally responsive way, teachers remain guided by state and national standards which apply to all students, regardless of language
capacity or home culture (Georgia Board of Education, 2015). This is partly a result of efforts to make language learning equitable by valuing the language of instruction (i.e. English) over students’ home or heritage languages because, in many cases, it is the only thing a heterogeneously grouped class has in common. The unfortunate consequence of this culture-blind standards-based instructional design is neglect of students’ unique cultural capital and the associated prior knowledge which should be used to build coherent, applicable understanding of new concepts and associated vocabulary. Home cultural relevance and prioritization of skills may be challenged by a pronounced disconnect between the contents and purposes of academic standards impressed by the hegemonic American cultural priorities and those cultural priorities of Hispano-Latino diaspora group members (Heath, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1978, 2003). Discovery of cultural priorities within the Hispano-Latino diaspora through the inquiry of this study may illuminate the particular points of disconnect and allow teachers to address those points in communication with parents, even if instruction is not able to be changed.

Attempts at race-, culture-, or demographically-blind execution of programmatic equality are rooted in significant efforts to remedy egregious historical social wrongs (see discussion below) but are to the detriment of students from all diverse of populations. American public education remains a compulsory experience to which parents submit their children, but parents’ familiarity with the content of equal opportunity content varies across schools and communities throughout the country. Academic writers utilizing various denominations of critical race theory (CRT), have advocated for more
cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness in program, curriculum, and assessment design, believing this should include the voices of ethnically and linguistically diverse parents and their communities (Roithmayr, 1999). Unfortunately, demands by academics for inclusive programming remain academic without the collected empirical data which can applicably drive culturally-informed programmatic design.

Critical race theory exists in a wide variety of divisions, speaking to the salience of racial identity to thoughtful consideration before institutional action. One voice heavily critical of the standardized public education practices prevalent in the United States is that of the Latino Critical theory, or LatCrit community. Critical analysis of the practices, language use, and policies in education with reference to members of the Hispano-Latino diaspora community from the perspective of that community specifically recognizes the deficit-model remedies applied to academic interventions intended to support, develop, or assist heritage Spanish-speaking students. Even when critics are operators within the public education sphere, a sense of “otherness” separates members of the Hispano-Latino diaspora community from other minority groups represented in the broader public education community. Due to the proportionally small number of self-identified Hispanic, Latino/a, or heritage Spanish-speaking teachers recorded in public education census, as well as a disjunction to the voice of the researcher, this division of CRT will be excluded for the purposes of this study. In alignment with the purposes of the study, the goal of recording and interpreting the stated expectations of Spanish-speaking parents is to make them heard by the majority of teachers, independent of those teachers’ individual
sociocultural identities. As addressed later, teachers should be familiar with the considerations of CRT when approaching content instruction and communication with all families; in-depth consideration of each division of CRT is not required for teachers to develop a cultural awareness for communication. In addition, teachers necessarily come from their own social, cultural, or ethnic identity standpoint which may or may not align with any one portion of CRT. Instead of attempting to align with unfamiliar or situationally inappropriate portions of the CRT sphere, teachers should instead develop a greater self-awareness of their own identity to have greater awareness of that identity’s influence upon their communication and instruction practices.

One way teachers’ cultural awareness can influence interactions with diverse student populations is recognizing that differences exist between the largely technological and progressive intents of American education and the frequently agrarian priorities of Spanish-speaking minorities (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1995; Spring, 2011). Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, and Goldenberg (1995) specifically investigated what impact values of agrarian origin might have upon students from self-identified Latino backgrounds. In contrast to expectations, the difference from the academic-occupational perspective of school administrators and teachers does not specifically work against these learners. Instead, conditions may be that these values are complementary to the school’s and support students’ educational achievement and school culture adaptation. Chief among the shared values is hard work, demonstrated in responses to Suizzo, Jackson, Pahlke, Marroquin, Blondeau, and Martinez’s (2012) inquiries of low-income sixth
graders identified as Mexican-origin. The authors characterize this value transmission as parental academic socialization (PAS) and attribute student determination through mediation analysis to high maternal warmth and PAS (Suizzo, Jackson, Pahlke, Marroquin, Blondeau, & Martinez, 2012). The hard work required of language-learning students must be supported by the valuation of hard work from the parents just as it must be demanded by the teachers and school culture (Godina, 2004; Stevenson, Chen & Uttal, 1990). Recognizing alignment between the different priorities and expectations of parents and the school academic culture is the space for teachers to enter and attempt to coordinate the messaging with parents with sensitivity to potential differences.

Another cultural issue which requires great sensitivity from school personnel is recognizing the origin stories and experiences of diverse populations, particularly those who may be migrant or illegal. Primary among reasons families emigrate from Spanish-speaking Latin American countries are economic and educational opportunities. Shifts in global politics and policies have rendered the economies and social structures of many Central and South American countries unstable, providing citizens of those countries with little to no opportunity for employment or basic educational services (Deutsch, Dumas, & Silber, 2013; Gamboa & Waltenberg, 2012; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2012; Marteleto, Gelber, Hubert & Salinas, 2012). Although the southernmost borders of the United States have been porous since originally drawn, the lack of opportunity in Central and South America has increased the motivation to immigrate to the United States. The risks and costs of emigration from unstable Spanish-speaking countries are high, and the
potential for success upon arrival in the United States is far from assured; families, individuals, even unescorted children continue to persevere at immigration, desiring benefit from the opportunities perceived to be in the United States (Park, 2014). For families in exodus from fractured social environments, prior access to structured educational experiences may have been limited. Educating students from this kind of experience requires recognizing what knowledge and skills may have been acquired in the process of arriving to the United States’ more reliable, structured instructional programming.

Culture-blind standards-based educational programming perpetuates a portion of educational neglect through failure to include linguistic and cultural intents brought to the public school environment by diverse populations. These intents are especially relevant to addressing the needs of immigrant, migrant and refugee students (Georgis, Gokiert, Ford & Ali, 2014). Study of the economics of educational stratification in Central and South American countries by Marteleto, Gelber, Hubert and Salinas (2012) beginning in the 1980s and extending from the 1990s into the 2000s includes specific consideration of Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay, determining how important macroeconomic conditions are to inequalities of educational opportunity. The findings also emphasize progressively increasing disadvantages associated with poor educational quality for adolescents. Marteleto, Gelber, Hubert and Salinas (2012) indicate greater examination of the quality and quantity of educational opportunity is necessary to complete understanding of educational stratification in Latin America which perpetuates the poor conditions
compelling emigration. Conclusions asserted by Marteleto, Gelber, Hubert and Salinas (2012) regarding the Effectively Maintained Inequities (EMI) are analogous to the factors revealed by the combined economic analyses conducted by Deutsch, Dumas and Silber (2013), Gamboa and Waltenberg (2012), and Hanushek and Woessmann (2012) in and of Latin American countries. Collectively, these studies included significant transforming national markets while looking at measures of the continent as a whole. Indicators such as PISA test performance, economic growth, and enrollment in private schools were compared internally and externally to draw a better picture of what educational opportunity does to the economic growth and diversity of these regions as well as how it may explain the growth in emigration numbers, particularly into the United States. These comparisons bear out the inequities Marteleto, Gelber, Hubert and Salinas (2012) find are maintained by inadequate, inappropriate, or ineffective educational processes, opportunities, and policies within each and all of these countries.

The remedy for this persistent inequity and lack of educational opportunity for immigrants to the United States is to provide linguistically-rich and culturally-relevant education to students enrolling in public school environments. Encouraging the commitment and investment in school work that is necessary for students to be successful with school instruction at home is vital, yet parents may be unaware of how students’ school work relates to standardized outcomes, particularly if parents’ own education was interrupted, incomplete, or within a structure distinctly different from that utilized in the United States (Gándara, 2010; Langdon, 2008; Mangual Figueroa, 2011; Reese, Balzano,
Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1995). Previous educational experiences of these students may be reflective of ineffective educational policies, stimulating a secondary need for education for the parents of enrolled students.

Involving the Parents of the Hispano-Latino Diaspora

Parent involvement is without question one of the most vital variables in school, student, and teacher success, but the variable least mediated by schools and school officials themselves (Castro, Esposito-Casas, Lopez-Martin, Lizasoain, Navarro-Asencio, & Gaviria, 2015). Studies indicated in the following sections have chosen to focus on the potential for expanding parent involvement, especially among Spanish-speaking parents representing the Hispano-Latino diaspora community. Education to increase school officials’ definitions and comprehension of parent involvement and recognize with validation previously unrecognized or unacknowledged participation must also include recognizing parents’ motivation to become involved (Hoover- Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins, & Closson, 2005; Maslow, 1943; Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler & Hoover-Dempsey, 2005; Schnee & Bose, 2010).

Hill and Taylor assert that “teachers have little time or resources to devote to promoting parental school involvement” and that “most teacher training programs do not include courses on how to effectively involve parents” (2004, p. 163). To the ethnically and socially diverse parents involved with schools, school agents’ communications must be coordinated throughout the academic community and unified in message and meaning, based upon the most constructive practices revealed in Beauregard, Petrakos, and Dupont’s

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analysis of partnership efforts between parents and schools in Quebec. Teacher communication with parents regarding their students’ performance in school is an opportune time to suggest and encourage parent behaviors supporting their students’ achievement and growth, especially in the middle school years (Banks, 2005; Beauregard, Petrakos, & Dupont, 2014; Strom & Strom, 2002). Students in middle school are also on the cusp of eligibility for dropping out of school. For Hispanic youth, the “dropout rate was more than three times greater than the 2000 non-Hispanic ‘white alone’ dropout rate of 6.9 percent” (Fry, 2003). Preventing students from dropping out of school enables them to earn potentially more in the open labor market and have greater employment opportunities, as well as avoid behaviors which can be socially debilitating, including early parenthood and lawlessness (Bowen, Hopson, Rose, & Glennie, 2012; Fry, 2003). Hill, Castellino, Lansford, Nowlin, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit correlated parental involvement in students’ academic activities with ameliorating behavior problems, leading to greater academic achievement; with that achievement follows greater occupational aspiration (2004). Additionally, children with parents less involved in the school building or activities were perceived by teachers and administrators as less advantaged and with parents who were less interested in their students’ achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Fry, 2003; Hill et al., 2004; Lee & Bowen, 2006). Teachers’ and administrators’ perception does not account for parent involvement in home activities supportive of students’ academic growth, nor does it account for valuations implicit in the hidden curriculum of the school culture (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jasis, 2013; Vang, 2006). High school students recently immigrated to the
United States report perceiving their parents’ involvement as “invisible” to school personnel, especially when viewed through a stridently critical race theoretical lens (Andrews, M., 2013). Parental involvement perceptions, by all parties involved, must be formed with consideration for providing information, as parents can and will only be involved to their knowledge of what that involvement is or should be.

Parent involvement in academic activities can take two forms. Parents with the ability to physically attend to their child’s school experiences may volunteer in their child’s classroom, participate in shows of student work, or meet with teachers and other school personnel. School-based supportive behaviors support student success in conventional measures of academic performance and are the visible, outward signs of parent interest and involvement (Altschul, 2011, Fishel & Ramirez, 2005; Mistretta, 2013). These demonstrations of involvement are predicated on a familiarity with behavioral norms in the social context of the United States. Parents and students from a culture with different norms may not know about the expectation of attending school-based events and would require receiving an invitation or explanation in a comprehensible way to be able to attempt meeting those social norms. Additionally, there is an underlying reality of leisure that allows adults to be in schools during school hours; because school attendance hours correspond to professional working hours in the United States, only individuals working in environments which offer the flexibility to be away from work in that time can participate. Events, activities, and opportunities to
participate in school operation which occur outside the general school attendance/professional working hours are few.

A second form of parent involvement in academic activities is home-based supportive action and messaging (Poza, Brooks & Valdés, 2014). Parents interacting with their children at home convey messages about the value of academics and the component skills associated with successful academic work (Altschul, 2011; White, 2011). Through data representative of national demographics (N=1,609) extracted from the National Education Longitudinal Survey, Altschul (2011) determined these home-based supports were not only more beneficial than school-based supports but also occurred prior to high school between Hispanic students and their parents. When parents’ messages about school are positive and motivational, it shapes student perception in positive and motivated ways (Díaz & Bussert-Webb, 2013). While “parent involvement at school and parental educational expectations had the highest correlations with academic achievement, [and] time management and homework help had the lowest associations with achievement,” parent engagement of any kind is associated with gains in student achievement (Lee & Bowen, 2006, p. 203).

Teachers and school administrators may prefer that parents attend in person to academic activities, an option which may not be available to many parents, but parent participation in the academic efforts of their students at home through supervision of homework and other supportive behaviors appears to be beneficial as well (Bower, Bowen & Powers, 2011; Fry, 2003; Hill et al., 2004; Lee & Bowen, 2006). To that end, it is
“suggest[ed] teachers, parents, and students value the importance of parent involvement in education” and “the goal of schools should be to persuade parents to participate in the activities that schools identify as important to the degree that teachers and students begin to notice a difference” in student performance (DePlany, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane, 2007, p. 367). School leaders must also recognize that the intuitionally-based involvement opportunities they desire from parents come from the preferences and needs of schools; soliciting input and feedback from stakeholders regarding preferred modes of involvement has greater potential to result in action (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Auerbach, 2007; Panferov, 2010). Building upon these positive associations with home-based behaviors in a culturally-sensitive manner would empower diverse families to exhibit their support for student learning and achievement while honoring their heritage culture rather than imposing cultural norms from the United States.

From his own critical theory position, Olivos (2004) concluded that what Latino or Hispanic parents didn’t have in order to be more involved on-site in their children’s education “was the political consciousness necessary to grasp how the school system implicitly (and explicitly) works to discourage the active, authentic, and meaningful involvement of low-income, bicultural parents and communities.” Similarly, Bolivar and Chrispeels (2010) determined parent leadership development through educational programming increases their access to comprehensible social and academic capital for understanding the existing structure of the school’s systems. Parents can receive assistance relating to and participating in their child’s school sphere through parent
education programs provided by the school which are designed from a culturally-sensitive model. Behnke and Kelly (2011) observed parental involvement in programming coordinated by the school increased student success measures when those outcomes were the focus of creating those programs. Over a two-year period, an integrated program of teacher and parent training toward home-based strategies in literacy, involvement, and advocacy resulted in increased levels of parent participation in home academic practices which significantly raised measures of student effort, social skills, and grades, and marginally raised scores on standardized English Language Arts tests (O’Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Explicitly expressing to families what kind of supportive behaviors are most effective and why, rather than relying upon cultural norms to be transmitted by ambient exposure, has underutilized capacity to improve student outcomes from educational instruction. This kind of programming should be offered to all parents and include a component which is linguistically accessible to the parents of language learners and is culturally sensitive to their particular needs (Behnke & Kelly, 2011; Jasis & Ordonez-Jasis, 2004; O’Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Parent education programming can improve parent-child communication reciprocity about academics which stimulates greater investment and engagement from students in learning and achievement around those academic topics (Andrews, M., 2013; O’Donnell & Kirkner, 2014; Ramos, 2014).

Aligned with increasing achievement, providing educational opportunities to mothers has been linked to increasing children’s language skills for mothers with low
education levels due to subsequently measured increases in home environment quality, including greater access to the tools of literacy and more engagement from better-educated mothers (Korupp, Ganzeboom, & Van Der Lippe, 2002; Magnuson, Sexton, Davis-Kean, & Huston, 2009). Educational opportunities for parents, but particularly mothers, not only improve their own skill sets but increase their fluency and familiarity with the behavioral and content norms of the school sphere. Increased familiarity with the context, content, and extent of academic programming provided in the school environment can increase parent self-efficacy, a co-occurring factor to increasing parent involvement with students’ home-based academic work as well as school-based activities (Pelletier & Brent, 2002). In response, teachers may better understand and have higher opinions of the out-of-school forms of engagement parents demonstrate that support student growth and learning (Ramos, 2014). In a circular fashion, this is the “difference” in student performance DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, and Duchane (2007) advocate. Measures of student success rise with parental involvement which increases when teachers extend comprehensible information to parents about becoming involved in order to increase measures of student success.

Strategically extending comprehensible information to parents may include using an inclusive education and communication method soliciting input about funds of knowledge germane to the origin or community of that group (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992). Originally conceived by academics attempting to further the efforts of social justice and defeat deficit model concepts of Latino families, funds of knowledge
include the most elemental practices in the home culture and understanding of daily family practices. Anthropological in nature, funds of knowledge theory is used to shape multicultural education practices (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2006). There is not a consistent, unified definition of what comprises a fund of knowledge for a discrete social, cultural, or linguistic group, nor what components of knowledge are most essentially known in differentiation from background or prior knowledge and are therefore most applicable to teacher practice (Hogg, 2011; Sugarman, 2010). These repositories of information and experience are similarly referred to as forms of fluency by theorists working with other minority, marginalized, or demographically less influential populations (Delpit, 2006; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1978, 1983, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Carew, 1978). Teachers can effectively activate and utilize the family and community funds of knowledge through specific solicitations for input and participation when trained to do so (Amaro-Jimenez & Semingson, 2011; Genzuk, 1999). Teacher-initiated communications appear to improve interaction between teachers and parents and increase parents’ comfort with teachers, which encourages communication on an ongoing basis and increases students’ motivation as revealed in a longitudinal analysis of parent perceptions and beliefs (Ames, De Stefano, Watkins, & Sheldon, 1995). Home-to-school communications must be personalized and acknowledge the revelatory nature of sharing home culture knowledge in the public sphere (Araujo, 2009). Parents must be comfortable both offering and soliciting assistance, especially with students’ academic activities their personal educational experiences may have been insufficient to support
(Araujo, 2009; Hughes & Greenhough, 2006). Parents may feel exposed or vulnerable by revealing detail about themselves, their home culture, or other personal information but will do so more willingly when asked directly by teachers or other school agents.

Parents’ vulnerability is related in large part to issues of trust. Issues of trust among and between the stakeholders in education have great influence upon the effectiveness of school programming (Adams & Forsyth, 2006; Adams, Forsyth & Mitchell, 2009). Trust is primarily a social role negotiation of shared responsibility between teachers as agents of the school and parents on behalf of their children, enacted at various levels of intimacy and expectation (Adams & Christenson, 2000). Epstein (1987) described this negotiation as “the coordination, cooperation, and complementarity of schools and families” at five generalized levels of action. At the most basic level is parents’ basic obligation of general care and preparation for school, which provides the opportunity for teachers’ basic expectation to communicate with parents. The second tier includes truthful and trustworthy communication about the school’s activities and requirements in general, in combination with individual students’ progress (Epstein, 1987). With increasing opportunity to emphasize and encourage collaboration and communication, trust is cultivated at a third level when schools make places for parents to participate as volunteers, attend student performances, and learn in workshops through school programming (Epstein, 1987). There is an expectation that a fourth level of trust then grows into parents’ extension of learning activities to the home, before or in conjunction with schools including parents in
governance decision-making at the fifth level of trust engagement (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Epstein, 1987).

The identified tiered foundation for parent-school or parent-teacher trust depends in great measure upon the vulnerability parents feel about releasing a child to the school. Parents may not intellectualize the vulnerable surrender of turning their child over to a closed society populated by strangers, but instinctive trepidation at the events and experiences which may transpire there is a part of parents’ concern about sending children to school. This may also be influenced by parents’ own experiences with schools, especially if those experiences were negative (Podesta, 2014). Conversely, teachers’ vulnerability rests in assuming responsibility for these strangers’ children, often for periods of time longer than the parents are able to spend with them at home, while balancing children’s individual needs with the demands and expectations of the school and its governance. Issues of vulnerability, power, and control are embedded in the negotiation of trust as a variable in effective collaboration between parents and teachers (Adams & Forsyth, 2006; Adams, Forsyth & Mitchell, 2009; Adams & Christenson, 2000; Hoy, & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tschannen-Moran, 2001, 2003, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 1998).

Balance and negotiation of trust between parents and teachers is more complex in situations involving diverse populations. Outside the United States, studies of trust relationships between teachers and parents from different social, economic, and racial identities have illustrated the inequities in these exchanges (Eng, Szmodis, & Mulsow,
While teachers may exhibit a lower level of trust toward parents than parents to teachers (Goddard, Salloum & Berebitsky, 2009; Janssen, Bakker, Bosman, Rosenberg, & Leseman, 2012), commitment on the part of teachers to be proactive about considering parents’ cultural beliefs and utilizing culturally appropriate community resources to increase parents’ interest in school participation (Eng, Szmodis, & Mulsow, 2014) may moderate most inequities of trust.

Within the highly diverse United States’ educational system, issues of trust are acute between the predominantly White, middle class teachers and the increasingly diverse, non-White student population. Young, Rodriguez, and Lee (2008) concluded that home-to-school trust, in absence or presence, is a factor in sustained development of parental involvement with meaning and purpose, particularly when commonly-held ideas of parental involvement may be insufficient to include diverse school communities. Increasing the defining characteristics of parental involvement may be a key to encouraging participation of non-White, and particularly Latino, families in school communities. One expansion of parental involvement definitions includes fostering students’ positive relationships with non-parental adult community members, creating a sense of confianza (mutual trust) with adults exhibiting care and support (Harris, & Kiyama, 2013). In the absence of parents, these community adults can be culturally and linguistically affirming in safe spaces that allow students to be themselves, relying up on the adults as institutional agents helping negotiate personal, social, and academic barriers.
to success (Harris, & Kiyama, 2013). This is a potential role not just for teachers, but for other school agents, including counselors, support staff like librarians and academic coaches, or community liaisons providing programming like Junior Achievement, internships, in-school tutoring volunteerism, and so on.

Increasing definitions of parental involvement in schools not only acknowledges the wide diversity of cultures participating in school communities but the change in participation which occurs over time as students mature through the school continuum. Parental involvement characteristically declines as students age, with significant decreases in participation between elementary and middle school and corresponding declines into high school (Brannon, 2007; Coleman, 1988; Epstein, 1990). Although declining levels of involvement do not necessarily correlate to declining levels of influence, limited participatory involvement may limit a parent’s influence upon their child’s formation of priorities and values, increasing the potential influence of teachers.

Outreach efforts aimed at including socially and linguistically diverse populations in school settings must be authentic (Klugman, Lee, & Nelson, 2012) to overcome issues of trust. Garza and Crawford (2005) utilize case study data to create grounded theory identified as *hegemonic multiculturalism*. The authors explain their theory by illustrating a school culture characterized by disunion between the multicultural ideology and a pervasive agenda of assimilation as part of that school culture (Garza & Crawford, 2005). The school in Garza and Crawford’s (2005) study defines success in narrow terms which include students’ cultural and linguistic assimilation level and standardized test
The authors report claims from participants within the school community (e.g., teachers, administrators, and other school agents) that bilingualism and diversity among the students are valued, but analysis reveals the school’s instructional practices instead work to devalue these diverse qualities by striving for equality rather than equity or inclusion (Garza & Crawford, 2005). Narrow definitions of involvement and engagement beg the question of striving for equality instead of equity. This is the unintended consequence of attempted remedies to historic inequities in public education through legal decisions like Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954), ASPIRA v. New York Board of Education (1974), Lau v. Nichols (1974) and the first amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1966) (“ASPIRA v. New York City Board of Education (1972-1974),” 2006, p. 69; Gutek, 2013; Hill, 2001). The stated goal of equity is in actuality intended to be fairness for all, including those who are or have been marginalized. Moreno and Gaytan (2013) identify this institutional behavior as a form of social adaptation and make specific suggestions to more effectively meet the needs of this population without compelling assimilation or social adaptation. Moreno and Gaytan (2013) note specifically the overrepresentation of Spanish-speaking language learners in disability education categories, as well as high dropout rates and discipline response records for these students. Study results indicating institutional insensitivity to cultural or linguistic differences may be perceived as intellectual failures in students who have not or do not assimilate to a school’s dominant culture (Moreno and Gaytan, 2013).
Parents must be aware of available culturally-sensitive practices for educating and assessing their children to advocate for and determine accurate implementation of these practices. Teachers and other school agents may not seek out opportunities to develop knowledge and skills related to serving social, linguistic, or ethnic minorities, but are more likely to do so if parents demand appropriate opportunities for their children (Jasis, 2013; Olivos, 2004; Rodriguez-Valls, 2009). However, Spanish-speaking parents representing the diversity of the Hispano-Latino diaspora may have limited or interrupted schooling experiences, largely outside the dominant educational culture of the United States’ public school systems. Parents from marginalized communities are unable to provide their children with information about or support for opportunities and programs they do not know, creating an opportunity for schools and cooperating social organizations to educate parents about the rights, opportunities, and responsibilities of families involved with the public schools (Gándara, 2010; O’Donnell, & Kirkner, 2014). When schools provide this kind of education and information to parents, it helps to raise their political consciousness as a community member partially responsible for steering the course of the school’s progress (Olivos, 2004).

Without this kind of political consciousness-raising skill or knowledge, parents without access to prior or cultural knowledge about the structural forms and functions in their children’s lives are not capable of empowering their children for success. Stanton-Salazar (2001) characterizes this experience as *alienated embeddedness*, using it to describe families without social networks capable of supporting development and
realization of human potential. This racialized, patriarchal, capitalist societal form perpetuates classist structures in a mechanism of oppression manufacturing despair for each generation (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Social “decapitalization manifesting itself in terms of parents not possessing the knowledge forms, resources, and middle-class cultural capital that would socially and academically empower their children and ensure their mobility” (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, p. 253) handicaps children from accessing social or economic opportunity without sufficient academic/educational support to acquire, comprehend, and utilize socially hegemonic strategies. Specifically, students without opportunity to be “embedded in a tightly knit and coordinated web of teachers, counselors, and staff” (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, p. 253) are unable to access the representations of success bestowed by schools through competitive and individual measures. For members of the Hispano-Latino diaspora, individuated competitive measures are more difficult to reach than familiar communal measures which have traditionally been supported within culturally insular communities (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, p. 254).

Likewise, schools “evaluate and rank neighborhood children by criteria that are meaningless and alien to the community” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1978, p193). Without education in the purposes and outcomes of assessments, rankings, and the repercussions of these metrics, parents cannot be expected to advocate for fair and appropriate assessment or encourage their children toward more engaged performance. The negative circular loop which begins at a lack of cultural sensitivity toward the impact individuated rankings have
on a student then ripples out to the family and community, effectively diminishing the esteem and potential of the neighborhood and it’s school, returning the negativity to the school culture which started it. Through hierarchical linear modeling analysis of 502 Latino adolescents’ academic and neighborhood influences, Henry, Merten, Plunkett, and Sands (2008) related students’ grade point average with perceived neighborhood risk and aspirational expectations of mothers, partially mediated by students’ own academic motivation. Positively influencing the maternal expectations factor while supporting student motivation in culturally-appropriate ways can offset the deleterious effects of perceived neighborhood risk to foster increased student achievement toward mothers’ and schools’ expectations.

Effective, appropriate, relevant, and actionable professional education about the factors in a negative feedback loop, as well as how to overcome such a loop, can be held utilizing the government’s own efforts at addressing such an effort. Title III, the federal educational funding program which provides educational support to language learning students mandates specific services offered to these students (United States Department of Education, 2015). Federal funding for Title III programming may be used for a variety of purposes which include, but are not limited to planning, faculty development, and student service programs designed to improve academic success, as well as administrative management, development, and improvement of academic programs. These programs include specific opportunities which “help retain students and move the students rapidly into core courses and through program completion, which may include
remedial education and English language instruction” (United States Department of Education, 2015). The United States Department of Education holds as a major goal that “Parents, families, and communities should be able to expect a set of educational rights for all students that prepares them for success in college and careers and as engaged and productive citizens” (2015). Correspondingly, Hill et al. note that “research has consistently shown that parent academic involvement is associated with achievement and achievement is related to career and educational aspirations” (2004). Educational outreach to parents should make clear the rights their children have to education, as well as conditions and variables related to their citizenship status and individual needs. With this awareness, parents may be better able and willing to advocate for their children, availing themselves of the potential continuum of interventions and services which may be available (Gándara, 2010). Gándara (2010) indicates “that a continuing net of support for disadvantaged students is likely to significantly improve their academic outcomes and reduce the wide gaps in achievement that now exist” between Spanish-speaking students and those of other demographic groups. Cooperative work periods must exist for the stakeholders in community relationships, parent organizations and other school representatives, including teachers, to coordinate these wrap-around programs (Bernheimer, Gallimore, & Weisner, 1990; de la Piedra, Munter & Girón, 2006). These cooperative work periods may include targeted training or development options which familiarize teachers with culturally-relevant strategies for providing appropriate information to parents and the resources available to make those strategies effective.
In Atlanta, the Latin American Association (LAA) is an available resource for facilitating parental support services, including translation assistance and community liaisons. In addition, the LAA sponsors programming helping families become familiar with academic improvement opportunities specifically oriented toward helping students become college-ready, engaging the whole family in preparing students for collegiate success (The Latin American Association, 2014). Involvement from the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) in Atlanta has included a history of activism in regional changes related to community settlement patterns and shifts in migration (Badillo, 2013). The organization’s legal advocacy has refocused to discrimination issues facing undocumented immigrants in the suburbs as well as growing coalitions with other social action organizations as 21st-century advocacy strategies (Badillo, 2013). These organizations work to build cooperative, mutually beneficial relationships with schools and school agencies and require the informed involvement of school agents at all levels to accomplish this goal (de la Piedra, Munter & Girón, 2006). Reciprocity of engagement with professional organizations and other employers strengthens family and community ties (Cohen-Vogel, Goldring, & Smrekar, 2010; Terriquez, 2011). Activating these connections to the benefit of students and their families extends the reach of teachers and the school environment to support learning and foster confidence in achieving the differing sets of expectations students are striving to meet.
Challenges and complications to meeting those expectations persist. Culturally diverse students are not immune to the conditions of their neighborhoods. A portion of school agents’ cultural sensitivity is to recognize the nature of neighborhoods they serve, and accommodate idiosyncrasies which may bear upon community members’ receptivity toward building those partnerships. The Southeast was particularly examined by Cohen-Vogel, Goldring, and Smrekar (2010) by comparing crime and health data with 20 schools’ demographics in one district to determine the quality of partnerships with social service organizations, parents, and the community; conclusions reinforced the influence of neighborhood conditions upon principals’ and teachers’ effective engagement strategies.

Creating a tightly knit web of teachers, counselors, and staff capable of coordinating not just school functions but cooperatively coordinating with the parents of students requires education for school agents in multiple strategic actions for communicating with parents. González, Moll, & Amanti, (2005, p. 93) identified that “the connection of the household and teacher could not come about through a field researcher as intermediary. The bond had to be formed interpersonally, evocatively, and reciprocally.” Most research evidence indicates the outset contact should be initiated by the teacher and parents are generally, though not always, receptive to teacher communications intended to build reciprocity. To increase parents’ receptivity, teachers must approach parents using active listening and without judgment, exhibiting a willingness to be changed by parental input, and without repercussion to the parents or students for input which may be shared (Shim, 2013; Symeou, Roussoundou, & Michaelides, 2012). This returns to the concerns
related to accepting the challenge of vulnerability in revealing personally-identifying
details which, while revelatory toward understanding parents’ receptivity and students’
prior knowledge exposure, may feel endangering to cultural minorities (Araujo, 2009;
Hughes & Greenhough, 2006). The feelings of vulnerability, limited self-efficacy with
communication skills, and potential danger can inhibit parents from acting upon the desire
to contact teachers. Durand (2010) identified “the salience of relationships with significant
others in achieving in school” as a primary theme of Latina mothers’ communication with
their first-grade children (n=6), and recommends school agents attempt to foster these
relationships with students and their parents early in children’s educational trajectories as
well as perpetuating them into later school years.

While multiple personal variables can influence failure to proceed from desired
intention to contact teachers through to implementation of that desire, low levels of
acculturation were not found to have a statistically significant influence on targeted
parents’ communication with teachers (Arriaga & Longoria, 2011). Complex, multi-step
behaviors are necessary for Spanish-speaking parents to effectively communicate with
English-speaking teachers, a challenge separate from but co-occurring with the social
disconnect between different ethnic subgroups. Arriaga and Longoria (2011) identified a
disconnect between intentionality (planning to do something) and translating that
intention into action (implementation), particularly for Latino families communicating
with teachers, and relating to the strength of the parents’ intention. Inhibition of
implementation can be directly traced to the communicative complexity of interpretation
and translation, services which may be difficult to acquire in some school settings, as well as difficulties overcoming fears of vulnerability. Parents facing these struggles are not unreceptive to teachers’ messaging, and may demonstrate more willingness to move outside their cultural comfort sphere when outreach is made by school agents, especially teachers. Key to this outreach is having interpreters available and in place as well as other outside resource information available upon request or recommendation.

Failure to reach implementation of parental contact to teachers is a different concern than lack of receptivity from parents when the teacher makes contact. Mahmood (2013) revealed challenges faced by new teachers in developing bi-directional communication with the parents of kindergarteners and identified the alignment with social exchange theory. Lack of reciprocal communication, challenges to relationship-building, and imbalanced power and dependence contributed to early childhood educators’ negative self-concepts of social identity (Mahmood, 2013). Particularly revealing is the impact poor receptivity from parents had on the participating teachers’ self-value regarding pedagogic expectations; teachers desired to provide the learning experience parents wanted for their children, but did not feel that expectation was communicated between themselves and their students’ parents (Mahmood, 2013). In contrast, teacher-initiated bidirectional communication increased both parental and teacher self-efficacy regarding communications about students’ performance and school issues (Bennett-Conroy, 2012).

In constructed efforts to overcome culturally-mediated challenges, school-to-home communication initiated by school agents in writing, either by email or notes home,
has gone up while phone communication has declined since 2007 (Noel, Stark, & Redford, 2015). One suggested reason for the decline in personal telephone calls is the language barrier between teachers and parents (Kraft, 2016). However, with clearly articulated guidance from administrators and appropriately allocated translation services and software, this decline could be overcome through the significant rise in mobile phone usage (Kraft, 2016; Noel, Stark, & Redford, 2015). For families able to access the internet beyond mobile phone platform use, internet-based communication opportunities include simple email, videoconferencing, asynchronous video viewing and commentary, and photo transmittals (Curtiss, et al., 2016). Technology aids the personal connection needed to build reciprocity of messaging but does not perfect the communicating parties’ understanding of individual cultural influences. Technological assistance alone is simply a conduit and does not include messaging strategies or structured information without consciously implemented programming for communication. Understanding culturally diverse families’ internal messaging systems builds a foundation for teachers to strategize communicative methods with the children and the parents in these families.

Among Mexican immigrant parents specifically there is an effort to foster academic achievement by developing moral behavior and standards through explicit messaging about these priorities. Heritage Mexican families concentrate home education messaging on issues of moral development through *consejos* and *dichos* which exhort children to moral obligations and behaviors (Espinoza-Herold, 2007). This is especially evidenced in families with a longer tenure in the United States, as their cultural preservation is perpetuated through
oral history recollections, including detailing for children the emotional, educational, and professional hardships adults have experienced, usually in an effort to provide better opportunities for the children being exhorted with the stories (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, p. 92, 95, 98). Among many of these families the expectation is that a child with strong morals and personal responsibility will be successful according to his or her natural abilities (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, p. 86). These consejos and dichos are intended to bridge the more existential moral obligations to religious convictions and family duty with perseverance and excellence in academic work. There is no lack of care, concern, or interest from migrant, immigrant, and culturally diverse parents in students’ success, even if there is a strong sense of alienation from the school entities. Parents from culturally diverse, low socio-economic status families often confront the challenges of communicating with acculturating or fully acculturated children who are resistant to the exhortations intended to perpetuate and integrate cultural identity information. This is the crux of the bridge needed between teachers, parents, and students to understand and accommodate each other’s expectations.

Parent Influence During the Middle School Years

Middle school is a period of change and transition for parents as well as students, requiring continued engagement from parents regardless of patterns of declining involvement over this period of time (Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996). Social norms of perceived maturity may differ from community to community, but the movement from elementary to middle school is a test of social and emotional development which frequently requires adaptive behavior toward school work process and product from all
parties involved (Bowen, Rose, Powers, & Glennie, 2008; Dumont, Trautwein, Nagy, & Nagengast, 2014). Moving into middle school and the troubling times of awkward, lurching growth, students press against familiar structures of expectations and requirements at school, at home, and within cultural communities, and parental expectations must be explicitly and consistently restated (Salmon, Mewton, Pipe, & McDonald, 2011). Parents are experiencing the results of parenting decisions made throughout the years before, particularly as related to behavior both in and out of the dynamic family sphere (Domina, 2005; Leidy, Guerra & Toro, 2010; Livas-Dlott, Fuller, Stein, Bridges, Manguel Figueroa & Mireles, 2010). This developmental period involves the physical desorption of the corpus callosum, dividing the brain more distinctly into separately-skilled hemispheres (Schunk, 2012, p. 52). Adapting to physical and chemical changes to the brain only serves to accentuate the expression of preferences and traits, which may be aggravating to those observing the unpredictable behavior common at this stage. The classical education model calls this period the logic period, a time for the growing brain to begin making sense of the volume of data that has been retained from direct instruction (Sayers, 1947). Students are more frequently being asked to draw connections between concepts or facts, to compare discrete points in search of similarities and differences, especially in heterogeneously grouped classrooms with diverse student bodies (Case, 2015, Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). Developmentally, this is also appropriately the time children first make overt movements to express their independence, challenging the social and cultural standards that were previously accepted with few
questions (DeTurck & Miller, 1983, Dixon, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008). Bandura’s concepts of self-efficacy (Schunk, 2012, pp. 118-119) influence student interests and demonstrated engagement or commitment to academics relative to their existing schema for success, failure, and acquired knowledge. When the existing home sphere schema are from different cultural, behavioral, or ethical frameworks than those utilized in a school sphere setting, students experience and react to the dissonance.

Mothers play a specific role in determining children’s language growth. Within the Hispanic-Latino diaspora this role is especially powerful as part of traditional cultural norms (Gonzalez, Umaña-Taylor, & Bámaca, 2006). All children demonstrate more successful school outcomes when their parents are involved in school activities, and although immigrant parents are perceived to have less involvement than other parents, they report highly valuing education (Durand, 2010; Ramos, 2014). The diversity of the Hispanic-Latino diaspora is highlighted by the mix of traditional and progressive cultural beliefs regarding parenting, education, and literacy practices in the home among Puerto Rican-identified mothers (n=81), as well as resulting language usage for their children (Hammer, Rodriguez, Lawrence, & Miccio, 2007). Mothers in Puerto Rican-origin communities that exist outside the high-concentration diaspora band strive to maintain ethnically-oriented knowledge and information which influences maternal ideas related to parenting and often differs from concepts provided in education programs for family literacy and parent education (Johnson, L., 2009; Lipski, 1975; Paratore, Melzi, & Krol-Sinclair, 1999). The relationship between mothers and children is culturally central to most Mexican families as well, conferring status
regarding influence over children’s exposure to traditional cultural beliefs and functions; central beliefs include *familismo* and *educación* (Durand, 2010). Mothers have greater levels of involvement over longer periods of students’ schooling than fathers; however, the association with achievement is equal between fathers’ and mothers’ modes of involvement, and equally beneficial to student outcomes (Kim & Hill, 2015).

Mothers are also more likely to have an active influence on community-sphere relationships which could benefit outcomes for their children and to encourage their children to develop supportive relationships in the community sphere (Durand, 2010; Green, Rhodes, Hirsch, Suárez-Orozco, & Camic, 2008; Woolfolk & Unger, 2009). Reports from nearly 1,000 mothers and children of diverse cultural identities indicate non-white families have greater concern for and emphasis upon education than comparable Caucasian families, with a more positive affect toward education and children’s abilities, especially as related to schools’ holding high standards, rigorous testing, and extended day opportunities (Stevenson, Chen & Uttal, 1990). Identity-building for roles and as members of an ethnic sphere is conveyed from mothers to children through overt messaging and modeled self-esteem (Guilamo-Ramos, 2009). Questionnaire analysis from 1,538 adolescents and their mothers revealed a protective effect against intended risk-taking behavior from affiliating with a sense of ethnic pride as an expression of self-esteem (Guilamo-Ramos, 2009). Startlingly, Kelly (2009) revealed Latina mothers were more likely than mothers from other demographics to prioritize their identity as mothers, choosing to both tolerate and manage abuse from an intimate partner in order to provide personal and educational access for their
children even as they continued to be victimized. Such self-sacrifice as a component of personal identity for the priority of education for children is evidence of great personal investment, even when the visibility of that investment is limited.

As early as preschool (Durand, 2010; Ramos, 2014), mothers from the Hispano-Latino diaspora report various ways of supporting learning and development (Loera, Rueda, & Nakamoto, 2011; Weber & Longhi-Chirlin, 2001). Mothers engage with their children through direct and indirect talk, book and media sharing, and socializing interaction at varying levels (Billings, 2009; Caspe, 2009). Although this engagement is predominantly in Spanish for families in the Hispano-Latino diaspora, the phonological and morphological experience children have with their mothers sets a foundation upon which additional literacy skills may develop in any language (Neufeld, & Fitzgerald, 2001; Neufeld, Amendum, Fitzgerald, & Guthrie, 2006). Mothers (N=10) participating in programmed literacy skill development demonstrated high levels of engagement with culturally relevant texts, gaining greater facility with literacy strategy to share with their children (Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011). Supplemented with early learning programming, mothers’ literacy development input in any language helps children develop oral language and vocabulary, a precursor to greater literacy facility (Farver, Xu, Lonigan & Eppe, 2013). Upon entry to formalized Head Start programming, 392 (85% Latino) participating children were pretested, and their families were examined through questionnaire and interview regarding language and literacy practices and skills (Farver, Xu, Lonigan & Eppe, 2013). Researchers concluded children’s literacy skills are
something parents actively support in both languages, although the support appears
greater within primarily the first language than across languages as conceptual transfer
(Farver, Xu, Lonigan & Eppe, 2013). As an element of comprehensible input theory, part
of Krashen’s (1982) five hypotheses, the learner’s $i$ is the primary language of input
mediating the combined interlanguage with a new language of input, or $+I$. The next
stage of input is the learner’s transition from $i$ only to the input hypothesis “$i+1$”,
utilizing primary language skills to develop skills in the next language (Krashen, 1982).
Therefore, when parents know and understand that literacy engagement in any language
is beneficial, their efforts are more likely to be productive, engaged, and persistent.

Parent engagement programming can also contribute to increases in children’s
literacy competencies, especially when sustained and increased over longer periods of
time, as in Crosby, Rasinski, Padak, and Yildirim’s (2014) examination of a durable,
unsupervised, and teacher-driven three-year program. Drawing from comparative
examinations of ethnic and socioeconomic variables upon student school readiness
between students of different racial or ethnic backgrounds within lower socioeconomic
classes, children from the Hispano-Latino diaspora may be expected to indicate higher
performance in pre-reading skills due to greater parental influence even in the face of
lower socioeconomic class challenges (Crosby, Rasinski, Padak, & Yildirim, 2014; Hill &
Taylor, 2004; Koury & Votruba-Drzal, 2014; Petersen & Gillam, 2013). Comparisons of
readiness and conscientiousness of race, culture, and socioeconomic disparities identify
the juxtaposition of responsibility in school preparation, questioning the primacy of
parents’ responsibility to prepare their children for school, or schools to better prepare their teachers and facilities for the arrival of students (Paratore, Melzi, & Krol-Sinclair, 1999). In effect, there is a debate between the defined and expected instructional responsibilities of parents as teachers and teachers as teachers for providing the most developmentally informative input to learners. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) observed that cognitive development literature

… investigators have focused on the dyadic relationship between mother and child as the only critical determinant of learning, and assumed an asymmetric, one-way influence from parent to child rather than a dynamic, two-way interaction. The preoccupation with mother-child dyads excludes and negates the other powerful participants in the child’s socialization; assumes that parents do not learn from their children; and gives the burdensome responsibility of child care and growth to a single female figure. (p. 157-158)

Although subsequent research conclusions have contradicted a one-way influence, there is a greater exercise of influential power from mother to child which may appropriately be utilized to catalyze change in opinions and behaviors for both parties. This motivates the current study’s interest in learning from mothers’ told stories regarding their messaging to their children about expectations for school achievement, particularly as related to reading in English.

The influence of mothers is not always positive, as demonstrated by the negative correlation between mothers’ homework help and academic performance development in 2,261 students, grade 1 to grade 4 (Silinskas, Kiuru, Aunola, Lerkkanen, & Nurmi, 2015). Mother’s influence upon a child’s performance on homework assignments is greater when correlated to feelings or relational affect than when correlated to the mother’s personal
academic skills or knowledge. Children were observed to respond to affectionate “mothering” behavior with greater perseverance at homework completion and higher accuracy of completed work, demonstrating reciprocity to the affection with pleasing behavior. When Latina mothers of preschoolers (n=122) perceived stress related to parenting, children’s oral language and social functioning skills suffered (Farver, Xu, Eppe, Lonigan, 2006). Diminished, declining, or limited oral language and social function in a child can then prompt greater stress in mothers, increasing the parenting stress, creating and potentially perpetuating a negative feedback loop requiring outside intervention. Other negative consequences of strong maternal influence were seen in longitudinally observed student school behavior, which after 9 years indicated participants (n=66) who were more strongly allied to their mothers had higher levels of aggressive and depressed behavior and lower levels of academic competency than peers in families with greater paternal influence or more balanced parental influence (Johnson, 2010). Lawrence-Lightfoot identifies mother-child interaction, particularly within poor, lower-class, minority families, as lacking of cognitive meaning to develop strong critical thinking skills similar to those demanded in the school setting because of a tendency toward imperative transactions by contrast to the more decision/choice oriented transactions between mothers and children in middle- and upper-class families (1978, p. 159). The dissonance between mothers’ directed management of their children’s behavior and academic demands for independent thought, creative invention, and active decision-making handicaps children from cultural communities where parental respect and direction are valued and expected in the home environment.
Compounding the challenges of culturally-influenced parenting behaviors, mothers with limited prior educational experiences, or with negative experiences which embitter their relation to schools, are less likely to convey the importance, relevance, or value of education and positive relations with school agents. Podesta (2014) aligned Bourdieu’s theory of *habitus* to reproduced class advantages for school preparedness when compared to mothers’ school experiences and the socioeconomic factors which might limit educational choices. Mothers living in low socioeconomic conditions reported limits to their choices of educational opportunities for their children, leaving them at home in isolating conditions which then perpetuated language deficits that are tied to poor school preparedness. Mothers without intellectually stimulating circumstances failed to find or utilize intellectually stimulating experiences for their children, perpetuating a significantly limited vocabulary range and formative context knowledge base (Podesta, 2014).

Similarly, Padilla-Walker (2007) identified a potential conflict between mothers’ conveyed values and the perception of those values by adolescent children, independent of children’s acknowledged acceptance of values. In effect, Padilla-Walker (2007) located a lack of measurement analysis between observable social behavior by students and reported values expressions. There is no accurate measure of the internalized constructs of values for adolescents by observation of their social behaviors. From equal groups of male and female students from public high school settings (n=151), Padilla-Walker (2007) could make no conclusions on causality or effect direction but did observe a positive correlation which indicated parental messaging resulted in positive, pro-social interactions, leading to
more positive behaviors and higher social regard. Similarly, Romo, Lefkowitz, Sigman, and Au (2002) revealed from videotaped conversations between 55 Latina mothers and their mid-adolescent children that when mothers focused their conversations about sexuality and dating on personal beliefs and values, especially with self-disclosure tales, their children reported better relationship function and attitudes conservatively aligned with their mothers’. These studies indicate the potential influence of parental messaging to children regarding positive interaction with their parents’ priorities. If teachers are able to align their messaging to the messages from parents, and mothers particularly, students have a greater potential for academic success. This is syncretic communication and the goal of effective syncretism between school messaging and home messaging.

Interventions designed to influence adolescent behavior which include parents, especially mothers, are more likely to result in positive outcomes (Williams, Ayers, Garvey, Marsiglia, & Castro, 2012). Latina-identified mothers of daughters received significantly more respect than did European American mothers (n=133), although they also reported greater intensity of conflict; frequency of conflict was reduced when associated with higher levels of discipline and communication (Dixon, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008). In semi-structured interviews of 25 Latino/a students, positive experiences with language brokering for families were reported, but concerns arose regarding limits to breadth and depth of vocabulary (Corona, Stevens, Halfond, Shaffer, Reid-Quiñones, & Gonzalez, 2011). Out-of-school engagement between mothers and their language-learning children may also involve operationalizing the use of learned English skills for interpretation and mediation as
language brokers, with particular language usage burdens upon the female adolescent children and in situations of highly technical, specialized language (Corona, Stevens, Halfond, Shaffer, Reid-Quiñones, & Gonzalez, 2011; Villanueva & Buriel, 2010). An additional English-language expectation appears to be placed on daughters when mothers were able to provide English experiences prior to preschool, as daughters are six times more likely to communicate with their mothers in English than comparable sons (Hammer, Lawrence, Rodriguez, Davidson, & Miccio, 2011). Study of parent-child conflict in acculturating families indicates that intergenerational conflict is particularly challenging between mothers and daughters. The lower the mother’s personal level of education and employment status, the greater the sense of conflict with daughters, and the higher her own acculturation stress. This acerbates issues with low personal communication confidence in or through the new language (English) as well as a sense of divided responsibilities due to work obligations and potentially fears of legal challenge due to immigration status (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, p. 103-104, 116).

Latino students’ characteristically low academic outcomes can be connected to an excessively high dropout rate which Gándara (2010) relates to a low level of affective attachment to their school culture, characterized by “a sense of not belonging.” The circular connection between the feeling of belonging and students’ efforts at developing a bicultural identity is challenged by the home models students base a portion of their identity upon (Martin & Daiute, 2013; Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004). Gándara (2010) notes that “more than 40 percent of Latina mothers lack even a high school
diploma, compared with only 6 percent of white mothers; only about 10 percent of Latina mothers have a college degree or higher . . .” which limits modeling academic priorities and achievement. Parents without higher education are also less able to provide enriching, supportive experiences in and out of the home (Davis-Kean & Sexton, 2009; Núñez, Hoover, Pickett, Stuart-Carruthers, & Vázquez, 2013; Perna & Titus, 2005).

In attempting to redefine and support changes in “educational policy on Mexicana educación (education of the whole person) and school cultures” for students and families in California, Gonzalez, Borders, Hines, Villalba, and Henderson (2013) explored ways in which the modeled identities of Mexican-origin women become formed. This exploration included considerations of acculturation, or developing a working synthesis of two cultures, and assimilation, or subsuming the minority culture to behaviors from the dominant majority culture (Saenz & Felix, 2007). Although acculturation rather than assimilation is the goal of Hispano-Latino diaspora community members, some parents, particularly mothers, observe a progressive loss of origin cultural identity and see maintaining it as one of their primary responsibilities (Worthy & Rodríguez-Galindo, 2006). Biculturalism is an attempt at informed acculturation for minority students by defying the academic hegemony present in many public school environments yet appropriating sufficient skills and knowledge from that dominant culture to operate effectively within it (Flores, 2014; Quinones-Mayo & Dempsey, 2005; Sheehy, Ornelles, & Noonan, 2009). Providing these skills through effective school outreach and parent programming, in turn, supports parents’ efforts at advocating for their children as
students. Parents’ opinions of the school’s effectiveness are more influenced by the opinions of their children than in reverse; students’ opinions of the school are more likely to be formed through experiences effecting policy at the school as well as their involvement in extracurricular activities and general academic progress (Grandjean & Vaughn, III, 1981). As determined by 102 students’ questionnaire responses compared to their parents’, influence from parents upon their children is second to students’ own personalities and external forces, but maintains an impact upon their values creation (Bobowik, Van Oudenoven, Basabe, Telletxea, & Páez, 2011). This reinforces the need for teachers and other school agents to model communicative strategies to students after communicative strategies and home messaging patterns utilized in the home sphere to increase receptivity from culturally diverse students through syncretizing techniques.

Students who develop a healthy orientation toward school and the expectations of education in the school setting from positive home-sphere messaging exhibit greater persistence, allowing them to achieve through educational challenges based upon their values orientation (Bobowik, Van Oudenoven, Basabe, Telletxea, & Páez, 2011; Franquiz, 2003; Franquiz & Salazar, 2004). These students then transmit that opinion to their parents, increasing the circular support which benefits students’ academic and employment potential. Influence transfer from parent-to-child and from child-to-parent mirrors influence transfer demonstrated by Lee and Beatty (2002) regarding family decision making. Market-driving MANCOVA research related to family decisions to eat out vs. dine in revealed greater influence from middle school-aged students than most.
other family members, especially in families with more modern (as opposed to more traditional) values orientations (Lee & Beatty, 2002). Assuming topical association of this familial influence, affecting students’ opinion of school could cultivate an overall positive opinion of the school environment within the family.

Household operational decisions, including dining preferences, were more likely to be made by working mothers than any other family member, illustrating an application of *comparative resource contribution theory* which could be explored as an operating factor in activating greater parent involvement in values transmission or school involvement (Lee & Beatty, 2002). Kalmijn (1994) utilized an existing data set from 1988-89 to illustrate the influence of working mothers upon their children by correlating educated, well-employed mothers with children’s levels of greater educational persistence and achievement, supporting Lee and Beatty’s (2002) later conclusions regarding the transfer of influence for these working mothers.

Parents’ expectations for their children’s reading practices are central in their influence upon and communication with their children. Independent of what influence parents, and specifically mothers, may have over their children as students, these beliefs shape the perspective from which parents view the work and work product they see their children producing in and for school (Arzubiaga, Rueda, & Monzó, 2002). Cottone (2012) has distilled maternal beliefs about reading to factors of self-constructed truth in knowledge or ideas about skill development. A mother’s personal truth about learning to read is shaped by her own experiences learning to read, her adult success with and
attitude toward reading, and evolving experience with her child or children (Cottone, 2012; Palts & Harro-Loit, 2015). Additional factors which shape mothers’ beliefs about reading include recognizing what learning children can gain from reading, mothers’ own pleasure at the experience of reading with and to their children, and their feelings of efficacy at teaching that skill through personal knowledge, ideas, and experiences (Cottone, 2012; Drummond & Stipek, 2004). As a result, the correlational analysis of Cottone’s (2012) study supports maternal beliefs about the value and purposes of reading as being powerful enough to impact children’s performance of literacy tasks.

Teachers and other school agents can better align their priorities for student outcomes and measures of success with parents’ through awareness of the differences in roles represented by each party. Although the context of engagement is the school, parents are organically considering their child; teachers and school agents are considering a student. Modes of perception, from parent to child, teacher to student, parent to teacher, and teacher to parent, without mediation from the school, local, or home culture, and relevant experience with social stratification can significantly alter each party’s concept of role responsibilities for themselves and others, especially when determining what constitutes appropriate or successful behavior in those roles (McKenna & Millen, 2013). The difference in identifying and transforming between these roles for the student/child is the primary source of differences in outcome goals and purposes for schooling; students who move most smoothly between “student” and “child” identities are most likely to achieve their chosen goals at externally defined measures of success.
The primacy of schools as “expert” in providing education does not prevent or supersede the necessity and value of parent involvement, regardless of the form that involvement takes (Fan & Chen, 2001; Orozco, 2008; Poza, Brooks & Valdés, 2014). Within the Hispano-Latino diaspora community, parents uphold the importance of the school entity while identifying their place in their children’s education as maintaining the unique place children hold in the family and supporting their home culture and language (Orozco, 2008). Home culture affiliation and familiarity is particular to the Spanish-language identity formed by members of the Hispano-Latino diaspora, preserved, and cultivated by overt, planned action by parents in the home setting.

Public discourse within the Spanish-language community also includes idiomatic phraseology of values (e.g. where there’s a will, there’s a way; knowledge is power) conveyed to students which support academic endeavors outside the structure of the school setting (Orozco, 2008; Poza, Brooks & Valdés, 2014). These idiomatic phrases are culturally similar to the *dichos*, or popular Spanish-language sayings Sánchez, Plata, Grosso, and Leird (2010) examined and determined motivational in facilitating communication with Spanish-speaking families regarding the transmission of values, particularly toward schooling. Wundt’s (1897) *Völkerpsychologie* includes the spiritual aspect of identity formation through the spiritual experience of acculturation. Tisdell (2008) has modernized this concept, stating “Often these types of spiritual experiences happen through unconscious and symbolic knowledge construction processes.”
(1897) *Völkerpsychologie* describes the development of individual psychology not merely through sensation but also through meaningful influences from that individual’s culture, or “spiritual [geistig] environment.” Parents are fundamentally responsible for and operating with meaningful intent to influence their children’s spiritual environment. Some of Wundt’s last work related to examining “cultural products [Erzeugnisse]” of the “totality of spiritual life [geistiges Gesamtleben] as codified into rules of psychological function in the individual, specifically, language, art, myth, and customs (Sitten)” (Wundt, 1897). The theory of Sitten is most commonly applied to psycholinguistics, recognizing the value of language in the development of an individual’s psychology. The “folk psychology” of identity formation is a portion of the language and experiences of an individuals’ cultural environment. This experience becomes more complex for students in a linguistic minority who are developing a sense of belonging through bicultural identity (Parker, Deyhle, & Villenas, 1999; Villenas, Deyhle, & Parker, 2002). Few of the “us” in a dominant culture environment have social experiences requiring conscious processing of identity challenges or schematic disharmony that members of a minority population experience, but many of “them” from that minority population take it in daily stride (King & Magolda, 2005). Although King and Magolda’s work is related to international students’ social competence in university settings, there remains little difference from the development of competency for one child existing in the cultural hegemony of a larger, disparate group like a school setting.
Torres and Hurtado-Vivas (2011) indicate differences in delineating roles in the educational process have increased the academic challenges facing parents in language-learning families and associatively increased inequities related to language, academic achievement, and socioeconomics rather than diminish them. Teachers may expect parents to be active participants in their children’s homework and other home-based academic activities (Balli, Demo, & Wedman, 1998; Martinez, 2011). Balli, Demo, and Wedman (1998) measured involvement from 74 sixth-grade students and their parents in homework activities, comparing teacher-prompted involvement to spontaneous involvement and learned parental involvement did not predict student achievement even when prompted involvement was high. This kind of active engagement between parent and child can be developmentally beneficial, but is eschewed by parents without adequate self-efficacy for assisting their children (Pelletier & Brent, 2002). There is a benefit to parents of language learners in observing and participating in homework activities (Durán, 2003; Knapp, Jefferson, & Landers, 2013). However, appropriating language teaching and enrichment to families from outside the hegemony of the dominant school culture diminishes the other, culturally-driven contributions families are making as inadequate by comparison to the skills-based, support practices considered the norm in middle-class publicly schooled communities (Sibley & Dearing, 2014; Torres & Hurtado-Vivas, 2011). Instead, culturally sensitive expectations by teachers should be inclusive of families’ transmission of heritage culture traditions and practices supporting personal
growth and development through experience and interaction as well as through language (Breiseth, 2006).

One framework for instructional planning able to include both content and contextualized input for nearly any subject area with a culturally sensitive lens is component model analysis. When content standards or concepts are dismantled into interrelated components students can associate individual components with appropriately paired contextualizing cues or strategies (Mellard & Fall, 2012; Mellard, Fall, & Mark, 2009). The component model also involves the metacognitive effort of tying the content to the cues or strategies, which can be modeled by the instructor while disseminating the information (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2014). In this delivery model, the teacher exhibits metacognition explicitly so that students can copy the behavior until they internalize the practice (Gooden, 2012; Marschall, & Davis, 2012; Mellard & Fall, 2012; Nash-Ditzel, 2010). Component model analysis-driven instruction increases learner self-efficacy in a way that reduces or eliminates the parents’ obligation to act as “teacher” at home by developing the learner’s ability to be self-motivated as a more intuitive independent learner. To this end, the explicit teaching which follows planning from a component model analysis standpoint is less about the content delivered in interconnected portions and more about fostering the student’s own metacognitive processes about learning, which can be applied to any future learning endeavors.

The component model could uniquely benefit second language learners, particularly older adolescent and adult learners with extensive prior knowledge. In many
cases, adult learners hold vast reservoirs of knowledge upon which to build their learning. Adult prior knowledge includes awareness of phonological and morphological function in language, which is a point for second language teachers to build upon when teaching the new language (Goodwin, Huggins, Carlo, August, & Calderon, 2012; Kieffer, 2013). When that learning centers on the content itself rather than language to access the content, activation of that prior knowledge both eases the learning process and contextualizes the information to the learner’s individual cultural capital. The learner can then apply the new vocabulary like a filter to the information, renaming known entities in the target language. Adult learners could best use these metacognitive strategies in academic settings requiring generative, original thought as opposed to work-related skill development which values practiced repetitive behaviors. By association, the component model analysis planning strategy could be used to organize and scaffold information delivery from classroom teachers to the parents of their students. While the classroom teacher is not directly providing explicit instruction to their students’ parents, actively planning what information to include in interactions through reflective, considered attention to the necessary components which need to be provided could increase access to information for parents and reduce the frustration level for teachers. These planning processes can only be utilized when teacher know the need and the skill, indicating a place for actionable professional development.

Teaching the instructors of language-learning students should begin with an understanding of and reflective self-analysis regarding the purposes for adult and
adolescent teaching and learning. Experiencing the process of metacognitive reflection and purposefulness in learning is beneficial for developing reflective teacher practice and for understanding the place of the self-determined learner, particularly for adults and adolescents (Brookfield, 1986). Adult and adolescent education should be appropriately grounded in the theories which inform methods for that practice, and teachers must develop familiarity with those theories for effective syncretic practice (Finn, 2011; Knowles, 1984; Merriam, 2007). Through reflective practice and sound theoretical application, teachers can blend the best aspects of andragogy for parents and pedagogy for children to best guide both types of learners pursuing individual learning goals (Stuart & Volk, 2002). The blend into pedandrogogy provides that parents can be assisted and guided in understanding the objectives and purposes teachers have for student learning to establish a more unified message to students about their work at school and at home (Smith & Elish-Piper, 2002). Paratore, Melzi and Krol-Sinclair assert that “through these social relationships, of necessity reciprocal in nature, that the social capital of both families and teachers is fostered and developed” (1999, p. xii).

As mentioned specifically in Gooden (2012), teacher modeling can be an effective way to teach strategy. Teacher modeling must necessarily include the pedandragogical practice knowledge related to language instruction to be effective (Plonsky, 2011). There are specific methodologies that are more efficient for language instruction than others, another opportunity to gather the best by strength or effectiveness. Language instruction does not simply exist in the Language Arts or
Foreign Language classroom; ideally, all teachers would be trained in methodologies and strategies for language learners (Cummins, 2014; Gullberg, Roberts, Dimroth, Veroude, & Indefrey, 2010; Orem, 2000). It follows that additional syncretic thought should be applied to practices in adult education, both to teach the adult students and to teach the instructors of those adults.

Beyond the quantification of learning readiness, teachers should consider those students’ motivation and purposes in education when developing content and pacing using a component analysis model to achieve syncretic action between goals, motivations, and outcomes. Effective interactive content discussion and pacing development may increase student engagement and self-directedness. This process includes all the component factors of effective adult education, as well as a forward-thinking consideration of what the duration of the acquired skills might be for what adults and emerging adults should know and demonstrate both now and in future employment conditions. Without this forward-thinking component, adult education is destined to fall away in relevance, possibly to be replaced with skill-component training rather than holistic teaching. Similarly, primary and secondary education of children must integrate forward-thinking consideration of employability skills with critical-thinking skills for students, recognizing these students are future workers and may become workers prior to completion of diploma studies or post-secondary education.

Adults are believed to come to education purposefully and with an internal motivation based on the planned outcomes of their educational process (Knowles, 1984;
With self-determination considered a vital component of the adult education experience, when the motivation associated with that self-determination flags, an effective teacher can support an adult learner’s process with more than content knowledge (Wlodkowski, 1985; Chiang & Hawley, 2013). Adult learners face potential failure without adequate or appropriately focused self-directedness in the learning process. Quantifying the relative self-directedness of learners at the adult level has been measured in part using the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale, developed by L. Guglielmino (1978, 1989). Since the instrument was released, multiple questions regarding the validity, structure, and reliability of the scale have emerged in the literature (Bonham, 1991; Field, 1989, 1991). By contrast to this quantifiable analysis of and for adults, the burden of developing academic directionality of growth falls to the individual teacher within the guidelines of curriculum standards, in cooperation with parents. That cooperation requires that parents have a passing familiarity with the standards in order to be effectively cooperative. Therefore, alignment of priorities between the parents’ expectations and the teachers’ expectations is a crucial component to fostering motivation and academic growth in students in order to create the desired syncretism between messages of value and priority originating in the home sphere and similar messages originating in the school sphere.

Utilizing adult education practices to the benefit of parents can be part of a holistic outreach effort by school programming to support all learning and learners (Shiffman, 2013). Anthony, Williams, Zhang, Landry, and Dunkelberger (2013)
demonstrated the effect of interventions, including parent education through Family Night programming, at a statistically significant level by comparison to no improvement utilizing the same intervention without Family Night programming. Providing parents with family-inclusive opportunities to learn about supportive behaviors which increase their confidence to act need not be designed as classroom instruction to be effective (Doherty, Jacob, & Cutting, 2009; Pelletier & Brent, 2002), although holistic outreach with structured classes can be beneficial to parents, students, and the broader community (Sink, Jr., Parkhill, Marshall, & Norwood, 2005; St. Clair, Jackson, & Zwieback, 2012). Parents’ survey responses report concern for professional and family obligations before including school-dictated scheduling of meetings and events (Archer-Banks & Behar-Horenstein, 2008). Considerations for programming may also include flexibility with scheduling and workshop-style opportunities (Archer-Banks & Behar-Horenstein, 2008; Lam & Kwong, 2012). Blended learning, which includes teachers, parents, and students, is an integral component of the wrap-around social support which has the most potential to improve minority students’ outcomes while reducing achievement gaps (de la Piedra, Munter & Girón, 2006; Gándara, 2010). Wrap-around programming also has the potential to increase capacity through training, funding, and expertise (McLaughlin, 1987, p. 172). McLaughlin does indicate that no capacity-building programing can specifically foster positive will, or “the attitudes, motivation, and beliefs that underlie an implementer’s response to a policy’s goal or strategies” (1987, p. 172). The general expectation is that by demonstrating goodwill to families by creating and implementing
this programming the families will reciprocate the goodwill through participation in the school’s activities and whole-family programming.

State Standards and Teacher Instruction

The state of Georgia has implemented state-specific standards modeled in part on the national Common Core standards. These standards were renamed Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) on February 19, 2015. The State Board of Education applied this renaming to the English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics standards, implemented at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year. New literacy standards are also more explicit for History and Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. These new literacy standards are grouped to narrow grade bands in the middle and secondary grades and put additional focus on three specific skill sets. One of these skill sets is to use nonfiction text aligned to the curriculum content to build knowledge for all readers. This nonfiction should include complex text utilizing academic vocabulary for regular reading practice. Finally, students should be able to indicate evidence from these texts when producing written or spoken products, or after reading practice. These are similar to many specific standards outlined in the ELA GSE for each grade and grade band as appropriate for increasing developmental stages (Georgia Board of Education, 2015).
Table 3

*Georgia Standards of Excellence for Reading in the Middle Grades*

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<tr>
<th>GRADE 6</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Literary RL</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reading Literary RL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key ideas and details</strong></td>
<td><strong>Key ideas and details</strong></td>
<td><strong>Key ideas and details</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</td>
<td>Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</td>
<td>Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Determine a theme and/or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.</td>
<td>Determine a theme and/or of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
<td>Determine a theme and/or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves towards a resolution.</td>
<td>Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how settings shape the characters or plot).</td>
<td>Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.</td>
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<td>Craft and structure</td>
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<td><strong>ELAGSE6RL4</strong></td>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.</td>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ELAGSE6RL5</strong></td>
<td>Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.</td>
<td>Analyze how a drama’s or poem’s form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ELAGSE6RL6</strong></td>
<td>Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.</td>
<td>Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.</td>
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<td>Integration of knowledge and ideas</td>
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<td>Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.</td>
<td>Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).</td>
<td>Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.</td>
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<td>(Not applicable to literature).</td>
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<td>Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.</td>
<td>Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means or understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.</td>
<td>Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.</td>
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Table 3 – continued

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of reading and level of text complexity</th>
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<tr>
<td>ELAGSE6RL10</td>
<td>By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.</td>
<td>By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELAGSE6RI1</td>
<td>Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</td>
<td>Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELAGSE6RI2</td>
<td>Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.</td>
<td>Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key ideas and details</td>
<td>Key ideas and details</td>
<td>Key ideas and details</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ELAGSE6RI3</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELAGSE7RI3</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELAGSE8RI3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).</td>
<td>Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).</td>
<td>Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Craft and Structure</strong></td>
<td><strong>Craft and Structure</strong></td>
<td><strong>Craft and Structure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ELAGSE6RI4</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELAGSE7RI4</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELAGSE8RI4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.</td>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.</td>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ELAGSE6RI5</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELAGSE7RI5</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELAGSE8RI5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.</td>
<td>Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.</td>
<td>Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft and Structure</td>
<td>Craft and Structure</td>
<td>Craft and Structure</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELAGSE6RI6</td>
<td>Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.</td>
<td>ELAGSE7RI6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELAGSE6RI7</td>
<td>Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.</td>
<td>ELAGSE7RI7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</td>
<td>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</td>
<td>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELAGSE6RI8</td>
<td>Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.</td>
<td>ELAGSE7RI8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3 – continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</th>
<th>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</th>
<th>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ELAGSE6RI19</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELAGSE7RI19</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELAGSE8RI19</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare and contrast one author’s presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).</td>
<td>Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing the different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.</td>
<td>Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity</th>
<th>Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity</th>
<th>Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ELAGSE6RI10</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELAGSE7RI10</strong></td>
<td><strong>ELAGSE8RI10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.</td>
<td>By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.</td>
<td>By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Georgia Standards of Excellence for English Language Arts © 2015, Georgia Department of Education, reproduced in accordance with Fair Use, Copyright, title 17 U.S.C. § chapter 1, section 107.*
Table 3 provides the standards in their public form, stated in broad strokes toward the content and skill sets that are expected of students from each grade level within modes and means of demonstrated competency. However, the standards do not delineate how the progress in content and complexity from grade to grade is addressed by programmed curricular planning or instruction. The implied increase in skill complexity and cognitive demand is more accurately represented by emphasizing the actions of each portion of the standards with comparison to the levels of complexity defined by Bloom, Krathwol, and Masia (1956) in the format commonly known as Bloom’s Taxonomy, as in Figure 5. Within the academic language burden of these standards is the process-specific language of action, including words like analyze, compare and contrast, determine, comprehend, cite and evaluate. These words align with the depth of knowledge cues and taxonomic classification of cognition codified by Bloom, Krathwol, and Masia (1956) as well as refined by both Marzano (2001, 2004) and Krathwohl (2002). The burden to language learning students is not the higher-order thinking required to reach the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels of thought but rather interpreting the directive language indicating how to think about the concepts and then generating appropriate complex language to convey those highly non-concrete thoughts. Also, depending upon a language learner’s education in their first language and culture, demonstration of these higher-order thoughts may take different forms than expected in English-dominant classrooms. The GSE standards for ELA specifically state demonstration of these complex cognitive processes in each of the four modes of communication (Georgia Board
In the receptive modes of listening and reading, students must be able to take in complex language related to a content area or a piece of literature with all the attendant connotation, denotation, implication, and extrapolation data those words may convey in context. Productively, students must then speak or write about that received input language using appropriate academic conventions of style, form, and presentation. This is challenging to native English speakers as part of standard progressive development in academic skills, and comparatively more challenging without complete access to the language.

*Figure 2.* This figure consolidates the grades 6, 7, and 8 taxonomic actions within the reading standards, as well as the source of data for those actions, for comparison across grade levels. This illustrates non-progressive change in complexity through standardized demonstrations of knowledge (Bloom, Krathwol, and Masia, 1956; Georgia Board of Education, 2015).
There are nine standards related to literacy, ten for informational reading, ten for writing which include descriptive subheadings, six for speaking and listening, and six for language, including conventions and vocabulary acquisition in the totality of the GSE for ELA (Georgia Board of Education, 2015). While this study looks only at standards for reading, it should be known that these standards are intended to be general enough for application to a wide variety of texts while generating specifically demonstrated skills interpreting the English language in various forms. What is not stated in the language of the standards is how acquiring and demonstrating these skills will be applied to adult endeavors outside of the school setting as a part of the federal goal toward college and career readiness, such as employment, parenting, civic participation, or social action, all examples of purposeful reading in a lifespan perspective of reading skill development and integration (Alexander, 2003, 2005; Knutson, 1997). Competence in reading in the development of adult topic expertise moves an individual through stages of acclimation to the language through to proficiency with the nuances of that language which may or may not relate to acquiring skills of linguistic analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Alexander, 2003, 2005). These adult life skills are more likely to be idealized and valued by parents with longer-range plans for their child than standards related to the mechanics of grammar or the expressive modes of language use.

In addition to the content-driven standards approved for Georgia public instruction, Georgia is also a WIDA Consortium member state, utilizing the language-learner-centered standards of language development identified in research and codified
into performance bands by the WIDA Consortium. Initially formed in 2002 from a grant which included Wisconsin (WI), Delaware (D), and Arkansas (A), WIDA was named as an acronym from these three participants. However, Arkansas elected not to participate at the last minute so *World-class Instructional Design and Assessment* became the new meaning of the initial acronym. In recent years, WIDA has abandoned the insufficient descriptor the new meaning conveyed and simply utilizes the name, guided by a Mission, Vision and set of Values related to the education of language learners. WIDA’s Can-Do descriptors serve as the basis for standards related to levels of developmentally-appropriate demonstration of acquired language skills. These descriptors take many forms, depending upon the skill and mode to be assessed. For the purposes of this study, the reading mode standards for the 6-8 grade band will be considered.

Consideration of the WIDA standards is encouraged of all instructional and assessment personnel in school settings, especially for classes containing students at diverse levels of language acquisition. However, the WIDA Can-Do Descriptors are primarily used by ESOL teachers as guidelines for differentiated assessment, and to assist classroom teachers who may not be trained in ESOL methods of instruction and assessment but teach language learners. The major difference between WIDA’s standards and the standards implemented at the state board level is that WIDA standards are applicable to all content areas and all instructional settings, where state standards are specific to content areas and may differentiate instructional or performance demonstration methods specific to those content areas.
It is instructive to note that the performance actions within the WIDA standards trend heavily toward the lowest complexity band of Bloom’s Taxonomy, with performance actions clustered at the knowledge band and to a lesser extent at the analyze band. There is no representation of work at the synthesize band, and very little at the evaluate band. This is in part representative of the effort to make these Can-Do Descriptors applicable to all content areas, as well as to scaffold the cognitive load for the least fluent into a focus on vocabulary acquisition.

Table 4

*Use of Bloom’s Taxonomy Terms in WIDA Descriptors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bloom’s Taxonomic Actions</th>
<th>WIDA Emerging Language Proficiency Can-Do Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comprehend</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apply</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>analyze</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>synthesize</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluate</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Language of WIDA Can-Do Key Use Descriptors (WIDA, 2016) compared to the taxonomic vocabulary provided in Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals, by B. S. Bloom, D. R. Krathwohl, and B. B. Masia, 1956.*
Table 5

**WIDA Can-Do Key Use Descriptors** (WIDA, 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Use of Recount for Reading</th>
<th>ELP Level 1 Entering</th>
<th>ELP Level 2 Emerging</th>
<th>ELP Level 3 Developing</th>
<th>ELP Level 4 Expanding</th>
<th>ELP Level 5 Bridging</th>
<th>ELP Level 6 Reaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifying responses to Wh-questions in charts or illustrated text</td>
<td>Sequencing illustrated text of narrative or informational events</td>
<td>Identifying topic sentences, main ideas, and details in paragraphs</td>
<td>Ordering paragraphs in narrative and informational text</td>
<td>Identifying summaries of passages in a variety of genres</td>
<td>Identifying a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; summarizing text absent personal opinions or judgments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifying icons in graphs, charts, and environmental print related to familiar topics</td>
<td>Locating main ideas in a series of simple sentences</td>
<td>Connecting people to actions based on oral descriptions with details</td>
<td>Matching details of content-related topics to main ideas</td>
<td>Evaluating how a central event is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEY USE OF EXPLAIN for READING</td>
<td>ELP Level 1</td>
<td>ELP Level 2</td>
<td>ELP Level 3</td>
<td>ELP Level 4</td>
<td>ELP Level 5</td>
<td>ELP Level 6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entering</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Expanding</td>
<td>Bridging</td>
<td>Reaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process explanations by:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching content related objects, pictures, or media to words and phrases</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying social or academic topics highlighted in text</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process explanations by:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing ideas on the same topic in a series of simple sentences</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrating relationships between main ideas and details in paragraphs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequencing steps or events to describe processes (e.g., solving math problems)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process explanations by:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching content related cause to effect in graphically supported text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlighting text evidence that points to how systems function (e.g., different forms of government)</td>
<td>Process explanations by: Sorting grade-level text by highlighting elements of the genre (e.g., differentiating the “how” from the “why”)</td>
<td>Process explanations by: Identifying factors that contribute to phenomena in explanations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process explanations by:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing and contrasting information from experiments, simulations, videos, or multimedia sources with that of text on the same topics</td>
<td>Process explanations by: Comparing and contrasting information from experiments, simulations, videos, or multimedia sources with that of text on the same topics</td>
<td>Process explanations by: Comparing and contrasting information from experiments, simulations, videos, or multimedia sources with that of text on the same topics</td>
<td>Process explanations by: Comparing and contrasting information from experiments, simulations, videos, or multimedia sources with that of text on the same topics</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 – continued
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Level 1</th>
<th>ELP Level 2</th>
<th>ELP Level 3</th>
<th>ELP Level 4</th>
<th>ELP Level 5</th>
<th>ELP Level 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entering</strong></td>
<td><strong>Emerging</strong></td>
<td><strong>Developing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Expanding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bridging</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reaching</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying words or phrases associated with topic choices</td>
<td>Distinguishing facts from opinions in text</td>
<td>Identifying claims and the reasons for each claim</td>
<td>Identifying evidence to support analysis of what texts say (e.g., position papers)</td>
<td>Evaluating evidence presented in support of claims</td>
<td>Identifying specific evidence to support analyses of content area text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying true from false short statements</td>
<td>Identifying features associated with content-related claims</td>
<td>Identifying opposing points of view</td>
<td>Classifying pros and cons of claims and evidence presented within written texts</td>
<td>Developing a stance in favor of or against claims presented within content related text</td>
<td>Distinguishing among facts, reasoned judgment, and speculation in text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* English learner level-specific descriptions of what learners should be able to do at the progressive levels of language acquisition in an academic setting. © 2016 Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, on behalf of WIDA.
Teaching to meet the explicitly stated standards involves extensive and aligned lesson planning, including citation of the individual standards attempted during each plan. To this end, the Georgia Board of Education makes grade- and course-specific maps of the curriculum available as well as templates for planning to meet the curricular goals and standards (Georgia Board of Education, 2015). This planning must include differentiation for diverse learning levels and styles (Gardner, 1983; Hill, 2001; Tomlinson, 1995). Of the available options for differentiation, process and products are most effectively differentiated for language learners, leaving curriculum content intact (Tomlinson, 1995). Pre-programmed, research-validated intervention options are also available for application to specific learning goals, such as increased fluency and comprehension for early learners (Begeny, Ross, Greene, Mitchell, & Whitehouse, 2012), the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) supported by the Center for Applied Linguistics (2016), or specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE) for adolescent learners (Cota, 1997). Explicit instruction in academic language, including the vocabulary of process and context, must be included for language learners, children from language impoverished backgrounds, and students who have transitioned from different learning contexts or settings (Heppt, Haag, Böhme, & Stanat, 2014; Cummins, 1986, 2014).

Teacher communication with language learning students must be explicitly taught for maximum effectiveness. Beyond communicating with parents, teachers must be trained to instruct productively and accommodate language-learners (Duță, 2015). Not all language instruction can happen in discrete periods of instruction by a specially
trained teacher, nor can all content knowledge be conveyed through illustrations and pantomime. Teachers at each level and discipline area should receive training on fundamental language acquisition theory to effectively provide comprehensible input and appropriate scaffolding for language learners to develop fluency in the content-specific language. This training is not common practice for all pre-service teachers and leaves many new graduates entering classrooms without a functional understanding of language acquisition processes. From the origins of language learning theory, Piaget (1952) based many of his assertions about intellectual development and language upon the concept of *schema*, or broad categories of association, to which new information is compared for likeness or difference and then considered for understanding. This process is based in part upon Kant’s description of sense experiences as “pure concepts of the understanding,” which he described prior to the schism between philosophy and psychology (Pendlebury, 1995). Broad schema theory combined with Skinnerian (1948) behaviorist input models was then critiqued by Chomsky (1957) as incomplete and simplistic. Chomsky’s (1957) observation of deep structures of language was insufficient to explain how language learning could be so similar from one language to another, nor how having learned one language could then influence learning another. Mediation of this debate over behaviorist principles in language acquisition also came from theories of social influence on learning from Vygotsky (1924) and Bandura (1977). Corder (1967) transformed the academic debate regarding language acquisition by dissecting the
difference between a mistake and an error. In effect, he correlated a *mistake* to improper performance in linguistic morphology as juxtaposed to an *error* indicating ignorance of the codified structure, grammar, or form of a language (Corder, 1967, p167). Later, Selinker (1972) pioneered the concept of *interlanguage*, the interplay and interruption of one language to another during the acquisition process leading to controlled fluency.

Although other theorists influenced the evolution of language acquisition theory, most of the research on language acquisition remained focused on the initial stages of language learning as for babies rather than additional languages, particularly as learned by adults. These theories shaped later language acquisition theorists more interested in developing an effective practice for learners of additional languages, including Cummins’ (1979) disambiguation of language functions and Krashen’s (1982) *comprehensible input theory*. Cummins named the two major functions of language BICS and CALP, differentiating Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), or day-to-day communication to participate in a social environment, from Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), the four-mode competency of language use necessary to be successful in a learning environment (Cummins, 1979). Concurrently, Krashen (1982) was developing five hypotheses related to language acquisition for first and second language learners contingent upon the form, type, and reception of language and information input. The five hypotheses address distinctly different components of the language acquisition process but are referred to cumulatively as the *input theory* and represent a major
influence on second language education practices in the United States (Krashen, 1982). Although knowledge of the historical evolution of second language instruction principles is not necessary for teachers to be effective facilitators for language learners, it can guide a teacher’s self-identification in the theory-to-practice continuum and assist in developing familiarity with the identified best practices in the field (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Musetti, Salas, & Perez, 2009; Schwarzer, 2009; Téllez, 2004).

Theory and research by Cummins (1979, 2008, 2014) significantly influenced and continues to influence the practice of second language instruction. Advocating for teacher education to be more humanistic in application, Cummins values recognition of the difference between and timeline related to BICS and CALPS for language learners so students of a new language are given the time and support necessary to acquire a full variety of receptive and productive skills and vocabulary needed in differing contexts (2008). Subsequent research has related maternal participation in the development of BICS social language skills with increased literacy rates in subsequent measures (Durand, 2010; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000). He relates this to the evolving classification of literacy, including digital literacy, and the challenges language learners may face in an increasingly digital, global world (2008). In additional support for the affective aspects of language instruction, Cummins (2014) asserts that equally relevant to the elemental concerns of CALP and direct instruction of those skills is engagement with literacy and affirmation of students’ individual identity. Teachers engaged with second language
learners need to be familiar not just with the practice aspects of language instruction but also the cultural sensitivity necessary when working with these populations (Cummins, 2014; Pizarro, 1998). These assertions return to the efforts of some advocates for language learners that school agencies should recognize the funds of knowledge and cultural value from learners’ home or native language, particularly with the potential for considering one language of greater value than another, or creating the perception thereof. Language instruction does not simply exist in the Language Arts or Foreign Language classroom; ideally, all teachers are or would be trained to use instructional methodologies and strategies for language learners (Cummins, n.d.; Gullberg, Roberts, Dimroth, Veroude, & Indefrey, 2010; Orem, 2000).

Reading instruction to language learners must be purposeful. Reading instruction to language learners must be purposeful and explicit to develop learner engagement. Cosgrove asserts “that attitudes (feelings toward an activity) and purposes (reasons to engage in an activity) are just as vital as knowing how to read” (2001). The influence of modeled behavior by both teachers and parents to develop student reading inclinations is incontrovertible; teachers who authentically demonstrate pleasure in reading, and parents who model pleasure-reading experiences lead children to embrace reading more willingly (Cosgrove, 2001). The conclusion Cosgrove (2001) draws in her review of literature is that the practice of reading should be both voluntary and purposeful. For this is to be the case, educators must know where children create their attitudes toward and purposes for
reading. More specifically, educators must know if those attitudes and purposes are different if messaged to children from parents or to students from teachers.

Barriers to syncretism of reading instruction purposes plague practitioners. The first, and most intractable, is the debate between content and context instruction (Cummins, 2014; Cummins, Mirza & Stille, 2012). While teachers rightly wish to impart to their students the greatest volume of content with the highest retention rate, this cannot be done without providing those students with contextual framing or scaffolding upon which to attach the content information. Teaching students strategies for approaching the content through identifying context clues is a valuable but time-consuming process (Tovani, 2000). For each situation, context is defined in component form by the gestalt which situates an object of interest in a field of ambient information and the schema of prior knowledge which informs both the content of and broader associations with that object’s gestalt (Koffka, 1922). “Schemas assist encoding because they elaborate new material into a meaningful structure” (Schunk, 2012, p. 189).

Afflerbach, Cho, Kim, Crassas, & Doyle (2013) both question and espouse the value of other components of reading instruction beyond developing students’ skills and strategic abilities, asserting teachers should include instruction related to thoughtful self-awareness, motivated engagement, and self-confident beliefs about competence and knowing. These “other” components are related to context building and identification. However, learners may well acquire other skills which more readily lend themselves to teacher observation,
assessments, and analysis (Leider, Proctor, Silverman, & Harring, 2013). Writing as a way of synthesizing reading or other information input can be used for both formative and summative assessment, and is a common assessment tool for student products. The quality of the product can be expected to reflect the quality of the metacognition skill application by the learner. Therefore, a teacher can surmise the student’s comprehension by the quality of their product (Huang & Newbern, 2012; Landi, 2010). Writing may take the form of notes, journaling or summary writing, each of which can be applied in different ways to different content areas. Assessment can then be made using a differentiated rubric or other metric able to verify demonstrated skills against a leveled expectation.

Contextualizing reading is related to a student’s command of prior knowledge, a quality that is not easily quantified or inductively known by either the teacher or the learner. Utilizing a lifespan model of reading, teachers can anticipate at what stage of development a student’s prior knowledge lies in correlation to the content or domain knowledge (Alexander, 2003, 2004, 2005; Mayer & Alexander, 2011; Thomas, 2013). The greater a learner’s prior knowledge of content information, the greater that learner’s ability to develop context for new information both in and out of that domain. Much of the work of context development happens as a metacognitive process, another facet of the reading and learning mental exercise which the teacher cannot easily quantify or know. When relying on metacognitive activities from the learner to create contextualized
connections, the teacher can probe that process with various assessments, both formative and summative.

How learners contextualize reading input can be probed by questioning the learners’ visualizations (De Koning & Van der Schoot, 2013; Harvey & Goudvis, 2000, 2007, 2013). Whether those visualizations are illustrated, written, or verbalized, the concept creation from word to visual concept activates the learners’ context schema in different ways than simple data recall, encouraging greater retention of concepts by stimulating deeper connections within prior knowledge. Park (2012) recommends assisting learners with visualization at even the simplest levels or structures to develop a pattern of cognitive behavior. Learners may develop automaticity in visualization construction with regular read-input practice, amplifying their retention and ability for critical analysis. When these strategic visualizations are related to a scaffolded literacy plan, learners internalize the effectiveness of strategy application, leading to continued and potentially increasing academic success (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002). This is particularly germane in the discrete content-area classes requiring mastery of concept and vocabulary. Students working in specific genres of writing or with scientific or historical scenarios may utilize visualization to activate prior knowledge with which to contextualize the factual data input (Onofrey & Theurer, 2007; Poole, 2005). Students can share these visualizations orally, in class or group discussions, adding an additional dimension of experience for multi-sensory instruction. Context-building, visualization,
writing activities, and other strategic instruction methods are interventions which provide students additional avenues to access content and skills while opening the learning loop for teachers to see the learning process and provide guidance or assistance when needed (Shang, 2010). These skills are necessary for learners to demonstrate the required competencies in mandatory standards, such as reflection following reading or character analysis from longer texts.

Beyond student-created products, teachers may rely upon testing metrics as generated by standardized testing protocols currently in place for public education. Although the conflict between teaching test-taking strategy and reading strategy arises when relying upon test data for student comprehension assessment, teachers can accommodate this by including testing strategy in reading strategy instruction (Allington & Gabriel, 2012; Dole, Brown, & Trathen, 1996). Standardized testing has become an expectation in all content areas, and test-taking skills should be included in the instruction before assessment for each area to be tested (Fichten et al., 2014). This expectation applies especially when instruction and assessment are in a new language. Students learning to demonstrate academic performance in a new language may not immediately recognize the metacognitive application of existing strategies, or may struggle to observe the connections to strategies used outside their home linguistic and cultural knowledge (DeVoe, 2001; Dreher & Gray, 2009).
Teachers must also be able to assess student learning effectively, fairly, and appropriately because in standards-oriented instructional practice following known second language instruction theories and integrating culturally-sensitive practices is incomplete. Siegel, Wissehr, and Halverson (2008) propose a set of guidelines which lead teachers to develop assessments which support fair and equitable evaluation of learning for students, regardless of language ability. These active teaching guidelines include: Match the learning goals and the language of instruction; Be comprehensible for English learners, both linguistically and culturally; Encourage students to think about complex ideas; Elicit student understanding; Scaffold the use of language and support student learning (Siegel, Wissehr, & Halverson, 2008). While the authors designed their study and recommendations around science classroom instruction, the practical actions of these recommendations apply to teaching learners in any content area. These recommendations parallel the “best practices” concepts of the WIDA Standards reviews and alignments, considered a primary source of information for teachers and schools addressing language learners (WIDA, 2016). Academic skills assessment of English Language Learners (ELLs) is a practice fraught with multiple diverse considerations. No single measure can accurately capture a student’s skills in social, academic, and functional language use. Reauthorization verbiage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (U.S. Department of Education, 2012) includes acknowledgment of the special needs of language learners, as well as the need for assessment which quantifies and tracks
student development. For English learners, this tracking must include development of each mode and all content-area forms of English language. One of the greatest challenges of this mandate is the expectation that assessment includes standardization, allowing growth measures to be compared over time and across student bodies. Unfortunately, no portion of language acquisition is standardized, and no group of language learners can be considered adequately standard. This drives multiple purposes for ELL assessment, and leads to multiple types of assessments and a diversity of assessment validity measures. These may be differentiated rubrics, leveled task assessment, or fractionated standards, with portions of skills demonstrated at different times as a scaffolding accommodation.

In addition to federally-mandated assessments and associated data collection in standardized formats, teacher assessments in the instructional process remain questionably valid, reliable, and informative (Cheng, Rogers, & Wang, 2008; Darling-Hammond, Herman, Pellegrino, et al., 2013; Pitoniak, Young, Martiniello, King, Buteux, & Ginsburgh, 2009; Spinelli, 2008). Programming for language instruction specific to English learners is highly variable from site to site, despite guidelines outlined in ESEA programming for Title III (U. S. Department of Education, 2015), and data-driven recommendations from governmental research programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). As a result, consistency in curriculum or assessment programming prevents teachers from utilizing a resource of valid and reliable assessments reviewed and approved by programmatic experts.
Current standards in assessment on a near-national level include influence from the WIDA Consortium, a cooperative organization of member states and other educational agencies guided by interest in best practices for language instruction (WIDA, 2016) and state agency determinations of compliance with ESEA and other federal Title III mandates and programming recommendations (U. S. Department of Education, 2015). In Georgia, ESOL student progress tracking is largely predicated upon Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) scores logged in the state longitudinal data tracking software. All active ESOL programming participants will complete the ACCESS for ELLs test annually in a predetermined assessment window, with scores provided to districts for consideration in promotion and progress monitoring decisions at the local level (Georgia Department of Education, 2015). At the post-secondary level, language skill assessments include the Accuplacer battery, written by the College Board to determine proficiency in multiple academic disciplines. Four separate 20-question assessments are used to guide placement in language remediation classes for ELLs, in addition to any other content area assessments (College Board, 2015).

The broadly standardized multiple-choice tests most frequently used for state and national comparisons are written to include the broadest reference to curriculum possible, in an effort to include the most students (Popham, 2010; Smith, 2011). However, because instructional delivery is highly individualized for language learning students, and
teacher assessments are equally diverse, no single programmatic decision or
determination has been made regarding instruction to prepare for these standardized tests.
Multiple alternative assessment strategies or methodologies have been proposed which
endeavor to more fairly assess language learner knowledge without penalizing for
linguistic differences, but none have been adopted for broad use (Dumais, 2005; Jones,

An additional complication to the appropriate assessment of ELLs is the difficulty
of determining what factors influence test outcomes for non-native English speakers.
The language acquisition process is significantly individual enough that it is difficult if
not impossible to accurately attribute low test scores to language deficit, knowledge
deficit, or learning capacity deficit (Bender, 2008; Burnett, 2004; Huang, Clarke,
Milczarski, & Rab, 2011). Determination of a student’s learning capacity is most
commonly done in English, putting a student with learning challenges at a disadvantage
for being appropriately or adequately identified when English is not their first language.
As a result, students with normal language acquisition deficits may be recommended or
even placed in Special Education classes; alternately, a student with a learning challenge
or acquisition deficit may not be identified as needed and struggle to overcome that
learning challenge while also attempting to acquire a new language.
School Agents’ Cultural Awareness

Teachers and other school agents serving the needs of language learners are also engaged in the development of cultural capital and elicitation of funds of knowledge and must plan for instruction which is culturally sensitive and responsive, relevant, and accessible to the learners. This kind of planning for language instruction frequently takes one of three shapes: problem-solving; rights-giving; or resource-building (Cummins, Chow, Schecter & Yeager, 2006). Teachers and other school agents who plan for second language instruction as a problem to be solved commonly utilize a deficit model of second language learners, considering the first language as deficient or otherwise inferior to the second, instructional language (Cummins, Chow, Schecter & Yeager, 2006). Educators interested in social liberation often consider language competency a right, believing increasing competency is providing additional access to rights; a less deficit model approach but one which may not effectively build upon the resources and abilities existing in the students’ native language and culture as mentioned in prior discussion of funds of knowledge and liberation pedagogy (Friere, 1994, 2000; Pizarro, 1998; Young, 2010). The third perspective, viewing language instruction as resource development, carries the least connotative meaning and develops language learning as acquisition of more facility for access to the broader world (Cummins, Chow, Schecter & Yeager, 2006). Within the language-as-resource mindset, bilingualism and bi-literacy are valued, and issues of power within a multi-lingual community are considered without detriment to the learners’ negotiated self-identification (Cummins, Mirza
Spanish-speaking parents identify these particular mindsets as most beneficial to their children and most welcoming to them, leading to the greatest potential growth and development in their children’s academic abilities (Irizarry & Raible, 2011).

Effective teachers for language learners maintain consciousness of identity negotiation for their students while addressing pedagogical issues of vocabulary and content. The challenge of this is in identifying and overcoming biased or negative opinions of students based on their cultural identity (Loes, Salisbury, & Pascarella, 2013). No comfortable, open discussion automatically includes admissions of bias and discrimination, especially related to protected classes such as immigrant and ELL students. However, these children are often seen as unwelcome or even unwanted in their local schools, and may be discriminated against because of teacher and administrator perceptions of their immigration status (Sox, 2009; Young, 2010). This discrimination can be extended to the district and even state levels, manifest as restrictive, delimiting, or outright prejudicial enrollment and assessment policies (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, 2003; Sox, 2009). School agents must strive to utilize research reflecting a participatory and potentially transformative agenda, in particular for these students’ and their parents’ concerns about access to social justice, educational empowerment, and aspiration (Hill & Torres, 2010; Pizarro, 1998, Young, 2010). The most inclusive and effective research-based programs and laws support the benefits of fostering home language-based skills in the classroom and in the home, especially when English is the target instructional
language in the classroom, and there is not an option for bilingual education (ASPIRA v. New York City Board of Education, 2006; Soltero-González, 2009). Support for the home language is concurrently supportive of students’ identity negotiation and their process of self-positioning and interactive positioning in the sociocultural space between school culture and home culture; in effect, instead of a school focus on language or culture, students’ critical awareness of identity negotiation and external confirmation can be aided by support for their unique abilities, contributing to success in both spheres (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, 2003; Pizarro, 1998; Yoon, 2012). Lawrence-Lightfoot observed, “It is when students experience institutional inequalities or prejudicial attention from teachers that they form rigid and exclusive groups among themselves” which effectively blocks effective communication between students and teachers (1983, p. 76).

Accomplishing balanced negotiation between paradigms demands culturally relevant pedagogy, a conceptual framework espoused and applied in educational research and practice but often poorly understood (Malone, 2015; Young, 2010). Advocating for academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness through culturally relevant pedagogy, Young (2010) instead found “deep structural issues related to teachers’ cultural bias [and] the nature of racism in school settings” which impeded teacher and administrator efforts to practice according to the precepts of the theories.

Greater opportunities for education, training, and modeling by knowledgeable practitioners through a coached or mentored model would provide both pre-service and
practicing teachers opportunities to develop functional mastery of inclusive and research-validated programs based on these experiences (Sherris, 2010). Inclusive to such experiences is facilitation of parent communication which can be used to align school and home messaging regarding purposes for reading in the target (e.g. English) academic language. However, site-based professional development is not the exclusive domain of teachers and administrators, nor is it necessarily a top-down experience.

School staff and leaders must be provided opportunities to learn about cultural diversity. All members of the school environment staff are involved in liaisons between teachers, parents, and students and must be equally prepared to participate in these exchanges with cultural sensitivity and awareness for all minority groups. First, school representatives should be aware that Spanish-language fluency does not define a family’s home culture, and more information must be obtained to form a complete picture of the student’s social, cultural and educational background (Hidalgo, 1998; Symeou, Roussounidou, & Michaelides, 2012). Acknowledgment of and cooperation with these parents’ power and interest in the school context by educators can help to align school, family and community values and beliefs with school policies and practices (Olivos, 2009). Issues of power relate to the relative influence of adults and organizations upon the decisions and behavior of students, especially when those influences may be in opposition to each other, or to the anticipated norms of the school environment.
Collaboration, consensus-building, and mutual support based upon a pan-diaspora awareness of the sociocultural schema Spanish-speaking Hispano-Latino families bring to the school setting is most effective. To create a collaborative climate for teachers, administrative personnel, and parents endeavoring to support language-learning students, Olivos (2009) recommends educators develop an understanding of their own acceptance of the culture and knowledge within the Hispano-Latino diaspora community. Hidalgo (1998) addressed gathering pan-diaspora demographic information by developing a qualitative research framework for probing a Latino family paradigm. The boundaries of this framework outline characteristics all Hispano-Latino diaspora communities exhibit in the United States, including a shared language, affiliation with a chosen culture, and challenges creating a bicultural identity (Hidalgo, 1998). Qualitative paradigm analysis strives to describe in ethnically defined terms Hispano-Latino diaspora members and their communities as agents actively facing socio-developmental constraints and exhibiting Freierian resistance behaviors within their social structure (Freire, 199, 2000; Gabb, 2010; Hidalgo, 1998; Turney & Kao, 2009). These families are seeking Freierian liberation through education for their children, and profiting from their children’s education with what educational materials the students bring home for practice or homework (Freire, 2000; Durán, 2003; Iddings, 2009).

Administrators responsible for scheduling and teacher duty assignments bear responsibility for making collaborative planning and information sharing possible
between teachers and other school agents serving these students (de la Piedra, Munter & Girón, 2006). In effect, educating one student begins the process of educating an entire family. This one child may begin to feel conflicted if the home lesson and school lesson do not align. School programming should include scheduled opportunities for teachers, counselors, social service agents, and other community members to meet and share resources and information in support of the whole child, including their home culture and particular family situation.

School counselors are gate-keeping actors in the dissemination of vital information regarding enrollment, progress, and scheduling for students and their parents. Similarly, counselors may be better informed about a student’s living arrangements or other extra-curricular personal information which could assist teachers in better differentiating for that student’s needs and which must be appropriately communicated to involved teachers (Gonzalez, Borders, Hines, Villalba, & Henderson, 2013). Partnership-building is a major component of school counselors’ role definition, and, therefore, should include preparation for culturally sensitive partnership building practices (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Dorfman & Fisher, 2002). Typically, parents of ELL students are not equipped to engage effectively with school structures as a result of limited English facility, limits on their own exposure to formal education, or familiarity with the social norms in the United States’ public schools. This may also be exacerbated by limits on their time for or ability to attend meetings and events.
prescribed by the school’s timetable, or to understand the structure of these meetings due to educational culture differences from their prior experience in educational contexts (Mathis, 2013).

Librarians or media specialists should also be included school representatives in culturally sensitive communication strategies. Communication concerns librarians should strive to address include helping minority students develop fluency in using library resources and ensuring access to culturally relevant materials. Making information about these resources and materials available to parents in a language they can understand is another valuable strategy (Overall, 2014). Schools may create parent resource centers or other materials banks.

Training school staff and leaders to include socially and linguistically diverse parents in school-based activities and decisions requires specific skills and strategies. Opportunities for developing these skills must be present at every level of teacher and administrator training to adequately engender and maintain the kind of socio-cultural sensitivity needed to integrate diverse populations effectively in school environments (Symeou, Roussoundou, & Michaelides, 2012). One way to begin affecting the necessary change in thought and knowledge is at the pre-service level for teachers in training. California’s State University system acknowledged this need with programming for education faculty and supervisors in the teacher education program. By teaching the teachers how to prioritize cultural literacy in teacher preparation programming and
seminars, the university system was able to influence new teachers going into the Central Valley region of California (Alamillo, Padilla, & Arenas, 2011).

Teachers bear the largest part of cultivating communication with parents, and this requires a wide variety of strategies and skills. Sherris (2010) calls for professional development opportunities, including coaching, mentoring, and peer support over long-term relationships so that teachers are able to experience structured interactions integrated to the sociolinguistic conditions presented in their individual classrooms. The importance of long-term opportunities for professional development is emphasized by conflicts between the microcosmic nature of classroom diversity and the larger agendas posed by schools and districts which reflect political, cultural, and policy-oriented influences (Sherris, 2010). Beginning with the school-to-home dynamic, teachers must be aware of what the home language and culture are to initiate and most appropriately build that exchange. Teacher efficacy toward school-to-home communication has a large bearing on the teachers’ willingness to initiate and foster that exchange (Ames, De Stefano, Watkins, & Sheldon, 1995).

Strategies which increase communicative effect, independent of language competency, include “using all of the tools around [oneself]: expressions, body language, visual objects, cultural ideas, and common background” (Hunt-Gierut, 2011). School agents at all levels must be taught culturally sensitive active listening skills. Additionally,
these communication skills must be cultivated with purposeful practice, especially for professionals accustomed to the ease of productive speech appropriately received.

Establishing Syncretic Communication

With DePlany, Coulter-Kern and Duchane’s (2007, p. 367) recommendation that students and teachers develop awareness of differences in influence and behavior as a guide, determining what difference to make in communication modes between participating stakeholders should guide the plan to change communication behaviors. It is valuable to consider how perceptions of the importance of parent behavior by students, teachers, and the parents themselves may be mismatched from behaviors parents actually exhibit (DePlany, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane, 2007, p. 367). Informing parents what purposes academic reading may have, and how those purposes may be of greater or lesser benefit or value to them and to their students might shape the messages parents convey to their students. Shaping the parents’ messaging may involve influencing parents’ opinions of or subjectivity toward the school’s stated purposes for educational activities, potentially increasing parental esteem for the school’s practices. Coordinating the messages coming from parents and the school institution(s) can help unify students’ understanding of the purposes of academic efforts.

Inquiry of parental subjectivity related to reading is especially illuminating given the greater emphasis in the newest Georgia Performance standards upon constructed responses for formal, standardized assessments. For students still acquiring a new
academic language, constructed responses require a level of vocabulary and grammatical mastery challenging even for native English speakers. Beyond the old educational saw that students go from learning to read to reading to learn, language learning is more than simply decoding and reconstructing the written word. Much of the content of standardized assessment is not standardized with language learners in mind, and the linguistic complexity of the questions, related answers, and following constructed response requirements is very high (Mayer & Alexander, 2011). If parents do not convey a message of value and priority regarding mastering conventions of English language which can convey to the testing arena, students will not persevere to those levels of mastery. In effect, the goal is syncretic messaging from both parents and educators.

Few scholars outside theological studies consider the syncretic analysis of a topic. Most research topics are or have been explored with meta-analysis, a procedure which is similarly broad and encompassing while remaining devoid of attempted amalgamation or reconciliation of differences. Syncretic educational practitioners seek to identify and implement best practices in teaching and learning, an effort best manifest by taking the most powerful components of known processes and integrating or amalgamating them into a unified theory or method. This does not prevent individual instructors from making their own stylistic interpretation of any given theory; instead, it provides carefully curated details which should guide the practitioner’s consideration when implementing that theory into practice. Syncretism may be viewed as a prioritizing filter
for broad topics, integrating the greatest qualities and winnowing away the smallest.

Syncretism is different from synergism because there is no intrinsic action or multiplication of effort, force, or power; synergistic work or thought has a multiplier effect rather than a combinatory effect.

As practitioners, teachers necessarily must have at hand a diverse set of skills and tools in order to serve the variety of students that come to them. Utilizing a syncretic, component-analytical approach when considering instructional and communication methods means the most powerful, common, or broadest application can be identified for first use. For students who require additional assistance or input, the hierarchy of tools or methodologies can then be examined for the next most impactful application, and so on. In this way, no viable option is left unconsidered, and students have the benefit of as many methodologies as may be possible at teachers’ disposal. This is, in effect, the goal of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) Part B language authorizing Response to Intervention (RTI) protocol. This concept should similarly be applied to the methodologies and messages communicated by teachers to parents, by teachers to students, and by parents to their children. Children learn through Vygotskij’s (1988) sociocultural constructivism, absorbing without criticism the cultural, social and linguistic standards accepted by the environment around them (Schunk, pp. 240-248). This supports Cottone’s (2012) assertion that maternal beliefs about the value and purposes of reading are powerful enough to impact children’s
performance through direct association with how mothers feel, talk, and act toward their children about literacy and identifies maternal beliefs as an active intervention to counter low maternal education levels. This implies practitioners should recognize, value, and incorporate mothers’ beliefs about reading in interventions with children’s skill development in literacy, in addition to fostering additional positive interaction between mothers and their children around literacy competencies.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Speaking to the stories of others is both the strength and danger of qualitative research. The researcher is the instrument, the filter, the reporter, and the measure of veracity. Methods for generating input from participants must be as transparent and without reproach as possible, nearing the reproducibility which is so valued in quantitative research methods (Creswell, 2008). The great value in qualitative research is in gathering, and making available for scrutiny, the previously untold stories of individuals in a way that raises them above simple storytelling with scientific analysis and rigorous consideration. Striking the balance of humanist care and scientific rigor while maintaining transparency is the equal of creating an intersection between art and science.

Portraiture is a method for gathering, analyzing, and narratively-reporting on qualitative data, honoring the human source of the data and the receiver’s potential skepticism at the analysis. It addresses the scientific community’s concerns with validity through rigorous procedural controls and transparency in data collection (Mertens, 2005, p. 104-105). The researcher as the instrument becomes an integral part of the reporting, acknowledged for and through each step of the process, gradually revealing each portion of content and comment with a critical eye to personal and participant voices (Campbell,
The guidelines delineating portraiture from other forms of narrative inquiry are codified by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) but remain congruent to a general consideration of narratively reported qualitative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2008). Although narrative, particularly fictive narrative, has been questioned for rigor, validity, and value in empirical and accountable research (Freeman, DeMarrais, Preissle, Roulston & St. Pierre, 2007), issues of validity are addressed. The place of fictive narrative as an instructional medium in philosophy (Ezzy, 1998; Freeman, 2003) and in archaeology (Mickel, 2012) is to open readers to the author’s sense of reality through an experience with Geertz’s (1973) “thick description” of that reality in the context of perceived experience. The author’s perception, experience, voice, and vision interplay to portray a situation which may be formative to the experience of the reader. Much of fictive narrative’s informative and empirical value is based in the philosophical and hermeneutic analysis of Ricoeur’s narrative identity theory (Squire, 2008; Wiklund, Lindholm & Lindstrom, 2002). The author (here, researcher) depends upon the reader’s interaction with the presented text for meaning-making, personalizing the related experience to provide the reader the necessary conceptual tools to make personal meaning. Fictive narrative relies upon the exchange included in Rosenblatt’s (1994, 1978) *Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* which demands of the reader meaning-making metacognition in order to make writing purpose-full and meaning-full. Additionally, Ezzy (1998) emphasizes fictive narrative’s ability to
identify social sources of an author’s self-concept to illuminate possible roles for power and politics while constructing personal narrative identities.

The value of fictive narrative in the form of Portraiture for this investigation is to provide an anonymized yet illustrative model of the interactions between a teacher’s identity as both the mother of a foreign-language-learning child and the teacher of foreign-language-learning students in episodic relation to the mothers of foreign-language-learning students through mediated communication provided by a teacher who is also self-identified as both the mother of a language-learning child and the teacher of foreign-language-learning students. The complexity of this interrelationship is illustrated graphically in Figure 7 in abstraction, preserving the legal and moral mandate for anonymity.
Figure 3. The locus of interest circled in this diagram indicates the intersection of communication between the teacher and student and the parent and student but does not indicate the communication between the parent and teacher. Instead, the parent-teacher communication is indicated in a triadic exchange via an interpreter. Refinements to this visualization may include omitting “parent” for “mother”; omitting student outcomes (not measured in the current study); narrowing the “student” field with age, gender or specific ethnocultural delimiters. This diagram also indicates the presence of the investigator as external to the triadic dialogue between parent(s) and teacher(s) in part to represent the two perspectives illustrated in the current study.
Research Design

The particular challenge of composing coded themes in a whole portrait is, as identified by Goetz and LeCompte (1984), like assembling a jigsaw puzzle. However, Goetz and LeCompte (1984) reference “having stolen some surreptitious glances at the picture on the box” (p. 192) when in fact the portrait being constructed is of interest and utility for being so far from a pre-conceived box. There is value in a writer-researcher’s ability to envision the portrait to be created and then composing it from careful knowledge of the generative pieces available in empirical data, newly gathered information, and the connections revealed in between (Creswell, 2008; Mertens, 2005). This is a portrait which can only be composed by the particular positioning of the writer-researcher in the situation, revealed as it is through interaction with the various players, familiarity with one’s own affective and intellectual filters, and deep knowledge of the foregoing examinations of factors germane to the relationships built in pursuit of the portrait report (Saville-Troike, 1998).

Within education, portraiture is particular for being akin to action research by involving the teaching practitioner-as-researcher in the acquisition of stories, creation of narratives, and analysis for meaning while each participant learns from the experience, shaping the experience even as it is recorded (Wade, Vaughn & Long, 2009). Coleman (2012) articulates the place of education as “both the channel through which values, customs, and culture are passed from one generation to the next and the most potent
means for bringing about change” and therefore an intersection of interest for teachers and parents. Correspondingly, the voices of parents, parents-as-teachers, and teachers are shared and combined to create a more holistic portrayal of the expectations carried through and to children. The interactive nature of narrative portraiture as a conduit for qualitative data is akin to Maxwell’s (2013) interactive model of qualitative research. In this model, the research questions are guided and push-pull influenced by each of the other parts of a research design and methodology: goals, conceptual framework, methods, and validity (Creswell, 2008; Maxwell, 2013).

Setting

Through association with another school, I became familiar with the La Amistad organization. Headquartered in a portion of a Presbyterian Church’s facility, La Amistad is the brainchild of Bill Maness, a former director of the Church’s Gym program. He pioneered the program in 2001, transforming it to a 501(c) 3 non-profit in 2006. Currently under the leadership of Cat McAfee, La Amistad includes after school tutoring and summer programming for children and educational programming for parents, including *English for Successful Living*, their signature adult program. La Amistad is a privately funded, community supported organization with volunteer tutors, a small staff of educators and bilingual assistants, counselors and social workers, and program directors. As an organization, “La Amistad believes that engaging students, families and caregivers together
as a cohesive unit establishes a support system where every student is given the opportunity to succeed and thrive academically, physically and personally” (La Amistad, 2016).

The La Amistad organization is keenly interested in the potential of this study’s outcomes as a way to improve the current outreach efforts in place to support student success. Because a requirement of participation in their programming is for parents to pledge support for students’ academic endeavors and to make graduation a family goal (La Amistad, 2016), improving parents’ understanding and support of academic goals and purposes makes student achievement more tangible and accessible. In addition, parents of children involved in the after school and tutoring programs are obliged to five instructional meetings in the duration of the school year to cultivate these goals in the families’ regular thought and practice. Toward this end, La Amistad agreed to host the interviews in their location. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participants, and within the common activity period of each after school activity. Participants were offered the opportunity to use English or Spanish at their comfort level, and advised of their right to elect not to answer questions. Finally, as condition of holding the interviews in La Amistad’s space at church facilities, supervision of the interviews conducted by church representatives at their discretion was required but not exercised.

Participants

Recruitment and inclusion of participating reporters fell into three phases (Creswell, 2008). The researcher is the first participant in Autobiographical Self-analysis
Self-analysis of goals and expectations for education, both as an educator and as a parent creates the framework for questioning, bracketing, and pre-coding in analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 1998, Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997; Seidman, 1998).

Second, the researcher interviewed the interpreter as a participant. This not only addresses concerns about interpreter bias framing (Cooper, Jackson, Azmitia, & Lopez, 1998) and familiarity with the purposes for the study (Freed, 1988; Marcos, 1979; Moerman, 1998) but includes the response of another teacher-mother from a different cultural framework. Additionally, the interpreter is a team member with La Amistad, and is familiar with the structure of programming and parent education. She has a unique ability to parse the participating respondents’ narratives beyond language interpretation to include contextual and cultural meaning which will assist the primary researcher with coding and comprehension. Finally, Spanish-speaking mothers of pre-middle-school students (5th grade, within the structure of their school system) were recruited through the La Amistad organization. The staff of La Amistad also provided triangulation data regarding these mothers’ true demonstrated support based upon participation and engagement history.

Researcher

Raised in the Industrial South by conservative, middle-class, Midwestern parents, I necessarily learned a certain standard of performance and behavior about school and success, to be perceived as a good girl, not causing problems or being too noticed. Do what you’re told, the best that you can, and you will do as well or better than the parents.
sacrificing for you to have what you do. Slacking was always seen as a temporary thing, like a mini-vacation from which return was not questioned. Attending college, a professional career, a manifestation of the white picket fence fantasy, all were expected because that’s what those good girls did. As a result, those expectations in their most modern form have been conveyed to my own children, just as they were conveyed to me.

Slightly contrary to the stated and unstated expectations related to school and career, my educational and professional trajectory was less than linear. Becoming a teacher was a later choice, something which evolved over time into an inevitability more than my consciously-pursued vocation. However, the expectations of doing one’s best, as told, and living up to the sacrifices that were made by others to make the opportunity possible never wavered. Personal experience has altered my expectations of others by removing the idea that progress from high school to college to career will be a straight path. For students before and entering middle school, the future is softly hazy, with no specific trajectory stated or planned, and after having lived that haziness, it’s for me easier to live with it in others, including my own children, and their future progress. Children on the cusp of middle school, so far from firm decisions regarding college and career, have open minds able to foresee potentialities like engineering and public service, without consideration of the financial and social realities of how work drives one’s lifestyle or place in public perception.
Interpreter

During the drug wars and FARC-influenced turbulence of the 1990’s, a professional engineer and his wife, a social worker, chose to leave Columbia with their two girls and start again as immigrants to the land of opportunity, the United States. Their oldest daughter, at 16, had demonstrated high academic skill with a talent for math and logical thinking. She started college with the intention of studying engineering but found herself changing paths after finding no pleasure in the early courses. Instead, she became an early childhood teacher, eventually as a leader in bilingual kindergarten programming at an in-town public school. Isabel earned a master’s degree in education as the mother of a young son and is the primary breadwinner for her family of four.

Isabel’s position in this research is unique, as she forms the bridge between language and culture for the researcher and the other participants. In addition, Isabel shares with the researcher the dichotomy of being both a teacher beholden to the teaching standards and a parent concerned about her child’s education. Her positioning in the “third space” (Bhabha, 1994, 2013; Hutcheon, Bhabha, Boyarin, & Golz, 1998; Newton, 1997, p. 294-295) of co-creating meaning from the data provided during interviews is especially valuable as an indicator of the disconnect between teachers’ professional knowledge and parents understanding regarding the standards to which teachers address their instruction. Isabel is not a trained, professional interpreter and does not intend to
convey herself as such; her existing relationship with the potential participants serves to aid the fluidity of the conversation.

**Bilingual**

Fabiola is a working mother of two young children. Originally from Mexico, she graduated high school in Mexico before immigrating to the United States. Her verbal fluency in nearly unaccented English sounds native, although she admits to occasional difficulties with vocabulary when she reads in English or talks with speakers of dialects. Her children are being raised fully bilingual, a priority she set for herself as a mother and for her children as members of a Latino community.

Her daughters’ education is one of Fabiola’s primary priorities, and she makes herself visible at the school and at La Amistad’s events. She consciously fosters relationships between her daughters and their teachers, ensuring her children feel safe and supported in the classroom setting. She also participates in family-oriented extra-curricular activities at the school. Fabiola is known among the staff at La Amistad as an engaged and involved parent (B. Bacorn, personal communication, August 29, 2016), and is known to the researcher in part by her regular presence at their children’s school events, particularly given that their daughters are in the same grade and have previously been in the same class.

**Monolingual**

Ana is the mother of two, and a stay at home parent from Mexico. She also graduated from high school in Mexico, and was educated completely in Spanish. Ana’s
husband is a chef, and works in one of the higher-end restaurants in town. He provides a comfortable financial situation which allows the family to live more comfortably than many of their community peers. Her older son, a quiet fifth grader, has developed significant facility with English in the ESOL program at their zoned public school. Her younger son, still a baby, is being raised with only Spanish in the home. He will eventually join his brother in the public school system and learn academic English in the school setting.

Ana has been acquainted with the researcher for nearly 6 years, as their children (her son and the researcher’s daughter) have attended school in the same classes since kindergarten. The relationship between these mothers is heavily conscribed by a lack of shared language; Ana is almost exclusively monolingual in Spanish and the researcher does not speak Spanish. However, the familiarity of repeatedly seeing each other in comfortable and familiar surroundings increased the ease with which they could converse through interpretation.

Co-occurring Context

The voice of children is not included in the data, or in the portraits created from this data. However, children are the center of this inquiry in more than one way. The introductory vignette describes friends and classmates who maintain an affectionate friendship independent from their vast differences in home language and culture. These children brought together the mothers sharing conversation, and the impetus for the study at hand. Similarly, the participating storytellers in each of the subsequent portraits are
mothers of children who are friends and classmates at a public elementary school which honors, includes, and respects their vast differences in home language and culture.

Nestled into a wooded hillside, the historically significant school façade fronts multiple additions and renovations to accommodate the diversifying population of a transforming center-city neighborhood. The school’s population has ebbed and flowed through economic and social changes which, most recently, have included a heavily Spanish-speaking enrollment of international students. Although the surrounding neighborhood includes one of the wealthiest zip codes in the city, the school remains Title I-qualified due to the high number of students receiving free and reduced-cost lunch programming. The teaching and administrative staff typifies the national public education character, being majority White, female, and middle-class, with the exception of two native-speaker Spanish teachers and a few special education or special service teachers. In addition to traditional grade-leveled general education which incorporates the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, the school includes a Pre-kindergarten class and a growing dual-language immersion (DLI) program taught in English and Spanish. The dual-language immersion program includes approximately fifty children spending half their day receiving core content instruction in English and the other half in Spanish. This empowers the native English speakers to acquire Spanish as a second language while their native Spanish-speaking classmates acquire English. At the time of this study, the DLI program only serves kindergarten and first grade students; none of the
students’ parents participating in this study are enrolled in this programming. However, Isabel, the study interpreter, is a teacher in this program, and maintains a unique position at the school and within the community for her recognition as a native Spanish speaker and as a member of the Hispano-Latino diaspora community it serves. She anticipates her daughter will enter the program when she reaches enrollment age.

The school maintains a Spanish-English bilingual parent liaison and parent resource center, funded almost entirely with Title I money. The parent resource center includes take-home activities for support and enrichment, parent education materials, and contact information for various social organizations in the area which support non-English speaking families. This information includes La Amistad’s after school enrichment program. In addition, the parent liaison assists with student check-in and check-out in the main office, does some interpretation as needed, and assists with translation of letters and documents sent home from the school.

A weekly newsletter is sent home to all students in both Spanish and English. Copied onto brightly colored paper, it includes general activity information, upcoming event dates, teacher birthdays, and other social and operational information about the goings-on of the school. In addition, the PTA maintains a communications position which includes responsibility for providing the same information in a regular email blast provided in both Spanish and English. In addition to the school-wide communications, all teachers make available class- or grade-specific newsletters, either on paper or on
websites, and sometimes both. Classroom newsletters describe grade-level specific activities and lessons, including curricular alignment of extra-curricular events and field trips, upcoming school visitors and opportunities for volunteers, and resources available within or through the school. For teachers without Spanish language capacity, the school district provides a translation and interpretation team as a segment of the World Languages and ESOL program office (Atlanta Public Schools, 2016). District employees can submit written documents through a web-based request and receive their documents via email within three to five business days (ibid). For district business, community liaisons speaking a multitude of languages are available by appointment for in-person interpretation or phone consultation at the request of school agents or parents (ibid).

The school’s circular communication policy, with different resources referring back to each other, is unique. The association of a multi-cultural student body with IB-guided programming and a respected, growing DLI track makes clear to all stakeholders how necessary multi-lingual communication in a variety of modes and methods is for the effective growth and development of the students and their communities. No specific participation with or utilization of these resources is required of the community. Teachers and administrators regularly mention the various resources at meetings and in conversations, and the parent center and associated resources are often advertised in the take-home fliers and mailings.
Data Collection

All data collection information relates to an idealized, not realized expectation of adherence to standards for qualitative research best-practices. Data are accurate to the context of collection, within each participant’s opinion of truth.

Interview Through Interpreter

Consideration of methodology in educational research has included adaptations of the qualitative research process utilizing the researcher as the instrument when that process must include an interpreter\(^1\) (Cooper, Jackson, Azmitia, & Lopez, 1998; Goodall, 2000). Strategizing research with ethnic or linguistic minorities must include acknowledgment of participants’ multiple identities and diverse relationships, including those with linguistic interpreters, based on researchers’ accumulated experience (Cooper, Jackson, Azmitia, & Lopez, 1998). In a systematic literature review, Wallin and Ahlstroom (2006) reveal that little consensus is demonstrated in the amount or quality of information regarding the interpreter as a co-researcher. More recently Cortabarria (2015) describes the challenge of a more heterogeneous population of Spanish-speaking individuals placing a greater burden upon interpreters and translators alike to mediate between Spanish and English without truly defined roles, qualifications or professional

\(^1\) The use of the word *interpreter* is explicit to the oral/aural transmutation of one language to another for the purpose of information exchange. The use of the word *translator* is explicit to the written word transmuted from one codified linguistic form to another. This is to the exclusion of oral/aural transmutation to visual representation in American Sign Language (ASL) by interpreters for the deaf and hard of hearing community.
standards yet strict behavioral and procedural standards defined by medical and legal work product. These interpreters commonly become respondents of record for medical patients and in legal proceedings, yet play a poorly understood role in creating meaning for the other parties involved in the transaction (Moerman, 1998). There is limited writing published in peer-reviewed context about interpreted data collection in education (Andrews, J., 2013; Hwa-Froelich & Westby, 2003; Leung, 2014). J. Andrews’ reflective exploration of a single interview regarding education research utilizes sociocultural theory and interactional linguistics to examine issues of power, exchange, and validity. Hwa-Froelich and Westby (2003) determine points of conflict related to interpreters serving multiple roles within a one employment construct through a single-case study. Expressing an interest in “the conceptualization and characterization of academic language with reference to classroom spoken communication, and the dynamic and interactional nature of classroom pedagogy in relation to the notion of academic language,” Leung (2014) indicates only the necessity for interpreted communication in specific educational contexts without direct evaluation of modes, means, or methods thereof.

By general analysis, the bulk of writing regarding interpreter participation in research and data-gathering is in nursing and social work. Both of these fields are governed by strict rules of ethics and conduct which constrain the function of interpreters. Within these ethics and behaviors, interpreters may mediate meaning beyond the scope of the interviewer or interviewee’s intention, leading to errors in judgment or understanding.
Marcos (1979) describes individual incidents of erroneous interpreter mediation in the evaluation and potential diagnosis of psychopathologies. While the stakes are significantly higher in psychopathology diagnosis than in education analysis, a concurrent question of validity, reliability and trustworthiness remains to be resolved.

In response to these concerns about validity, reliability, and trustworthiness, Freed (1988) recommends beginning with an explicit understanding of each individual’s role in an interpreted exchange. Interpreters must understand expectations of them in form and conduct, and have a general understanding of the context of the interviewer’s questions. Freed (1988) also recommends awareness of physical positioning during the interaction to best build rapport and make efficient use of nonverbal communication, especially when the interpreter and interviewee are ideally of the same cultural background.

Documentation of interpreter involvement in education is most frequently indicated as a significant challenge facing immigrant and linguistic minority populations, most often due to lack of access to interpreters (De Cohen, Deterding, Clewell, 2005; Guo, 2010; Ramirez, 2003; Turney, & Kao, 2009). Interpreter assistance is a federally mandated service public school entities must provide for community members. With origins in Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, clarity for interpretation services was provided in 2000 by Executive Order 12166 (Federal Interagency Working Group on Limited English Proficiency, 2015). The intent of these responsibilities is to provide guidance to programs
receiving federal funding regarding the appropriate steps toward providing access in
meaningful ways to service information based upon factors including total number or
proportion of people served, frequency with which those served utilize the programming,
necessity of the programming to the lives of participants, and responsible financial resource
use (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children’s Services, 2016). Although the language
“interpreter” or “translator” or permutations of those words are not specifically included in
these orders, providing access to non-English speaking individuals in effect requires this
type of service. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 does
specifically include multiple indications that interpretation and translation are appropriate
and necessary, stating all assessments, evaluations, and notices must be provided in the
native language of participants, and that school agents must do whatever is necessary to
ensure the meeting is comprehensible to the parent(s), including utilizing an interpreter
(Bender, 2008; Bridging Refugee Youth & Children’s Services, 2016; Langdon, 2008).
These documents make clear that access to an interpreter should not be a barrier to parental
involvement in school-based communication, yet frequently students still learning English
become the de facto interpreters for their parents

Informal interpretation by and for students and their parents is often completed by
students on their parents’ behalf. This mediated communication does not begin to
address issues of validity, reliability, or trustworthiness for any of the parties involved.
Considered a form of language brokering, this child-directed communication strains the
social contract of social roles between parents, teachers, and students (Corona, Stevens, Halfond, Shaffer, Reid-Quiñones, & Gonzalez, 2011; Cortabaria, 2015; García–Sánchez, Orellana, & Hopkins, 2011; Villanueva & Buriel, 2010; Weisskirch, 2012). Brokering communication between adults also has a significant influence on bi-cultural and bilingual children’s identity creation process. These children assume significant responsibility for themselves and their families in these exchanges but may lack the emotional or intellectual maturity to create inner meaning to the information being exchanged (García–Sánchez, Orellana, & Hopkins, 2011; Greenberger, Josselson, Knerr, & Kner, 1975; Smagorinsky, 2001; Villanueva & Buriel, 2010). While language brokering abilities may be associated with greater self-efficacy and more positive self-esteem for children, there is an erosion of mutual esteem between parents and their children as well as a possible decline in parental self-efficacy and self-esteem for parents engaged in child-mediated language brokering (Weisskirch, 2012). This operationalized use of English is more commonly expected by mothers of daughters and demands more technical language for special situations and circumstances (Corona, Stevens, Halfond, Shaffer, Reid-Quiñones, & Gonzalez, 2011; Villanueva & Buriel, 2010). The benefit of this additional linguistic demand is it increases the English usage between mothers and daughters, increasing fluency for both parents and children (García–Sánchez, Orellana, & Hopkins, 2011; Hammer, Lawrence, Rodriguez, Davidson, & Miccio, 2011).
Self-interview

Qualitative approaches to human behavior “must portray the subject as a whole, in the temporal, geographical, sociocultural context” as a function of biography (Campbell, 1990). To this end, self-interview is less about asking and answering questions and more about a reflective consideration of known experience from a particular lens or memory-goggle. Self-interview may more accurately be considered an autoethnography which begins “from reflections of what one has already experienced-from a life that one cannot step outside” (Crawley, 2012, p. 156). Autoethnography utilizes reflective thought to mine contextualized, lived experiences for lessons germane to the universalized human experience. The self-interviewing reflective process in autoethnographic writing is a formalized approach to the same reflective practice encouraged for all teachers. Considered reflection about teaching practices, determining what is effective or not, how students received the instruction, and what the outcomes are, is encouraged for all teachers. However, the “age of accountability” ushered in by No Child Left Behind and subsequent updates to the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (ESEA) beginning in 2001 has left teachers with little time or initiative for reflective consideration of their practice (United States Department of Education, 2015). Instead, teachers determine what curricular content can be aligned with what grade-level standard, and what instructional delivery method or activity will most effectively unite those purposes for student learning. Reflective thought or writing is both time consuming and
to some considerations superfluous to the practical teaching process. By contrast, autoethnography is a common practice for educational research, in line with action research (e.g. Ai, 2016; Brooks & Dinan Thompson, 2015; Nethsinghe, 2012; Pitard, 2016) and allows for deeper exploration of the contextual milieu associated with the formation of a particular theoretical framework, process of evolution, or other developmental arrangement.

With the limited cultivation of reflective practice for teachers in mind, composing a reflective self-interview or autoethnography as a teacher and as a parent must necessarily be guided not only by a procedural plan but also by known best practices for qualitative data collection. Issues of validity and reliability related to personal recount of data must be addressed (Creswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 1998; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982), as well as maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of connected participants. One method for self-interviewing is to record remembered events and experiences through journaling or diary-writing. “The diary is written as and when the participant wants to, so allowing time for reflection. The method places emphasis upon the respondent’s interpretation and freedom to follow or ignore the given focus” (Keightley, Pickering & Allett, 2012, p. 511). While diary self-interview is often followed by a dialogic interview of the writer by the researcher, this can be accomplished by re-reading and adding annotations or additional information as needed (Kenten, 2010). Self-reflection and writing can also
be utilized as prompted by the guiding inquiry of the study, as in this case. As a researcher, I created the list of guiding questions for interviewing participants, and will pose those same questions to myself. Rather than creating an oral record, however, I have recorded my responses in writing directly. This avoids the artificiality of recorded monologue and makes possible time and personal space for reflective consideration of the responses.

Inquiry Plan

Due in part to the demands of self-inquiry in the Portraiture process and in acknowledgement of an interpreter’s role in co-creating meaning, I proposed the following inquiry plan. Each step in this inquiry plan was appropriately and consciously fluid, maintaining space for unforeseen revelations or discoveries. In addition, each step purposefully informs the next, maintaining a constant-comparative stance with and toward the data provided in each step.

1. Questioning began with self-interview of the researcher. Revealing pertinent demographic and self-defined identification information sets the context of the data collection and inquiry. Self-interview is a reflective process guided by consideration of the researcher as a White, native English-speaker teaching heritage Spanish-speaking students English in a standards-based public school environment. In addition, a second, parallel line of reflective inquiry related to the researcher as the mother of a heritage English-speaking student
acquiring Spanish as a second language in a public school environment is interwoven as a counterpoint to the experience of heritage Spanish-speakers.

2. Utilizing the self-inquiry line of question, the researcher interviewed the interpreter. Following a brief, structured inquiry regarding demographic information, the interview was semi-structured around the interpreter’s experience as a teacher providing Spanish-language instruction to heritage Spanish-speaking students learning English as well as heritage English-speaking students learning Spanish in a bilingual immersion program. The second line of questioning was related to the interpreter’s expectations of her biological pre-middle-school-aged child, including expectations as a mother, as a teacher, and as a heritage Spanish speaker raising an English-speaking child in an English-dominant environment.

3. Comparison of the questions originally posed by the researcher in the self-interview and the questions and associated responses which evolved from the semi-structured interview of the interpreter was conducted in a matrix format. Results of the researcher’s self-interview, as well as the uncoded matrix of the interpreter’s interview questions and answers, were provided to the interpreter. Review and discussion of these questions and associated answers guided the choice of questions for interview of the heritage Spanish-speaking mothers in the next part of the inquiry. Similarity in questioning was
maintained for comparison purposes, but maintaining a semi-structured interview process permitted the most revelatory opportunities for participants.

a. Demographics: What do you consider your origin country or culture? Is Spanish your first language? How long have you and your child(ren) lived in the United States? (general inquiry of age, etc. re: children) How long has your middle schooler been learning English in school?

b. What standards of performance (i.e. grades, behavior, etc.) do you hold your child to? How do you evaluate their performance to those standards? Where do you think those standards came from?

c. How do those expectations specifically relate to their work at reading in English? What do you want/expect your child to do or be able to do in English reading? Why do you want that for your child, specifically in English? How is that different from your expectations of your child’s reading in Spanish?

4. With a guiding list of structured demographic questions and semi-structured interview questions, the interpreter and researcher met with two heritage Spanish-speaking mothers of pre-middle-school-aged children. Although the interview was primarily conducted by the interpreter, the researcher attended and followed to annotate question and answer responses with body language and incidental observations.
5. Comparison of the heritage Spanish-speaking mothers’ responses was conducted in a matrix both with and without comparison to the researcher’s responses and the interviewer’s responses immediately following receipt of transcription and translation. Observations and nonverbal communication was considered as needed as factors in the analysis and creation of portraits.

This inquiry plan was followed with one exception. The storytellers participating in the study were not interviewed separately, as intended. Due in part to the constraints of time and availability in scheduling for the researcher, the interpreter, and the mother(s) to be in the same place at the same time, the mothers were interviewed at the same time. While there is no empirical evidence to suggest a detriment or benefit to the information gathered with this change to the inquiry plan, the possibility of influence from one mother to the other, of the environment and social pressure on the mothers from the communal communication and potential to preventing revelatory disclosures cannot be ignored. This experience does, however, lend a portion of experiential reality to the collection of these mothers’ stories, as communal communication is not unheard of in public schools with limited resources of skilled interpreters. Parents may well have multiple entities involved in communication opportunities with teachers, and personalizing the communication is exceedingly difficult.
Data Analysis

Factors involved in the analysis of collected data are specific to the qualitative research standards and expectations. In the study at hand, data were subject to lexical and linguistic analysis as a condition of interpretation and translation which adds complexity to the analysis, not to the conclusions.

Interpretation and Translation

The bilingual interview was facilitated as a tripartite conversation between the researcher, the interpreter, and the participants. The interpreter interview and the researcher’s self-interview were conducted in English. Oral interviews were audio recorded. Recordings were removed from the recording device and stored in non-rewritable digital media within 6 hours of recording. The recording was provided to a contracted, confidential transcription service. Transcription was provided in both Spanish and English, with the Spanish portion translated to the English. The transcription was provided to the interpreter for review. Questions of interpretation in translation were discussed for resolution against the session notes recorded by the researcher and shared memories of the event between the researcher and the interpreter, as well as contextual interpretation regarding the dialect, register, and regionalist speech of the participants as needed.

Translation by a disassociated, anonymous translator allows for the most abstract and academic transfer of language from one code to another. Transcription was provided
by a contractor from Rev.com, noted for having thousands of translations for submission to USCIS and other U.S. authorities, where they have received a 100% acceptance rate (Rev.com, 2016). Translation was provided by VerbalInk. However, due to the natural variability of meaning which may be present in any conversation, triangulation through interpreter verification, session note correlation, and awareness of vernacular constructions was used to increase validity of conclusions. Validity is also confirmed by random analysis by the interpreter regarding coding, theme analysis, and thematic grouping.

Although all transcripts were recorded and translated, quotations have only been taken in English. Due to the researcher’s limited capacity with Spanish, and the reality of most English-speaking teachers’ practice in using interpreters, attempts at using quotes in Spanish would be disingenuous. In the effort of transparency, and for purposes of confirming validity, all quotes are available in transcripts in both languages in the appendices. In addition, an example of the coding spreadsheet utilized for identifying conjunction and disjunction between the mothers’ stated expectations and the language of the standards is included in the appendices.

Narrative Coding

Coding was conducted in multiple phases (Creswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 1998; Fielding & Fielding, 1986, p. 52-70; Seidman, 1998, p. 107-110). Constant comparative coding took place upon receipt of transcribed and translated documentation
verified by the interpreter. Coding was done in English only; reference to Spanish transcription was only in consultation with the interpreter in verification of differences in connotation due to language variations. In addition, constant comparative coding was advised by cultural familiarity of the interpreter as needed.

Comparative coding was conducted through each individual participant’s responses to semi-structured and unstructured interviews as well as between corresponding responses from across the participant group to scripted questions within the semi-structured interviews. Comparison within participant responses is intended to reveal recurrent concerns or themes as well as patterns of reference to teacher speech and associated understanding. Comparison across the participant group is intended to provide group-wise themes and common concerns.

For the purposes of the proposed study, responses to inquiry were coded with attention to contradictions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 178; Creswell, 2008; Moerman, 1988; Saville-Troike, 1998). Responding participants were cued to answer open-ended and semi-structured questions which provided the opening for self-contradiction as well as contradiction to the answers of all other participants (Saville-Troike, 1998). Although the goal of the study was to find points of concurrence and perpetuate that analogous messaging as much as possible, remedy to non-concurrent messaging can only be proposed when the disagreement or disunion is identified and analyzed. The “noticings” of the researcher or participants are to recognized disclosures of information the parties
communicating both consider useful; failure for the information to be of similar use or interest is communicative error (Moerman, 1988). As a result, participating reporters’ commentary regarding noticings “permits us to locate and analyze talk in which participants agree (or conspicuously fail to agree) about the sensibly noticed and consensually discussed properties of their world” (Moerman, 1988, p. 106).

Fictive Narrative

Utilizing fiction as a genre for relating the told stories of research participants is appropriate in this application on a number of counts. The first, and most salient to transparency in the research process, is in protecting the identity of storytellers participating in the data collection. By providing personal information, stories which in some part may be identity-forming or culturally discrete, the storytellers must be protected from exposure to the greater public. This is essential to establishing and supporting the relationship between the story-gatherer (researcher) and the story-teller (participant) which permits the self-revelatory aspects of personal storytelling. It is also the obligation of a social sciences researcher, and is officially codified in the informed consent documents provided to, explained to, and signed by the storytelling participants.

The place of fictive narrative in the social sciences is supported by Szabó’s (2015) assertion that, as part of a theory about the acceptability of a third person narrator, fictive narrative represents the truthfulness of the narrative world’s state of affairs, thereby validating the received truth to the reader. In fact, Hatavara and Mildorf (2017) assert that
the purpose of fictive narrative relates more generally to the content of the narrative than on the fictionality of the recount. Their study reveals engagement with presentation from one mind to another necessarily moves from fictional to nonfictional stories as needed to convey the intended message, with artful, conversational, and potentially documentary intents and audiences (Hatavara and Mildorf, 2017). Yacobi’s (2015) discussion of the duality of voice in fictive narrative between the narrator and the author, and differentiating between them, if at all, describes the informative transaction in the narrative which must be parsed for truth in voice as opposed to truth in fact, based upon the transparency of the narrator as a proxy for the author or as an omniscient and omnipresent force independent from the author. The collection of cross-cultural and cross-methodological study examples collected by Smeyers, Bridges, Burbules, and Griffiths (2015) illustrates the thoughtfulness and precision with which researchers must approach decisions about methodology and interpretation of collected educational practice data. Inquiries into education must consider the dichotomous relationship between thought and practice, between qualitative and quantitative information, and between the analogous and dissimilar characteristics in each situation. In summary, Smeyers, Bridges, Burbules, and Griffiths (2015) emphasize the necessity that interpretation must be the greatest part of consideration in transference or application of conclusions drawn from educational research.

However generalizable or not the conclusions from educational data research may be, the overarching purpose is to elucidate and inform the thought and practice of those
involved in education. Education is both a means and an end, each served through the contextualization of information in fictive narratives. Mickel (2012) supports the use of fictive narrative for reporting from archaeological sites due to the useful flexibility of temporality and dynamic way the author can contextualize the findings. These attributes allow the archaeologist to convey a more living, human experience of the static historical findings which may enhance understanding for non-participants. Narrative fiction as ethnohistory connects the artifacts and existing realia to informative stories which illustrate the lived experiences of unknown individuals in a historical context and serves to advance the theory rather than dogmatic explication of practice (Braun, 2013). Especially as a diverse but connected collection, fictively retold stories allow historians and those who learn from them to be inclusive of the wide variety of narrative information outside of academic norms (Braun, 2013). Expanding upon the doctoral thesis which revealed the self-authoring of teachers-in-training and the trainers of those teachers, Hayler (2011) perpetuates the value and instructional purpose of autoethnographic narrative and the fictionalization of lived experience. Starr (2010) correspondingly identifies both implications of and value for the methodology for understanding the dialectic between oneself and all others. Writing one’s autoethnography helps the author locate an identity of reference to cultural and historical influences, deepening personal comprehension of internalized values in context. Autoethnographical narrative in a fictional form can be educational to the masses, to the individual, or as a case against which other cases may be
compared in order to generate ever more general conclusions (Belbase, Luitel and Taylor, 2013; Boylan & Johnson, 2010). In the case of the present study, autoethnographical narrative in constructed fictionality makes use of the realia from interview and observed cultural context as well as background context grounded in empirical research and theory to construct a verbal portrait of the multi-faceted and influenced relationships between teachers, students, the students’ parents, and the values and purposes each of these stakeholders bring to the dynamic between them.

Portraiture

Lawrence-Lightfoot utilized existing guidelines to qualitative data collection and analysis as a foundation for the method she named Portraiture. Seeking to unite the aesthetic of the arts with the intellectual rigor of science, Lawrence-Lightfoot combined accepted strategies for qualitative research with researcher-inclusive collection and reporting techniques which honor the “inability to capture and present the total reality” (1997, p. 5) of a situation without including acknowledgement of the researcher’s interaction with the researched.

The humanist perspective which motivates and inspires Portraiture “is an intentionally generous and eclectic process that begins by searching for what is good and healthy and assumes that the expression of goodness will always be laced with imperfections” (1997, p. 9) which are characteristic of human efforts. To this end, Portraiture is a deeply contextualized reporting and analysis of the authentic behavior of
actors with and to the researcher, setting a standard of “authenticity, capturing the essence and resonance of the actors’ experience and perspective through the details of action and thought revealed in context” (1997, p. 11). Rather than reporting what has been heard through storytelling from the actor or storyteller, the Portraittist is instead reporting what the story was told for, drawing together greater detail and information than even the storyteller is aware of including.

Ever mindful of the artistic component of Portraiture, the metaphoric explanation of the process is to the creation of an artifact. This is in part the value of utilizing Portraiture to illuminate education and the artistic practice of teaching. O’Reilley (1989, p. 23) describes the practice of teaching by noting that “. . . whether we are aware of it or not, professional life tends to be dominated by one or another set of metaphors.” Portraiture works because it utilizes words as individual brushes to paint an all-encompassing portrait not just of the actor but of the actor’s contextualized world (Butler-Kisber, 2002), resting in part on the portraitist’s metaphoric world. Lawrence-Lightfoot asserts,

… the aesthetic aspects of production that can contribute to the expressive content include the use of keen descriptors that delineate, like line; dissonant refrains that provide nuance, like shadow; and complex details that evoke the impact of color and the intricacy of texture. The forms that are delineated convene into emergent themes and the interrelationship of these themes is woven through the connections of their content against the backdrop of their shared context. (1997, p. 29)
Portraiture is especially useful to convey the contextualized experience of a researcher co-creating meaning not just with the actors and participants but also with an interpreter. The meaning which is documented is created in a multi-faceted way, through a collection of filters and affects, and therefore must be reported in a way which reveals, honors, and acknowledges the multiple potential meanings involved. Rather than dispassionate, impersonal bracketing and extraction of the researcher from the data collection and interpretation, Portraiture includes the researcher as a distinct and essential voice contributing to the conversation. While including the researcher precludes replicability, the potential for replication in most qualitative studies is accepted as a non-essential verifying factor (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 1998; Geertz, 1973). However, Portraiture seeks to make possible the universal experience by creating a parable upon which to model the reader’s own thoughtful experience, including the Transactional Theory of Literary Work (Rosenblatt, 1978).

Acknowledging the researcher as a participating co-creator of meaning with the participants includes recognition of the researcher’s voice (Anttila, Barrett, Doan & Rutmann, 2015; Chapman, 2005; Smitka, 2015). Lawrence-Lightfoot indicates multiple uses of voice for text development in a produced Portrait: as witness, as interpretation, as preoccupation, as autobiography, as a mode of listening, and as a conversation (1997, p.87). While the intent of the research guides selecting a voice, choosing a reporting voice must be a fluid decision based upon the stories which are told and the information
which must be conveyed following analysis and interpretation. The Portraitist is ever-present, listening and recording, reflecting and considering, looking into and beyond the words provided by and about the participants for unacknowledged, unrevealed, or unknown meaning. Reporting must include a balance and understanding of Geertz’s (1973) thick description, thoughtfully interpreted and discerned from the content of the stories, and thin description, intricately revealing but without great inference.

A portion of revelation in constructing a Portrait is the relationship built between the researcher and the participants. The researcher must endeavor to build a relationship of benign attentiveness, productively revealing without transgressing boundaries which would impede thoughtfully navigated and negotiated levels of trustful intimacy in a reciprocal way. Participants’ intents must be based upon the earlier-stated intent of revealing goodness, even when flawed, in an effort to illuminate concepts which remain hidden in the absence of the Portrait. Relationships must be built relative to the depth and quality of time spent in shared company, which may define the boundaries and contextualize the institution of familiarity. Lawrence-Lightfoot calls this “ecological mapping” (1997, p. 139) and concedes that portraits constructed from less penetrating relationships “are broader, more contextual, often institutionally defined … [where] the topics of discourse are more circumscribed and the boundaries clearer” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997). To this end, “it is the Portraitist’s responsibility to define the boundaries and protect the vulnerability and exposure of the actor” (Lawrence-Lightfoot,
throughout the relationship, never motivated in a self-serving way but always by a desire to reveal the most universal truth in servicing the purposes of the work. One way the Portraitist can achieve this protection is to utilize one voice to represent the many in expressing a revealed fact or theme, blending the voices in meaning and purpose while allowing one to speak for them all (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997, p. 173). This may or may not be the expected information the researcher intended to reveal; preparatory self-memoing by the researcher can help to triangulate anticipated revelations from experienced ones, and assist in differentiating preconceived themes from those revealed in the stories told by the participants (Creswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 1998). The researcher-cum-Portraitist’s chosen voice reflects the contemplative quality of portrait-making, imperfectly defining the humanity in the experience. This codifies O’Reilley’s (1998, p. 5) notion that contemplation “is a dimension of being human … and that’s why I think it’s appropriate to talk about the contemplative dimensions of teaching.” Considering, synthesizing, creating from gathered data the portraits of thought and experience is a way of making available the singular experience of that individual in interaction with anonymous others to unforeseen future anonymous others who may choose to receive that experience in order to guide their own. Receiving Portraits allows the reader to create their own meaning from the meaning the portraitist has attempted to create and convey.
Within the Portrait construction process, Lawrence-Lightfoot characterizes the work of portraiture as operating in a state of “generative tension” between such facets as “organization and classification on one hand and maintaining the rich complexity of human experience” on the other while creating codes, themes, and categories from interview data. Part of this tension is created when attentively considering the discrepant, deviant, or outlier datum for the context it helps to define and the definition it provides to the researcher. Only with a self-critical, self-reflective, and self-conscious mind can the researcher receive and reveal the connections within and to context from the tension between art and science (Creswell, 2008; Mertens, 2005). Although guided by multiple theoretical approaches, including Rosenblatt’s (1978) and Lawrence Lightfoot’s (1983) with Davis (1997), the Portraitist must really “let methodology follow from the particular (this student, this hour, this blue spruce) rather than from the world of theory” (O’Reilley, 1998, p. 14). The Portraitist must be the human in the human experience in order to feel the tension that is created and convey it deeply and thoroughly to prospective readers for their own interpretation (Johnson, N., 2009).
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS: PORTRAITS AND CONCLUSIONS

Portraits are designed to integrate Geertz’s (1973) “thick description” by contextualizing more than the outward expressions of participants. Each of the following portraits is a facet on the lens of communication between parents and teachers, between envoys of different cultures, language backgrounds, and anticipated futures. These portraits each inform the other, just as facets on a gem each contribute to the sparkle for which the whole is prized. To that end, the final portrait becomes a portion of that sparkle, assembling each of the diverse portraits into a singular conversation. In concept, the fictional narratives which follow are the artistic or aesthetic rendering of scientific analysis, making palatable hard science through artful rendering (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Utilizing Portraiture as a methodology for collection and analysis of data works because the words are used to create a cohesive illustration not only of the author-participant’s vision but of the author-participant’s contextualized world (Butler-Kisber, 2002). This methodology is unique in the capacity to express the experience of a researcher building context, knowledge, and meaning in conjunction with the other participants. The meaning created by all interconnected participants must be documented a multi-faceted way so that it can be reported to reveal, honor, and acknowledge the variety of diverse meanings involved. Portraiture includes the researcher as a distinct and
essential voice central to an interactive conversation instead of bracketed out of the interaction as a dispassionate, impersonal documentarian. Including the researcher eliminates the opportunity for replicability but in most qualitative studies non-replicability is accepted as a non-essential factor (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 1998; Geertz, 1973). The essence of Portraiture as a research methodology is making possible a highly-accessible experience through storytelling which readers may utilize as a model for their own thoughtful experience as described by Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory of Literary Work (1978). Portraits include the reader, making their background knowledge and affect part of the interpretation and evaluation of collected data.

Criticism of Portraiture is particularly focused upon this broadly inclusive perspective. Critics ask if and how a Portraitist can support the unverifiable, unilateral, and independent creation of Portrait-artifacts from their own data collection and analysis when the truth of those Portraits is necessarily circular (English, 2000). Portraiture has relied on the eloquence and evocative prose characteristic of authors as esteemed as Lawrence-Lightfoot (1978, 1983, 2003) for veracity and reliability as truth in recitation. In fact, circular reference to and through truth is the ultimate check for validity on a Portrait; readers may fail to experience transactional association with the Portrait and therefore find it untrue in their own epistemological schema. While Portraiture may strive to define the essential truth or quality of a construct, relationship, or situation it will
always be subject to the infinite fracture of information through the participants’ lenses (Cope, Jones & Hendricks, 2015). There is no foil, treatment, or abstraction that can prevent influence from “the politics of vision” (English, 2000). Instead, the ultimately human experience of connection and co-created meaning defines the value, purpose, meaning, and richness of Portraiture as an educative methodology. Participants in analogous human experiences may find previously invisible facets or filters to their vision of the explicated truth with which to better envision their own expanded perception, just as we may individually be moved by the beauty of an expertly wrought canvas or exquisitely turned phrase in melody. There is no interrogation of this experience, only the increasing capacity to consider the opportunity for reflective thought that it provides.

Portrait Findings

Each of the following segments creates a contextualizing portrait of a participant’s lived experience. The portraits are titled to indicate a thematic nuance created by the participant’s lived experience.

But Mom, You Don’t

Car doors disgorge small humans with amazing speed as the minutes tick ever closer to 8 AM. All along the curb cars ease forward to have back doors yanked open from the inside by eager students or from the outside by patient, encouraging adults. The small bodies and associated baggage—brightly colored backpacks, occasional poster board
or shoe box projects, character-themed lunch boxes, haphazardly snatched up jackets-tumble and careen up the elegantly curving stairs into a classically dignified school. Just as the principal begins to upright a sandwich board at the end of the carpool lane, a small car lurches to a stop just in front of the doors and three dishevelled children emerge.

The sandwich board reads “It is now after 8 AM. Students must be escorted inside. Es ahora después de 8:00. Los estudiantes deben ser escoltados dentro.” The principal turns as that sandwich board settles upright to smile at the children shuffling up the stairs and leans down toward the passenger window of the car. It rolls down slowly, and the principal’s bright smile breaks only as she says, “We’ll see you at the parent meeting later!” With a wave, she turns and follows the remaining stragglers into the school to start another day, flapping her arms like a duck shooing ducklings with her wings.

“No, you won’t,” I mutter under my breath as I rush off into traffic on my way to yet another school building. With just over five congested city miles to cover in under thirty minutes, I know I don’t have time to stop and chat. Worse, I know I won’t be at the parent meeting, or the PTA coffee, chaperoning the dance, or manning a booth at the fall festival. Instead, I’ll be grading papers, writing a lesson plan, searching for supporting materials, or otherwise not being engaged in my own children’s school life. I’ll be lucky to see inside their backpacks each evening before shooing them off to bed and thrilled when the weekly newsletter emerges from the school communication folder.
each Friday, crumpled but legible. Most weeks I read over their work with a mixture of pride and confusion; although the concepts are familiar, the execution is peculiar and unfamiliar. My mental accounting for grades and minus signs is all that truly registers before the myriad papers are recycled *en masse*.

I was trained to know that effective teaching is more than the time in the classroom, and preparation is what makes it possible to implement an engaging, informative, and assessment-aligned lesson. Students will be evaluated by their performance on tests which teachers do not write, so every piece of input and guidance must be carefully crafted to provide just enough information while retaining the student’s motivation to learn. Standards composed by anonymous workers in the offices of any State Board of Education guide each step in providing information and assessing students’ acquisition level of that information; those standards are the drumbeat and cadence of public school teachers’ work. My efforts at being an effective teacher often leave me in the dark with the standards and content my own children are exposed to, and unable to participate in the regular parent meetings and activities the school provides. However, my work as a teacher has not observably impacted my children until recently. With the blunt wisdom of unfiltered awareness, my child recently observed, “My friends’ parents need help to talk to our teacher. It’s really hard for them. But Mom, you don’t. Can you help them?” Out of the mouths of babes; innocently, she hit my concern without realizing the depth and complexity of her question. Speaking as a child, as the school-
based representative of a family, she sees the challenge I face as a teacher of just those children, the ones who come from languages and culture backgrounds so different from my own. I wonder how much those parents know or understand about the education and experiences their children are receiving each day, especially compared to my own paltry knowledge. Is it possible they know as much as my very little? Could they, and how could they, know any more?

For me, home-school communication is easy. The school-wide information in the weekly newsletter, email blasts, and website updates are easy to access and keep me up to date on the major events my kids may or may not mention. The teachers frequently send grade-level or class-specific newsletters and emails, and remain conscientious about signing behavior charts or sending class photos by email or text. My children’s teachers know I’m a teacher; although it doesn’t change their expectations, it does shade their willingness to cut me some slack on conference appointments or chaperoning events. It does change the conversations we have, because they believe I understand the district-mandated metrics for achievement and how the lessons and assessments will be determined. In fact, no elementary classroom teacher I’ve interacted with as a parent has ever asked me if I know about the standards for that grade or class. Teaching to standards is so pervasive it’s almost the elephant in the room in any conversation with parents, unspoken but oppressively present nonetheless. For other parents, English-speaking or not, the complex, jargon-laden language of stated standards can be impenetrable or
confusing. This challenge can be even worse if parents, like Fabiola and Ana, don’t even know that the standards exist. How will they begin to grasp the purposes and outcomes of the work their children are doing? How can they know the meaning behind the grades and reports that come home, often in a language they cannot read comprehensively?

Managing More Than Words

I lurch to a stop under heavy century oaks shading a hulking, old building clinging heavily to the side of an in-town hill. All around are the sounds and bustle of a busy neighborhood sputtering into a morning routine which includes navigating around the particular traffic of heavily overcrowded school-buses relieving themselves of bustling loads of children, impatient parents delivering reluctant students, walkers trudging under real or perceived weight up flights of crisp brick stairs-and I mentally shift my attention and perception to the teacher-wise behavior of my next few hours. I know that “living by some idea about how things should be is not entirely preferable to living as who you are” (O’Reilley, 1998, p. 18) but I live keenly aware of the expectations that are held for me.

My principal and I laughingly call me a unicorn. My job is unique among my fellow educators, enough that most of them recognize me as a teacher but not as the same. I’m like a fantastic creature of myth and legend that everyone has heard of but no one really knows well enough to understand. It’s a strange and alienating experience to work collegially and cooperatively with peers who never really know what it is I do. I’m
greeted with respect and inclusion but caution, as if my participation will be so novel there is an entertainment value to what may come. The school’s culture of high expectations lands heavily on the teachers, with mandated cooperation for planning and prescribed professional learning schedules that leave little time for real personal connection or reflection on the practice of teaching. I float through this untethered, connected only by tangent and determination.

My English-learning students come from all over, and at varying levels of knowledge, ability, interest, and motivation. While the learning diversity is not so different from any other classroom on campus, the shared but unique challenge each of my students face is the level of English language capacity they bring to their learning experiences. They may perhaps be native to the United States but only speak English during the school day. They may be recently immigrated from across the globe and bring a high level of academic English with very little oral proficiency. By policy, they are gathered by age, not by ability, and expected to meet the same levels of demonstrated content comprehension as any native English speaker. The extra level of challenge in acquiring that content knowledge through a language which may or may not be familiar is the work which makes my professional position unicorn-like; I teach, but from two directions at once, to provide academic content knowledge through language as well as basic functional language at the same time.
My sixth grade English Language Arts in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ELA-ESOL) class is governed by two sets of proficiency standards which intersect in different places and at different levels for each of my students. The Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) prescribe the action-oriented proficiencies in English language skills all sixth graders in Georgia public schools should demonstrate through proficiencies and standardized assessments. These proficiencies will be assessed on the Milestones test in the late spring which measures acquired skills by comparison to a state norm, in addition to my own regular in-class formative and summative assessments geared toward small subsets of the larger GSE expectations. The second set of standards is defined by the WIDA consortium and describes in a more demonstration-oriented way the students’ proficiencies at defined levels in each of the 4 modes of language use. Each student is measured at a discrete level for each of the language modes through testing related to those standards, defining what type of product demonstration would be appropriate for each student at each level. Integrating these two sets of standards produces an individualized assessment rubric for each student but does not necessarily bring them to the level of competency which the state’s assessments require.

As I plan my lessons, cooperate with other teachers, provide modified assignments, and assessments for other classes in other disciplines, I am conscious of the disjunction between the expectations of the state standards and the students’ ability to demonstrate their proficiency. I know that my students probably have very lively
analytical processes going on in their heads when they see the parts and whole of a population density map or the impact of weather and climate upon the Earth’s landforms but they cannot adequately express what they think or know without a comprehensive vocabulary of common and content-specific language to assemble into coherent speech or writing. Their expression becomes even more challenging when the content is language itself, and the demanded expressions are words on top of words on top of words, none of which can be exactly the same as the words which were used before.

My instruction is necessarily holistic, including just-in-time cultural context to words and phrases included in content instruction. Scoring in a football game may be one point or it may be six, with an optional seventh. The holiday season may be strictly through the late fall and winter or it may be determined by phases of the moon. Picking flowers may be frivolous summer diversion or it may be work which helps to sustain a family, depending on how the blooms are counted and by whom. Each of these misunderstandings has come up and been resolved as my students have worked through example questions on standardized assessments designed and implemented in coordination with state standards. I watch and listen as my students read the printed words fluidly but uncomprehendingly and look up with confusion and frustration written across their faces. My own children, born and raised in the state where they attend school, have probably glossed right past these questions, never once questioning that scoring in football should be at least six points or that they have the luxury and freedom to pick flowers just for fun,
especially around a summer holiday so uniquely tied to their national identity. The heart-sinking truth is that there will be something else I haven’t discussed with my students that will show up on the formal test and I will not be able to scaffold the information into a context they can understand. For that one moment, their hard-won vocabulary and content knowledge won’t matter because remembering how to read a population density map or what influence weather patterns have on hurricane formation and beach erosion will be irrelevant in the face of reading about vacationers converging on a coastal city for a pork smoking contest while they wonder who taught pigs to use cigarettes and why.

Multiple Worlds, Many Voices

Sasha’s sassy walk and her brother Lucas’s quiet patience belie the earnest effort and encouragement that pushes them forward from home. At three, Sasha is verbal and vocal beyond her years, with plenty to say and no fear of doing so. She speaks confidently to adults and children alike, and does so in both Spanish and English with ease. Her casual transfer from one to the other is classic interlanguage (Selinker, 1972) with a lack of awareness that serves as testimony to her emerging fluency. I laugh when I see her holding an audience and ruling a room; there is no compunction in her little world.

Lucas, however, is more of a listener. He listens to his mother speak in Spanish and responds as needed, but does not go out of his way to utilize the Spanish he has learned. His verbal fluency in English is beyond class-peers his age, but does not translate
to a love of words and reading as his mother might desire. He reads daily out of duty, not out of desire, making his mother sad and frustrated at not being able to find something more stimulating to fire his own initiative. His peers recognize he holds greater skill in the Spanish language classes they share, but those skills are not quite as developed, not quite as fluent, as his mother would prefer. At least, not to anyone’s observed assessment; he may just be keeping it to himself.

Their mother Isabel is a reader herself, and her kids see her disappear into books when her schedule permits. Between her work as a teacher leader in a Spanish-English dual language program (DLI) and a site manager for after school programming specifically for Hispanic children, her home time quickly disappears into the daily obligations of parenting and planning for the next day’s events. Weekends, holidays, even unexpected breaks, she tears through books like a buzz saw. By contrast, their father Louis manages to balance three books at a time, picking them up and putting them down with ease. He reads casually, slowly, taking pleasure without urgency in the matter the way well-fed diners turn a rich dessert over and over in their mouths late into an evening.

Both models should encourage reading for the kids. Isabel and I laugh at each other because we see each other’s frustration and expectation both as parents and as teachers. Our children are friends, beloved to each other, but so different in their love of reading. The puzzle of individual motivation cannot be solved by their guileless friendship.
Planning for teaching, however, takes on a different complexity for Isabel. Not only does she teach to standards as set by the state board of education but she does so in cooperation with a co-teacher in the dual language immersion model for kindergarteners. Her instructional position is as a Spanish content teacher, using her training both as an early childhood educator and as a native-speaker Spanish teacher. Her co-teacher provides English language instruction through ESOL strategies for English learners, complementing the native-language Spanish instruction in the other half of the students’ day. Isabel’s teacher mind knows the value, purpose, and outcomes of the state teaching standards, and they remain on the forefront of her mind as she teaches through each class rotation each day. However, as a parent, she acknowledges not really knowing what the fifth graders are up to in Lucas’s class, or where their instruction will lead by the end of the year in terms of sustained skills and knowledge.

While Lucas is successfully mastering fifth grade standards through instruction upstairs, Isabel is wrestling with providing language-rich content instruction downstairs in the same school. The luxury is that she is familiar with the communication efforts the school makes, and she contributes to those efforts. The weekly newsletter home from her class supports the DLI goals by being in both Spanish and English, and the parents are welcomed into the classroom regardless of their home language. However, she admits to being less informed about the content and instructional standards her son is learning from on the other side of the building. “You know, whatever it is, and we talk about it, but I
don't . . . I could look up the skills and the pacing calendar and see what they're covering in each unit and be more proactive in that way. It's a parent fail, from my part,” she says, reflecting on her awareness of the fifth grade standards. “I don't know more about the tests, and I think I should know more. That's another parent, parent fail there.” She laughingly refers to Lucas as “on autopilot” because he is a high-achieving, well-behaved student. If he was often in trouble, or was showing difficulty in achieving at school, she feels she would be more attentive to the expectations and his accomplishments related to those expectations.

Part of that autopilot comfort she has with his progress is related to the proactive outreach and communication from his teachers. We share this experience, Isabel and I, of parenting a “good kid” who requires so little direct oversight and intervention to be successful. Bemusedly, we admit that may be part of the reason our children are friends. She sighs as she observes, “I think they [the teachers and administrators] do a pretty good job when they do curriculum nights and things like that, when we can talk about the major work or the grade and what they're going to be learning. Um, I think it's important for parents to go and attend those, um, but it's also important for teachers to make that material accessible to parents that don't understand the language or understand why those are the standards that are being taught and how they're gonna be tested.” Very often, the challenge for her as it is for me is in attending the curriculum nights; at that time we are
also hosting parents in our teaching rooms, making the curriculum and the standards transparent to the parents of our own students.

“So, as a parent, I often, because I'm so busy teaching my kids [students] and, and working on, on the things that I have to do in the classroom, I often don't know what my son, you know, is studying. I would like to be more involved in his course of study. I just am not,” she shrugs. I nod in agreement. We share this frustration, but take comfort in knowing our children are academically motivated and self-regulated learners. However, what if that changes? What happens as they age, become adolescents, go off to middle school and beyond? Would that force our engagement with the stated standards and the published information about tests? It’s hard to know, and neither of us wishes to consider the potential for additional worry. More so, we wonder how other parents with less “good kid” behavior from their own children are able to address motivation or understanding or fostering their children’s success. Adding an additional layer of concern, how can parents without the luxury of fluency in English know if their children behave appropriately and are successful learners? And what if their children aren’t?

More and Better for My Girls

Lara is quiet around adults, preferring to watch and wait for an explicit invitation before speaking. Her teachers consider her a model student, with excellent, polite behavior and high achievement. During open house events and unscheduled class time, she loves to return to her previous classes and check in with the teachers, often sharing
hugs and quick updates about her progress. Fabiola acknowledges that she has encouraged her younger daughter to trust her teachers, consciously cultivating the relationships as Lara demonstrates confidence and comfort with each new class. I have always seen Lara as independent, but an outsider’s perspective on behavior will never have the accuracy of a mother’s understanding.

Fabiola considers Lara smart and capable but perhaps babied into a softer, quieter personality, *timida*. She knows that without the encouragement that fosters a closer relationship with her teachers, Lara might fade into the background and become invisible. Fabiola wants more for Lara than that shadow existence, just has she does and has for her older daughter. The model of a successful older sister is, to all outward appearances, part of what motivates Lara to the levels of academic achievement she has reached so far. As a high schooler on scholarship at a private school on the other side of the neighborhood, Lara’s older sister shows the value of hard work and perseverance. Fabiola’s hope is that Lara will follow her sister with a similar scholarship opportunity, designed to increase outward diversity at a school which historically has catered to a wealthy, White elite.

Fabiola is pragmatic about the opportunities that racial identification and affirmative action-like programs provide for her family. She and her husband work hard at their restaurant jobs to provide their girls a secure home environment but she acknowledges they have little extra for luxuries like private education. Fabiola’s English skills are near-native and unaccented; her children have only qualified for ESOL.
identification because she insists they speak and read Spanish at home to preserve the connection to their heritage. The sacrifice of social and school support of the girls’ ethnic and cultural heritage is worth the potential a private school education can provide for their future, and Fabiola prioritizes maintaining their cultural connection at home. With only a high school education herself, Fabiola expects her daughters’ academic achievements will carry them to college and beyond. She also knows that being identified as Latina and natively Spanish-speaking will increase their chances for scholarship awards, and bilingualism is a marketable skill for their future careers. They’ll be Good Men

Beneath enviable curls, Pablo’s sweet face remains impassive as his mother settles his baby brother into a stroller. He spots a friend across the room and whispers something in Spanish to his mother before dashing away to huddle over a tablet to play games. The connection between mother and son is visible; she watches him move away and a smile flutters across her face before she returns to fussing over her infant son Simon. She dotes, tucking the blanket here, repositioning the pacifier there, even though he’s quietly staring at the ceiling fan and drifting into a milk-drunk doze.

With nearly nine years between her boys, Ana sees herself dedicated to parenting them individually before anything else. She is untroubled about the differences in their needs, seeing it as her primary purpose rather than a challenge or burden. Her husband’s management-level job at a high-end eatery provides her the luxury of being home with
her children and she relishes the time she spends with each of them individually. Before
Simon was born, Ana worried that Pablo would be angry or resentful toward the new
sibling so she began early concentrating her efforts on maintaining high levels of
engagement with him. They read together daily, in English and in Spanish, and she
checks to see that his homework was finished before putting him to bed. At every
opportunity she visits the school, bringing Simon along, making herself visible to Pablo
and to his teachers.

Ana’s dedication to parenting is motivated by the idea that raising good boys to be
good men requires they be kind, strong, and capable, like their father. She wants them to
go to college, unlike their parents, because college is a chance to have more choices for
work in the future, but she doesn’t dwell on that today. Instead, she is focused on the
here and now, providing small physical comforts and visible participation as assurances
of love and guidance.

Perfectly dressed and socially reserved, Pablo is known by his teachers and peers
as hardworking and quiet. Like his mother, he is bashful about receiving or
acknowledging compliments but both beam with pride about his good grades and
occasional awards. Ana does not expect he will be the best in his class in academics; she
knows he has to work for every grade he earns. She does, however, expect that he will be
the best behaved. This is how she knows he is on his way to being a good man.
We’re all Just Moms Here

The church’s small common room is furnished with large round tables and industrial stacking chairs. We choose a table near the door, leaving the children to entertain themselves at another table behind us. The round table assures at least one of the moms will have eyes on the kids at all times but no one expects trouble. To the children, this place is not a church; it is the after school program that keeps them academically supported and provides snacks and play time with their friends. To their parents, the church is a convenient location to pick their children up after school knowing their homework will be done, they will have had time to burn off any remaining busy energy, and any important news will be shared among the other parents in the group. La Amistad’s programming is more than just after school supervision for these families, and that support has become part and parcel of the children’s success.

When I arrive to speak to the mothers I hope will participate, I am eyed warily by two mothers waiting near the door to pick up their children. Mama-bear caution about strangers isn’t unfamiliar to me so I quickly make my way deeper into the labyrinthine corridors of the church activity building to search for my interpreter. Isabel is the site director here, providing supervision to more than 50 kids ranging in age from six to twelve, from first to fifth grade. With the help of community volunteers from the church membership, she divides the children by age to rotate through a period of homework and academic enrichment, a snack and recreation period, and programmed group mentoring
sessions emphasizing good choices and citizenship skills. Just before five each evening, the students are gathered in the main common room to anticipate who will have a good behavior ticket pulled for a trip to the prize box.

I wait near the back, watching, as the children settle to wait to be called for pick-up. Parents must sign their children out at a table by the door before the students can leave. This assures not only the safety of the children, but a commitment by parents to be present and involved in the organizational programming going on through La Amistad. As each mother steps forward to sign, her child or children snatch up belongings and weave through the tables to be with her before following like ducklings out the door. Some families have two or three children attending the site, benefitting not only from the programming provided by La Amistad’s leadership but also from a shared culture of value toward education and civic duty.

The quiet organization of mothers and children hums along without intervention by Isabel, who is carefully packing away her small collection of necessary items. The prize box, a few notebooks, a file box full of documents, all stacked neatly into a closet along the wall of the multipurpose room. I remain to the side, staying out of the way of women and children getting themselves ready to leave, feeling their eyes on me. I know they are protectively suspicious, and rightfully so. Isabel looks across the crowd and singles out a couple of women to speak with me, considering which of these mothers might be willing and available. Her first solicitations were met with resistance,
and she hopes that my being visible, in person, will make them more willing to talk
with me about themselves and their children.

I feel a small arm snake around my waist, and a friend of my daughters’ has
started to hug me. She’s small for her age, one reason she and my younger daughter are
friends, and she knows me from the years they have been in classes together. Although it
was unplanned, I think her unexpected demonstration of trust and confidence goes far in
easing the suspicion around me. I hug her back, smiling, and turn slightly to nod to her
mother. It is a relief to be greeted with a smile in return. They turn and walk out quickly
together, headed to the parking lot behind other similar groups of parents and children.

Just as they walk away Isabel turns to catch my attention. She has harnessed two
mothers who are familiar to me, and they are attempting to settle themselves at a table
behind me near the door. Their kids stand behind them, waiting.

I turn to move toward them while Isabel turns to address the children. Rapidly, in
Spanish, she fires off a couple of directives, punctuated by broad gestures. The meaning
is plain to me even if the words are not: Go, sit down, don’t move. The boys move to one
table, clustering around a tablet device and whispering urgently at each other. The girls
move to a separate table and strike different postures of repose, books in hand. Other
than Ana’s stroller-bound infant, it’s just us moms here at the table.

Speaking rapidly again in Spanish, Isabel reviews the purpose of my visit, the
goal of my interview, and the general guidelines about the uncomfortably contrived
conversation we’re going to have. As she speaks, Ana and Fabiola occasionally glance at me, nodding. I’m straining to appear relaxed, casual, with a smile that doesn’t look as forced as it feels. It takes me a minute to mine my mental Rolodex for the faces I see; I know these ladies are familiar, but it is taking a minute to place why or from what context. Thankfully, Isabel is familiar with facilitating bilingual conversations and moves seamlessly into explaining to me what she has just told them, both prefaced and concluded with, “I’m sure you understood that I said . . .” This phrase takes the tension out of my smile, breaking the ice. I speak so little Spanish, with so little comprehension, she could have just sold my family and I wouldn’t have known. It’s obvious to the ladies at the table I didn’t have a clue, and their genuinely bemused smiles meet mine.

By this point, I have placed their familiar faces. Ana’s son Pablo has been in class with and a friend to my older daughter since kindergarten. Although the language barrier between them has diminished over the intervening 6 years, their relationship is now clouded by the politics of gender. My daughter’s most recent comment about her male classmates, Pablo included, struck the familiar refrain of Venus and Mars, and I’m sure Pablo would have told me the same. Fabiola’s daughter Lara has been friends with my younger daughter since kindergarten as well. They are often playmates at recess despite having been separated into different classes, and share an interest in bugs and fairy gardens built out of leaves, sticks, and other found objects. I swallow the shame of
not knowing these women better under a heavy dose of reality, mentally acknowledging how difficult it is to foster and grow even the most casual of friendships without a shared language.

Isabel makes sure that everyone is seated and comfortable before explaining the informed consent document. I provide the papers and pens. Even before Isabel has finished reading the Spanish version, both Ana and Fabiola have signed it and returned it to me. This may not be a best practice of receiving consent but it reassures me of their comfort in speaking with me. When Isabel has finished reading, both moms look at me with anticipation.

“I really appreciate you talking with me,” I begin. “Your participation is the only way this can happen, and I hope that it leads to something really useful for each of us.”

Half-smiles, nodding heads, but no real sense of how much they really understood.

Isabel repeats in Spanish, then pauses to see if there is any comment or response. Nothing. This may be a more challenging exchange than I expected.

Just before she starts with the guided questions, I interject. “I really like that it’s just us moms here. I know we all want the best for our kids, and you wouldn’t be willing to talk with me about their education if you didn’t. It’s important to me that you know I recognize that, no matter what else comes out of this interview. I know your kids, and I know how precious they are to you, and that makes me value your answers even more.”

After a pause, Isabel repeats, and a heavy silence hangs over the table for a moment.
Fabiola turns to me and smiles, and says in English, “I know how you care for your children. I see it when I see you at school. I know you want good things for all of them, and that’s why I want to help.” Beyond breaking the ice, this truly warms my heart, and I feel myself smile even harder.

With the recorder in hand, questions at the ready, Isabel begins. Rather than interpreting from my spoken questions, we have agreed she will use the written version of my questions and simply ask directly in Spanish. Our participants know these are my questions; they don’t need the false formality of my mumbling and stumbling before Isabel presents it in Spanish. I listen hard, not just to test my own comprehension and to keep up with the progress of the questioning, but also to associate the responses with body language. Ana’s attention remains divided, constantly on the alert to her infant son in the stroller beside her. Fabiola has the best view of the kids’ tables, and her sharp gaze flits regularly over their heads, surveying the scene and sussing out danger. I worry, wonder, if individual interviews would be better or worse, if providing more attentive child care would have helped them focus their attention, if I need to be taking a more active role in this questioning. It’s everything I can do to remain focused and attentive, as it appears to be for them as well.

And yet, their answers are open, considered, directed toward me with confidence and warm smiles. By the time the formal questioning has concluded, I no longer fear the situation or context should have been anything other than what it was: just us moms, talking about the thing we each dedicate so much thought and concern to so much of our
days. Ana and Fabiola echo and amplify each other’s answers. They engage me and Isabel together and equally, checking verbally and nonverbally for understanding. We laugh together, nod over shared opinions, continue watching each other’s children. It’s just us moms here, and at that moment, it’s just enough.

Something Just Doesn’t Fit

A chorus of groans greets my handful of new books, and I swallow frustration and dismay. My class is not the only one to see assigned reading as a less-favored chore, but I take it more personally than most other teachers. I’m so proud of what reading skills my students have, and so invested in improving them, it feels defeating to know it will continue to be such an uphill battle. I pass out the books while explaining the plot and purpose. Narrative fact-based fiction will allow us to determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings (ELAGSE6RI4) while determining the central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details in order to provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments (ELAGSE6RI2). We will use those words and phrases to guide our detailed analysis of how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in examples or anecdotes included in the text (ELAGSE6RI3). That is, we intend to do these things, once we get past the three out of five students who don’t understand the single-word title of the book. Ten minutes later, after picture-drawing, pantomime, translating dictionaries in three languages, and
animated cross-talk about personal experiences with the target word, we return to the book. And open it.

Not once, in the fifteen-should-have-been-five-minute introduction to our new reading assignment did the idea that students were interested or personally invested in the text ever come up. Never did the idea that they should be building enthusiasm and appreciation for literature, that there were big, broad, universal themes of human experience to bridge their cultural differences at play. No consideration of developing reading endurance or life-long love of reading simply for enjoyment. And yet, these are the things parents have told me over 15 years of practice and recent interviews that they want and value from their children’s reading in and from school. Instead, our school time is focused on determining and analyzing, separating our personal opinions and engagement from the explicitly stated words on the page.

The book begins, as much adolescent literature does, without much preamble. The author’s introduction is to thrust the reader immediately into the action, allowing the characters and their setting to evolve over pages and pages of action and interaction. My students stumble and bump over one word and another, unevenly decoding and poorly comprehending the phrases and clauses which carry as much connotation as denotation. We stop after five pages to regroup. When asked, no one can restate the main action or idea of what we have just read. I give multiple choices, written on the board, and only two can accurately identify the general setting, character description, or primary action.
Our goal is to cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text (ELAGSE6RI1) but first the students must know what the text says explicitly. Then we might start on inferences.

We return to the book, look for the explicit language to answer each of my questions, and spend the remainder of the class period discussing questions of vocabulary. Not because they can't say the word, or can’t find it in the translating dictionary, but because they don’t see the bigger picture and haven’t connected to the main character with interest. The bell rings, books slam shut, and we’ll try again tomorrow, hoping to get through more than five pages. And so it goes, from one class period to another, age the only difference between them. The questions differ, the misunderstandings shift, but the problems remain the same.

The next day, after limping through another five pages, one student stops on the way out the door. He tells me his mom wants to know why he can’t pick his own book, do his own reading, and write a report. I try to smile, assure him there are chances to pick his own book, but worry I’ve only managed a twisted grimace and another layer of confusion for his sense of school. I offer to call his mom and talk with her, and realize I’ll do so through an interpreter who knows neither of us, and wonder if it would really help or just aggravate his home-life with a culturally unfamiliar contact from school. He seems satisfied by my answer and melts into the surging crowd of adolescents. I’m left to wonder how valuable my answer really was to him, and how formative the exchange
should have been to me. I know that both his parents have come here as illegal immigrants from South America, doing menial labor at irregular intervals in order to support their family. I’m confident there are multiple differences between his past educational experiences and the present, more than he can articulate or than I know to ask about, and the potential for difference halts me from further consideration; it’s just too much to work through on my own.

Ends, Means, and the Space Between

My job, by the broadest definitions, is to bring the meaning and value of language to the students in my classes. I have at my disposal many tools and strategies to do this, from elemental instruction in the alphabetic system of English to literary analysis and comparison of multiple genre-typical texts. I try to remember the federal government charges that “Parents, families, and communities should be able to expect a set of educational rights for all students that prepares them for success in college and careers and as engaged and productive citizens” (The United States Department of Education, 2015), so whatever I do and however I do it, that is where the instruction should be headed. Parents, communities, and students themselves want success which leads to a secure, productive life and work, and will generally do the things I tell them will take them there. It’s a huge honor and responsibility, one that doesn’t seem well served by the work we do with analyzing individual words and phrases in a single text. Looking at my own work and the work of my peer-friends in other industries, it seems that self-
motivation toward continuous learning through stimulated interest would be a valuable skill for future collegiate students and career professionals to develop. Perhaps adaptability and the capacity for critical thought, although as higher order thinking skills, those are even more challenging to teach without access to complex language to explain them. In concept, these are the efforts of words like “analyze” and “determine” as I find in the GSE standards. In theory, approaching language and literature with the stated goals in these words will teach students to be more critical in thought and consideration of comprehensible input in every form.

However, this returns me to the concern that we should “let methodology follow from the particular . . . rather than from the world of theory” (O’Reilly, 1998, p. 14) and consider the particular needs of the particular student in the particular context of his or her cultural priorities and interest for learning. Have that student’s parents spent a lifetime perpetuating the cultural value of social egalitarianism in their child, who is now thrust into the competitive, individual evaluations of standardized assessments? Is the recurring theme in this student’s home to grow into the “best self” a parent aspires to based on whatever would be better or more than that parents’ own life experiences? What is critical thought to children like this, students not just of language or content but also of culture? How can I know these things?

It leaves me torn between doing what is told and doing what would be best. I cannot be assured of knowing what the purposes and priorities of each child’s family
might be in the fleeting, passing, limited exchanges we have in tripartite conversations. I also cannot jeopardize the consistency and reliability of a contract teaching position by willfully choosing not to follow the expected and prescribed instructional standards by which my practice and product are judged. Knowing that my students may come from such different emphasized priorities and yet being so unfamiliar with their stories is paralyzing, and I hesitate to pursue the stories any further. The reassurance is that other teachers relate the same tension. Isabel and I commiserate that it’s not always an issue of language but a difference of understanding how to express heartfelt desire and familial priorities. We are both children of parents who trusted in a school system believed to have our best interests at heart. Now we are cogs in the same machine, including our own children in each turn and knowing those intents may not align.

Autoethnographic Reflection

The parents I have interviewed, in conjunction with historical experience and support from the social agencies which provide remediation and assistance to the students outside school demonstrate the differences between what teachers are told is important to teach and emphasize in compliance to the state standards and what parents say they desire for their children. Analysis indicates that expectations of reading for only mid-level critical thinking skills predominates the standards, producing students who can disassemble the surface-level facts and details of a particular selection of text but are not being taught skills to utilize that information for constructive and evaluative purposes or
develop appreciation for the act of or artistry in reading. However, parents’ expressions of priority are more that students develop an appreciation for and internal motivation toward reading, which are concerns and behaviors unaddressed in the reading standards.

Straddling these two competing sets of priorities are teachers. Evaluation of teachers is predicated upon their successful implementation of the stated standards for reading. Evaluation of the students’ success rate is predicated upon their ability to demonstrate critical thinking about reading which teachers have emphasized with repetition in the classroom. However, teachers are also tasked with developing the life-long learning intents of their students as an expectation that students will be college and career ready, a mind-set which is not often cultivated with explicitly analytical and critical reading of texts.

Teachers like me, like Isabel, like the colleagues who see what I do as unicorn-like, must be empowered with strategies which allow them to teach the standards, provide test-adherent instruction, and encourage academic growth while supporting, maintaining, and increasing their students’ investment in ongoing reading practices. As part of these strategies, teachers must know how to communicate the value of and purposes for the standards they design instruction for coherently to the parents of their students, regardless of the home language and culture of those students and parents. Resources beyond interpreters must be available, and those resources must be intended to foster open, productive communication between the school and the home. Additionally, parents must
be provided with a generalized, contextualized outline of what the standards are, how those standards impact their students’ learning, and how to retrieve more information.

Research Findings: Conclusions, Discussion, and Suggestions for Future Research

Comparing the expressed priorities of selected maternal Spanish-speaking storytellers for their children’s reading education with the standards expected by a state board of education yielded a significant disparity. Bridging this difference relies upon effective communication strategies by teachers, strategies which must be taught for effective implementation. Teachers are obliged to teach to standards, and therefore must find ways to convey the value and purpose of those standards to their students’ parents in order to align and syncretize the messaging about purposeful learning to students.

Response to Research Questions

Direct response regarding answers to the research questions remains an issue of author interpretation, as indicated by exemplar studies from Smeyers, Bridges, Burbules, and Griffiths (2015). Interview responses of storytelling participants could be directly quoted in answer but would lend little support nor context to the applicability of any following conclusions. As a result, the responses which follow are the author’s interpretation of the sum of parts herein.

1. What do the Spanish-speaking mothers of English learners say they communicate to their children about their expectations of students’ reading in English?
Common between the three Spanish-speaking mothers in the study was a desire that their children develop linguistic fluency with reading in English but also an interest in and love for the practice of reading regardless of language. This is parallel in intent to the English-fluent mother (and teacher) functioning as both researcher and participant, who does not face the additional challenge of preserving a home language and culture different from what is espoused in the school environment. All of the mothers state they communicate their expectations explicitly to their children in spoken conversation as so much maternal direction of their children’s behavior. However, communication of this expectation is also implicit in the priority they have made of their children’s education through interest in the educational activities their children participate in and complete both at home and in quasi-educational environments. In addition, the participating mothers indicate they model the desired behaviors when possible by reading for themselves. The reading they do may not always be in English, as per their own fluency with the language, but through modeling reading as a desired practice they influence their children’s perceptions of value for reading. The confluence of these practices – of overt expression, covert expression, and modeling – serve in triangulation to indicate that Spanish-speaking mothers of language-learning children deeply value their children’s work at reading, including in English, and work consciously and unconsciously to express that expectation to their children.
However, the mothers who are not also teachers professed to be uninformed of the standards their children’s teachers design instruction for, and therefore do not consciously and overtly espouse support for the purposes those standards have for their children’s reading activities. As a result, the behaviors indicated in the standards which correlate to analytical consideration of what a student has read are not supported explicitly or implicitly by what the mothers say or imply in their modelling of reading priorities. Without explicit instruction or information about the standards and the instructional priorities of those standards, the storytelling mothers do not know to verbalize the specific behavior of analytic thinking about reading in English to their children. Although the participating teacher-storytellers are highly informed about the standards that students are instructed to and through, they also did not prioritize the reading outcomes related to analytic thinking for their own children. Instead, similar to the participating mothers, they prioritized perpetuating a lifetime of enjoyment from reading. For these teacher-mothers, it was not ignorance of the standards but a shift in prioritization and schema which caused the lack of reinforcement of the priorities articulated in the state standards.

2. How can this information shape teacher education about teacher-parent communication regarding the expectations of standards-based education?

Stories shared by the participating Spanish-speaking mothers indicate a real need for teachers to learn actionable strategies for communicating the content, intent, and purpose of standards for educational practice. Aligned with the shared stories of the
participating teachers who believed these standards had been shared, a disjunction to the mothers’ perception of ignorance to the standards became clear. Teacher education for both pre-service and in-service teachers should include concrete strategies for sharing with all parents the content, intent, and purpose of directed standards for educational practice in jargon-free vocabulary the parents can understand. Where necessary, this sharing should not only comply with existing federal guidelines regarding communication in a language the parents can understand but should also include translation of the expert-level jargon included in the standards to common language comprehensible to all stakeholders. Sharing this information in a proactive, welcoming, and culturally-sensitive manner should provide an opening for dialogic communication between parents and teachers, providing a foundation for syncretism of parents’ culturally significant expectations for their children’s education and teachers’ dictated, standards-based expectations for their students’ education.

In addition to educating parents about the existence and purposes of the standards, the lack of reinforcement from the teacher participants highlights the need for teachers and parents to understand the connection between parental influence and teacher influence on student outcomes and learning, in order to syncretize the messaging. Reinforcement and consistency are vital to a pre-adolescent’s internalization of knowledge, behavior, and purpose. When parents and teachers are able to prioritize the
same conscious behavior of analytic thinking, students are more likely to experience academic success, regardless of their cultural origins or home language experience.

Summary of Findings

Following coding of mothers’ responses to semi-structured interview questions, it was found that mothers’ priorities for their children’s reading instruction are to learn to enjoy and appreciate reading, in part as a support for developing into productive, socially-appropriate adults within the family’s socio-ethnic cultural sphere. In addition, mothers expressed desiring an ongoing investment in reading for their children’s future based upon cultivating an intrinsic desire to read for self-edification and satisfaction.

In contrast, the standards to which teachers must teach in the state of Georgia focus upon analytical skills. This is the middle of the skill complexity scale designed by Bloom, Krathwohl, and Masia (1956) in the taxonomy of educational goals and outcomes to which the standards were compared. In greater contrast, the standards for English language learnings students provided by the WIDA Consortium (2016) are concentrated at an even lower segment of skill complexity, relying heavily upon recall skills which refer directly to the text. Neither of these levels of thought-skill complexity is in any way tied to developing the life-long interest in and love for reading that the parents expressed. These skills are also not at the highest levels of critical thought determined necessary for career readiness and success in college. As a result, parents and teachers are attempting to foster two different and opposing priorities for reading in English. In order to address
this disparity, teachers must be trained and prepared to discuss what values and purposes the stated standards expect with their students’ parents.

Frank, open discussion between teachers and parents must include explanation of what student products demonstrate mastery of the standards, how competency in the standards will be assessed, and how teachers will endeavor to assist students to meet the standards. The goal of this discussion is primarily to inform parents of what is happening in the school during instruction, but with teacher intent may have the added benefit of helping parents to modify the messaging they are providing to their children about school to focus upon meeting the stated intents of the standards. Mothers from cultures and language backgrounds different from the hegemonic social structure of the United States strive to perpetuate an awareness of home cultural values in their children which may in part be in disjunction to the state’s standards. By providing information about those standards to mothers, teachers may help mothers understand the impact of including the priorities of those standards as an integrated part of their expression of values about reading in the home.

Teacher training in strategies for culturally responsive communication with diverse populations must begin with passing familiarity of the theoretical underpinnings of culturally relevant pedagogy and adult learning theory so that teachers can approach teacher-to-parent communication from an instructional mindset. Additional training for teachers may include functional cooperation skills for working with interpreters,
acquiring translated messages and documents, and emerging technologies for streamlined communication. This training must be individualized to the teachers’ specific context, based upon the resources available within each school, district, or Lead Educational Agency (LEA) which serves diverse students. Ideally, all teachers will be trained in the fundamentals of language instruction methodologies in order to provide more explicit language acquisition support for all students, with the intended effect of inclusively supporting culturally or linguistically diverse learners acquiring an additional language.

Conclusions

Comparing the expressed priorities of selected maternal Spanish-speaking storytellers for their children’s reading education with the standards expected by a state board of education yielded a significant disparity. Bridging this difference relies upon effective communication strategies by teachers, strategies which must be taught to teachers for effective implementation. Teachers are obliged to teach to standards, and therefore must find ways to convey the value and purpose of those standards to students and to the students’ parents in order to align and syncretize the messaging about purposeful learning to those students between school and home.

Parents must be informed explicitly about the standards their children will be instructed to and assessed by in the public schools. Without explicit information in a
language and context they can understand, parents cannot support the efforts and intents of teachers and schools.

Teachers must be trained to provide culturally sensitive, linguistically appropriate information to the parents of their students regarding the content and format of the instructional standards their teaching will address. In addition, teachers must make transparent the instructional aims and assessments which will be tied to these standards. Resources such as interpreters, multi-lingual materials, and other supports should not just be available but should be included in any instruction or training teachers are provided so that finding these resources is not an impediment to their use. Ultimately, the just-in-time delivery of information should become a standard of communication with and from the school-sphere of influence upon students to the home-sphere of influence upon children.

Discussion

Teacher communication with the parents of their students has been shown to be most effective when initiated by the teacher (Ames, De Stefano, Watkins, & Sheldon, 1995; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Without specific, actionable strategies to follow in initiating that contact, teachers may be reluctant to initiate communication, much less to offer information regarding the standards they will be teaching and assessing that may not be requested by parents lacking that knowledge. These strategies may include greater familiarity with the language support services available within or among the educational agency’s structure, including multi-lingual interpreters, translated
documents, and community support entities and liaisons. Additional strategies may also include integrating a wider variety of communicative modes from the classroom, especially including technology when available. Possible school-to-home communication modes may be newsletters, rubrics and assignment descriptions in the home language attached to student work, translated or “unpacked” standards explanations related to current instructional tasks, or narratives of classroom operation available for translation via a website or other autonomous service. Finally, teachers must be aware of how school involvement behaviors may be different for members of diverse populations and recognize that all parents will exhibit their interest and involvement differently. By recognizing the wide variety of ways parents may demonstrate their engagement with the school and school processes, teachers open the opportunity for parents to feel more respected by and engaged in the classroom culture, encouraging greater communicative reciprocity within the community.

Cultivating and sustaining a sense of community among diverse individuals from different stakeholder positions requires surrendering possession of knowledge and information for the greater good. Knowledge-sharing is what opens the avenues of communication which make possible greater understanding. In addition, shared knowledge increases the productivity of all those who have shared in the knowledge. When teachers and parents share knowledge about the student-child, the point of their common interest and investment, the synergistic value of effort on behalf of that child is
both greater and more powerful. Instead of working at disparate purposes, when teachers and parents share their purposes, student-children can benefit. Interconnecting the student-child’s spheres of influence in common communication through shared knowledge about educational intents and purposes should be the goal of guided and ongoing teacher-parent communication.

Suggestions for Future Research

The expansion of this research with a larger number of storytellers and a greater breadth of cultural diversity would add depth to the conclusions which this small sample has provided. Cross-cultural as well as inter-cultural analysis of parental priorities, including fathers as well as mothers, could better inform the kinds of training teachers receive regarding school-home communication. Quantitative data regarding the number of parents informed about or familiar with the content and purposes of the standards could inform more focused questioning regarding the potential correlation or disjunction between the state’s standards and parents’ own priorities as well as guide teacher education regarding expression of the values and purposes of the standards. These data may be informative only within and across the Hispano-Latino Diaspora community, so increasing diverse participants can result in adding to the aggregate of teacher training for more effective communication across linguistic and cultural diversities.

Finally, the changes in parent-to-student messaging about school-oriented topics over a child’s maturity could have influence on the influence of that messaging.
Comparison of parents’ self-disclosed explicit and implicit communication at different child-life stages could shift the timeliness of teacher training to one grade band or another relative to a potential maximum impact upon student receptivity. Therefore increasing the age range of participants’ children could yield information about how this messaging transforms through a student’s growth over time.

Though a shift in methodology to include a greater number or diversity of participants could yield a greater volume of data with which to generalize conclusions and recommendations, it is important to remember the value which comes from Portraiture’s close interaction between the researcher and the participants. Improving teacher-parent communication requires that teachers and parents are included as cooperating participants in the communication process. Any shift in methodology for data collection and analysis must provide for including the dynamic of this cooperative meaning-making through communication with specific consideration of the social, cultural, and power dynamics which may impact teacher-to-parent communication.

Specific to that dynamic is that teachers are always the co-creators of any truth and meaning in the dyadic or triadic relationships necessary in communication with parents. With special regard for the language-learning and language-diverse population, teachers are co-creating meaning with parents and families to whom communication is more challenging, and mediated through an interpreter. This interpreter becomes an additional co-creator of meaning, adding a layer of potential miscommunication or
reinterpretation of information. Therefore Portraiture remains an invaluable analytic tool for interrogating and examining the multiple layers of interactive meaning-making and co-occurring influences in a communicative schema.
CHAPTER 5

ACTIONABLE INTERVENTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Academic data collection and analysis regarding linguistically diverse families is informative but not actionable for practicing and pre-service teachers. Instead, concrete knowledge and practice through informed strategies must be in place to assist teachers in establishing and perpetuating the kind of syncretic practice which empowers parents to support literacy skills and growth in the most appropriate and culturally representative way possible while also supporting the aims and purposes of standardized educational practice. Provisions for culturally sensitive, syncretic communication practices should be a portion of teacher education as well as a component of how schools prepare teachers for the arrival of students (Paratore, Melzi, & Krol-Sinclair, 1999).

Actionable interventions for teachers must be aligned with two sets of theory and research: what is known and practiced for effective adult education and what is known and practiced for teacher-to-parent communication. Teacher-educators tasked with designing interventions for the adult teachers interacting with linguistically diverse families must honor the necessary personal motivation and learning intents of teacher-learners while providing information about the formative theories for implementation of research-validated strategies. Coming to educational opportunities purposefully, with internal motivation based on expected outcomes of the intended educational experience assures that adults will benefit from the instruction delivered (Knowles, 1984; Maslow,
1943; Mezirow, 1997). Effective teacher-instructions must support adult learners’ knowledge acquisition with more than content knowledge (Wlodkowski, 1985; Chiang & Hawley, 2013), but also with practical and applicable methods and strategies. Accomplishing effective, actionable intervention for teachers is again syncretism of thought, theory, and action and should be the foundation of intent for professional development for teachers.

Teaching Teachers

Teacher-educators must first model the type of teaching and communication their instruction is designed to transfer into the practice of the teacher-learners (Keyes, 2000). This type of modeling should be informed by intentionality toward syncretizing, or aligning, the values and purposes of reading skill originating in the school sphere with those provided by parental influences in the home sphere. Gooden (2012) asserts that teacher modeling can be an effective way to teach strategy which must necessarily include the pedandragogical practice knowledge related to language instruction to be effective (Plonsky, 2011) for teachers to recognize the difference between teaching discrete content knowledge through language versus teaching language which supports content knowledge acquisition. Acknowledging this difference begins the synchronization of values and purposes in a culturally sensitive way because it mirrors families’ transmission of heritage culture traditions, practices, and language.
Training the teachers of language-learning students to accomplish syncretism of home and school messaging should begin with the process of metacognitive reflection and purposefulness in learning that develops reflective teacher practice (Brookfield, 1986), particularly as related to teachers’ preconceived expectations of parental involvement with and participation in the school sphere. To that end, teachers must develop familiarity with theories for effective syncretic practice (Finn, 2011; Knowles, 1984; Merriam, 2007) of education of and communication with adults as learners. Through reflective practice and sound theoretical application, teachers can communicate through the best practices of andragogy for parents the standardized expectations of pedagogy for children’s learning goals (Stuart & Volk, 2002). Utilizing the theory-based best practices of pedandrogogy will most effectively assist parents’ understanding of the objectives and purposes teachers have for student learning to establish a more unified message to students about their work at school and at home (Smith & Elish-Piper, 2002). Emphasis on achieving syncretism of these messages is necessarily reciprocal and relationship-building, which fosters into greater development the social capital of both parents and teachers (Paratore, Melzi and Krol-Sinclair, 1999, p. xii). For teachers, growth in social capital can work circularly to continue the metacognitive reflective practice which deepens understanding of the extra-academic influences upon linguistically and culturally diverse students. Complementarily, social capital growth and development can support increases in political consciousness necessary to advocate for
their children’s unique needs and increasing their children’s potential for success (Behnke & Kelly, 2011; Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Olivos, 2004).

Parental advocacy for their children, and positive reception and acknowledgement of parents’ interest and concern is integral to culturally responsive programming and pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). Cultural responsiveness from teachers and other school agents integrates students’ funds of knowledge as an ethical obligation to pedagogical practice (Amaro-Jimenez & Semingson, 2011; González, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Hogg, 2011; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992; Sugarman, 2010). Honoring funds of knowledge must include recognizing the variety of reading media students are exposed to outside the school environment. Some children do not have books at home, or rely upon electronic media to experience reading opportunities. Some families value just-in-time written communication through community newspapers and fliers, as seen in the researcher’s triangulation experiences at Hispano-Latino diaspora community meeting places. In contrast, some families may expect and perpetuate culturally significant texts like religious documents or tracts, family or cultural histories, and other documents outside the knowledge base of teachers representing the dominant cultural sphere. When presented with the knowledge that culturally responsive teaching and communication is both ethical and effective, teachers can close the reflective loop by enacting practices to manifest inclusive thinking. Beyond utilizing translated and interpreted communication
at any available point, teachers must acknowledge and integrate students’ revealed home
sphere realities into their communication strategies.

Methods and Strategies

One move toward more inclusive communication is to acknowledge that parents
from lower-income environments are increasingly relying on cellular devices to
communicate, a tool which could be incredibly valuable to teachers (Thompson, Mazer &
Flood Grady, 2015). The first and most effective thing teachers can do is text using
language with no greater than about a third grade Lexile; high linguistic complexity
increases the potential for mistranslation by automatic or integrated translation services
as well as increasing the demand upon the parents’ ability to comprehend the intended
message. Another is to shorten messages into the smallest possible piece of information
per text, saving details for other forms of communication. This limits the linguistic
complexity but also creates an avenue for greater interactive communication in other
methods. An additional suggestion includes trying the message through an online
translation service like Google Translate, then re-translating it back to English to see how
much of the meaning holds. If the re-translation returns incomprehensible, try
simplifying the message or considering a different means for communicating the
information. Although some teachers decry the additional time this multiple translation
method requires as defeating the purpose of a service like Bloomz or Remind, culturally
sensitive communication guidelines emphasize the insensitivity and lost value in an
incomprehensible message, particularly for families who may not have access to an unlimited messaging plan (bloomz.net; Remind.com).

When teachers utilize a system like Bloomz or Remind, they are beholden to the terms of ethical behavior which govern all teacher interactions, but also to the expectations of organizations like the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) (International Society for Technology in Education, 2016). The ISTE standards for teachers expect ethical behavior to include modeling appropriate use, including in communications with parents and other extra-educational entities. Finally, teachers utilizing SMS messaging have both an ethical and a legal standard to maintain privacy of the communicants based upon the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (U. S. Department of Education, 2016). Teachers may find SMS messaging, regardless of the challenges of translation, and the impediments to smooth and rapid communication, a worthwhile tool for including parents of all backgrounds in the function and operation of the classroom environment. This becomes especially pertinent when parents are hampered by access to other communication modes. Linguistically diverse families are likely to be more responsive when the school communication modes and avenues are expanded to include them in a world which may often appear inaccessible to them. Teacher-initiated outreach like text messages also increases the reciprocity between the home sphere and the school sphere, increasing the likelihood of continued engagement by parents.
Continuing conscientious use of language at a low linguistic complexity should extend to letters, news fliers, and other paper communication provided by teachers and schools, even when those documents are translated into known home languages. As noted by Gándara (2010), if “more than 40 percent of Latina mothers lack even a high school diploma” their ability to read and comprehend complex text may be limited at best, especially if it includes jargon specific to educational thought and practice. In addition, translations completed by native speakers may be indicative of that native speaker’s own dialect, educational level, or familiarity with educational jargon and these internal, often unacknowledged linguistic biases may influence the comprehensibility of communications as well as the receptivity of the families receiving the information. The “something is better than nothing” mentality prevails in many schools serving diverse communities but exclusive behaviors may serve to be more alienating than inclusionary, defeating the effort and purpose of school-to-home communications (Waites, Macgowan, Pennell, Carlton-LaNey & Weil, 2004). Exemplar school newsletters reviewed for triangulation in this study were examined by native Spanish speakers from different cultural backgrounds and interpreted differently in 3 of 5 cases. The differences in interpretation were minor, and the general concepts were conveyed, but parent affect toward the school could be effected by negative interpretations and that negative affect is likely to be conveyed to the children engaged with that school sphere (Bobowik, Van Oudenoven, Basabe, Telletxea, & Páez, 2011; Franquiz, 2003; Franquiz & Salazar, 2004;
Padilla-Walker, 2007). In closely-knit linguistic communities, parental affect can be transferred between community members, perpetuating possible alienation. Demonstrations of inclusion and care such as providing translated documents may be received as disingenuous, defeating teachers’ efforts at establishing reciprocal communication as a necessary component of syncretizing messaging styles and values.

Beyond translation is the complex and necessary use of interpretation services. Federal laws, originating with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and clarified in 2000 by Executive Order 12166 (Federal Interagency Working Group on Limited English Proficiency, 2015), mandate that public school entities must provide interpreter assistance for community members. Challenges with communication through interpreters are many, but can be overcome by teachers’ own procedures and behaviors. The first and most valuable skill teachers can acquire is recognizing the background and knowledge of their interpreter. Language brokering by untrained interpreters is a dramatically different experience for the teacher and the parent than communication facilitated by a trained interpreter with knowledge of educational jargon and concepts (Corona, Stevens, Halfond, Shaffer, Reid-Quiñones & Gonzalez, 2011; Villanueva & Buriel, 2010). Unless absolutely necessary due to emergency circumstances or initial introduction, children should not be expected to act as language brokers for their own parents or for other adults. Observations that children generally lack the emotional or intellectual maturity to comprehend and interpret the information being exchanged.
(García–Sánchez, Orellana, & Hopkins, 2011; Greenberger, Josselson, Knerr, & Kner, 1975; Smagorinsky, 2001; Villanueva & Buriel, 2010) also note that children are rarely fluent in the complex language adults frequently utilize when communicating with other adults. In addition, ethical communication necessitates children not be obliged to communicate about other children, even when those children may be siblings or other family members. Issues of confidentiality can be extended to parental disclosures to teachers which may shame, embarrass, or frighten children. School systems with growing linguistically diverse populations are increasingly investing in relationships with trained, professional interpreters capable of mediating communication between teachers and school agents and the families with whom they struggle to communicate.

When an appropriate language broker has been identified, teachers must familiarize themselves with the interpreter’s style and capacity. Some interpreters can listen and speak at the same time, fluidly moving ideas from one language to another. While this skill is both impressive and significantly more comfortable for the participants, this kind of unreflective language transformation may cause interpreters to transmute meaning beyond the intents of the communicants’ intention, leading to errors of interpretation or understanding (Freed, 1988; Marcos, 1979; Moerman, 1998). Other interpreters require an opportunity to listen, consider, then speak. The reflective practice within this mode of interpretation has the potential to allow for more nuanced communication when the interpreter is familiar with the contextualized, culturally influenced intents from both
members of the interpreted conversation. Interpreters utilizing this style of communication must be given information in short pieces, then given adequate time to process and speak. Teachers must therefore be capable of segmenting their thoughts or information and remain cognizant of their responsibility to listen actively, often repeating back their understanding of what is related to them. This practice on the part of teachers can serve to significantly reduce the potential for misinterpretation or misunderstanding as well as demonstrating a high level of interest and engagement to the parent.

An additional strategy teachers can utilize when relying up on interpreted communication, particularly when that communication is face-to-face, is to provide and actively engage with documents, illustrations, gesture, and realia. Comprehension of cross-cultural or cross-contextual communication is supported by multiple modes of information transfer and items such as student work, illustrations of methods or procedures in the classroom or school environment, physical demonstration of desired actions, even pantomime. While interpreters may not replicate teachers’ behavior, the context such actions and objects provide can assist language brokers with effectively conveying the deeper meanings in teachers’ language. This strategy reaches increased value and significance when the information conveyed is highly specific or technical in nature. Data like test scores or student achievement markers, concerns about behavior which is not culturally appropriate to either cultural schema, recommendations for additional services or opportunities, and conferences connected to decisions about
retention are examples of situations where illustrations of some kind can increase the communicability of the information. When possible, discrete data can be illustrated using graphs and charts. Concerns about progress, achievement, or potential retention can be referenced through comparisons of norm data to the student’s own data in line graphs or numerical representations. Reference to documents such as a student handbook or code of conduct, particularly if that document is in the parents’ home language, can bolster assertions of concern or disciplinary procedures. Exemplars of student work provide concrete examples of teachers’ intended messages of either success or failure and can be used for explicit reference to components or trends in student products. While care must be taken to preserve all students’ legally mandated confidentiality, comparison between two student exemplars can be helpful for demonstrating what may be exceptional or what the minimum requirement of an assignment may have been.

Educating Parents

Teacher-to-parent communication, even when interpreted, must include an educational component for the benefit of the parent and the student. Parents are most likely to directly or indirectly transmit the information provided by the teacher to the student and it is in the best interests of all parties involved if that transmission is as accurate in content and intent as possible. When information about behavioral norms, performance expectations, or future interactions is misinterpreted or misunderstood, students may suffer unintended consequences for noncompliance to the teacher’s directives or expectations. By
utilizing instructive communication, teachers effectively “teach” the parents how to communicate accurate ideas to their children. This type of communication is vital to conversations about instructional standards because the expected knowledge demonstrations demanded by the standards have been demonstrated to be so different from parents’ own expectations of students’ knowledge. The goal of teacher communication to parents through instructional means is not to change parents’ communication strategies or modes but instead to assure that any content in that communication is accurate to what may also be communicated between teachers and students. Syncretizing the messaging must come from consistency in content and meaning, which can only be achieved through teaching parents with fidelity what the intended content and meaning are. Additionally, due to Lawrence-Lightfoot’s (1978, p. 159) observation that families from lower social and economic classes are more likely to have interactions based on imperatives rather than negotiations or discussion, assertion of parallel meanings take on an added significance and must necessarily be at the highest fidelity possible.

Drawing from the storytellers included in the present study, when parents indicate to their children that reading is valuable, that communication is faithful to the value and purpose of parents when it encourages reading in the home language and is faithful to the value and purpose of teachers when it encourages reading in English. Parents’ value of reading in the home language is likely to be more associated with experiencing pleasure and reinforcement of cultural norms and identity. Teachers’ value of reading in English
is likely to be associated with content knowledge acquisition, analytical processes, and assessment expectations. Both sets of values can be supportive of and through positive messaging about the importance and value of reading as a generality, with particularities addressed in the individual spheres of influence. The influence of syncretizing these messages, particularly with and for mothers in contact with schools is to impact children’s success with and perseverance at literacy-affiliated tasks (Cottone, 2012). This kind of achievement is not specific to English Language Arts standards as explored in this investigation but can in fact extend to the literacy tasks for all content areas.

Finally, independent of the mode of transfer, parents must be provided comprehensible information about what standards teachers are guided by in their instruction. Teachers are expected to make learning targets and intents visible to their students and often this includes digesting the standards into more accessible language. This reduced linguistic complexity can then be provided in whole or part, in translation or interpretation, to the parents. While it is not necessary that parents assume the responsibility for teaching these standards and their intents to their children, it is a portion of the responsible and ethical sharing of information about students’ school experiences which develops communicative reciprocity between parents and teachers. Due to the analytical emphasis in the reading standards, parents should be aware that reading for pleasure must be a portion of their value for reading practices in the home sphere because
it will not be emphasized in the curricular implementation in the school sphere. Parents can be taught to consider reading for pleasure their part in developing life-long readers.

Conclusion

Because teacher-initiated communications improve interaction between teachers and parents and increase parents’ comfort with teachers, which encourages communication on an ongoing basis and increases students’ motivation (Ames, De Stefano, Watkins, & Sheldon, 1995), establishing syncretic messaging between families’ home sphere priorities for reading and schools’ classroom sphere priorities for reading through culturally responsive communication strategies is essential. Teaching teachers not only why to initiate and perpetuate these communication strategies but also how to implement and improve these strategies is the first step to an ongoing improvement in interaction to the best interests of students and their achievement.
REFERENCES


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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

MOST FREQUENTLY UTILIZED DATABASES
Most frequently utilized databases, available through the Mercer libraries.

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<th>Database</th>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Search Complete</td>
<td>Ebrary® E-Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Placement Source</td>
<td>Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHFS Consumer Medication Information</td>
<td>ERIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Encyclopedia</td>
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<td>Greenfile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Health Source - Consumer Edition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta Journal &amp; Constitution Book</td>
<td>Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Edition</td>
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<td>CBCA</td>
<td>History Reference Center</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Information Science &amp; Technology</td>
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<td>CINAHL, CINAHL Plus with Full Text</td>
<td>Abstracts (ISTA)</td>
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<td>Legal Collection</td>
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<td>Proquest Dissertations &amp; Theses Global</td>
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<td>Proquest Health &amp; Medical</td>
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Psycarticles
Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection
Psycinfo
Race Relations Abstracts
Science & Technology Collection
Socindex with Full Text
Sociological Collection
Teacher Reference Center
The Christian Science Monitor
The Serials Directory
The Wall Street Journal
The Washington Post Topicsearch
Violence & Abuse Abstracts
Vocational and Career Collection
APPENDIX B

REFINED LIST OF CORE SEARCH TERMS
Student – students, pupils, learners

Child – children, child’s, children’s

Parent – parents, parents’, parent’s, ALSO Mother – mothers, mothers’, mother’s, maternal,

Read – reading, reader, reads, read* ALSO Literate – literature, literacy, litera*

Teach – teaching, teacher, teaches, teachable, taught,
also: instruction, instruct, instructor; program, programming, programs; educate, education, educators, educating; learn, learner, learning, learns

Communication – communicate, communicates, communic*

ELL, ELLs, ESOL, English Language Learner, English learner, language learner,

Associated Terms (added to various searches with the above core words):
culture, cultural, cultur*; involve, involvement, involved, involve*; practice; knowledge; academic; school; social, social*; standard, standardized, standard*; skill, skills, skill-based; strategy, strategies, strategic, strateg*
APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD PERMISSION AND INFORMED CONSENT
01-Aug-2016

Ms. Catherine Travelute
Mercer University
Tift College of Education
3001 Mercer University Dr
Atlanta, GA 30341

RE: Mothers’ expectations of ELL’s reading in English (H1607199)

Dear Ms. Travelute:

Your application entitled: Mothers’ expectations of ELL’s reading in English (H1607199) was reviewed by this Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research in accordance with Federal Regulations 31 CFR 36.110(b) and 45 CFR 46.110(b) (for expedited review) and was approved under Category 6, 7 per 85 FR 80384.

Your application was approved for one year of study on 01-Aug-2016. The protocol expires 31-Jul-2017. If the study continues beyond one year, it must be re-evaluated by the IRB Committee.

Item(s) Approved:
New application for research using semi-structured interviews of heritage Spanish-speaking mothers of middle school-aged students

Please complete the survey for the IRB and the Office of Research Compliance. To access the survey, click on the following link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/R7CIT1BR

"Mercer University has adopted and agrees to conduct its clinical research studies in accordance with the International Conference on Harmonization's (ICH) Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice."

Respectfully,

Ava Chambliss-Richardson, M.Ed., CIP, CIM
Member
Institutional Review Board
Mercer University IRB & Office of Research Compliance
Phone (478) 301-4101
Fax (478) 301-2329
ORC_Mercer@Mercer.Edu
Consentimiento informado
(Expectativas de las madres sobre la lectura en inglés como lengua extranjera)

Le estamos invitando a participar en un estudio de investigación. Antes de dar su consentimiento para participar como voluntaria, es importante que lea a continuación información y haga todas las preguntas que considere necesarias para asegurarse de que comprenda en qué consiste el estudio.

Investigadores
Catherine Travelute, candidata a doctorado, Universidad de Mercer.
Isabel Hernández Marsh, intérprete.
William O. Lacefield, Educación, D., presidente del Comité y docente consejero de la Universidad de Mercer.

Teléfono de oficina 907-336-6335 Teléfono móvil 204-277-0211 correo electrónico lacefield.w@mercer.edu
Departamento Tift College Dirección 1: campus oficina de B&E

Objetivo de la investigación
El presente estudio fue diseñado con el objetivo de recopilar información sobre las expectativas que tienen las madres, cuya lengua materna no es el inglés, sobre las prácticas y competencias de lectura en inglés de sus hijos. Los datos recopilados en esta investigación serán utilizados para crear una descripción de las expectativas de las madres en comparación con las expectativas de los docentes dadas por los estándares establecidos. Esto permitirá a los formadores de docentes identificar, y tratar de remediar, las diferencias en este conjunto de expectativas. La recopilación, el análisis y la publicación de datos forma parte de los requisitos para la finalización del programa de estudio de la investigadora principal.

Procedimientos
Si se ofrece como voluntaria para participar en este estudio, se le pedirá que conteste una serie de preguntas lo más completa y honestamente posible. No hay respuestas incorrectas. La entrevista tendrá lugar en el sitio y en el idioma con el que usted se sienta más cómodo. Su participación durará aproximadamente una hora y será requerida solo una vez. La entrevista se programará con antelación. Si decide participar en este estudio, será seleccionada de la comunidad de padres de La Amistad y podrá elegir la cita más conveniente para realizar la entrevista entre los horarios disponibles.

Posibles riesgos o inconvenientes
No hay riesgos previsibles asociados con el estudio. Los inconvenientes potenciales que pueden presentarse incluyen el tiempo necesario para completar la investigación y posibles preguntas de seguimiento en el caso de que se requiera clarificar. A las participantes se les ofrecerá asesoramiento psicológico si la profundidad, amplitud o el contenido de la entrevista resultan perturbadores o bien después de la experiencia. De igual forma, las participantes retienen el derecho a interrumpir su participación, ya sea temporal o permanentemente, en cualquier momento durante la entrevista. Ninguna sección de los datos recopilados influirá sobre la participación de la familia en el programa de La Amistad, ni sobre la condición académica del estudiante. Una vez invitada, si acepta participar en el estudio, acepta que su entrevista se grabe para su futuro archivo y análisis.
You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to volunteer, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

**Investigators**
Catherine Travelute, Ph. D. candidate, Mercer University
Isabel Hernández Marsh, Interpreter
William O. Lacefield, Ed. D., Committee Chairperson and faculty advisor, Mercer University
Office Phone: 256-547-6315 Cell phone: 404-277-0211 E-Mail: Lacefield_w@mercer.edu
Department: Tift College Campus Address: B&E offices

**Purpose of the Research**
This research study is designed to gather information about non-heritage English-speaking mothers’ expectations of their children’s reading skills and practices in English. The data from this research will be used to create a portrait of mothers’ expectations in comparison to teachers’ standards-guided expectations. This will allow teacher trainers to identify, and attempt to remedy, differences in these sets of expectations. Data collection, analysis, and publication is a portion of completion requirements for the primary investigator’s degree program.

**Procedures**
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer a series of questions as completely and honestly as your comfort allows. There are no right answers to these questions, and the interview will be held at a location and in a language you are comfortable with. Your participation will take approximately one hour on one occasion. This meeting will be arranged in advance. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be selected from La Amistad’s parent community. You will be invited to choose an interview appointment at your convenience from the available appointment times.

**Potential Risks or Discomforts**
There are no foreseeable risks associated with the study. Potential inconveniences include the time required to complete the inquiry and potential follow-up questions for clarification. Participating interviewees will be offered opportunities for counseling if the depth, breadth, or content of the interview proves disturbing or following the experience. Participating interviewees maintain the right to discontinue participation, either temporarily or permanently, at any time during the interview. No portion of the data collected will have influence upon the family’s participation in La Amistad programming, nor on the student’s academic status. By agreeing to participate in the study once invited, the participating interviewee agrees to audio recording of her voice for archival and analysis purposes.
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: ISABEL (INTERPRETER)
Isabel: My name is Isabel Marsh. I was raised in Colombia, South America, in the city of Cali. Um, and I moved here when I was 16. Um, currently in my family, there is my husband, who’s 34, 36 (laughs), my daughter who is 3, soon to be 4, and my son who is 10, soon to be 11. And they all live with me.

Um, years of education, I attended school in Colombia. That goes up to the 11th grade. Um, from 3 years old all the way up to 11th grade. And then I came here to the States and did 12th grade, and then 4 years of undergrad for psychology, and 2 years of Master’s for early childhood education.

Um, my education in Colombia was done in Spanish, however we did have a, an English component. Um, and my educational goal for myself was actually to be an engineer, but after I took my third calculus class I decided that was not something I wanted to do. So, scratch that, and I became a teacher.

I love to read. I read as often as possible. Whenever we have a vacation or a few days off, I’ll put my nose in a book, and it annoys my husband because I read like 200 pages in a day, and he can’t read that fast. Um, my little one doesn’t quite read yet, but she pretends to read. Like we read a story over and over again and she’ll go through the story and tell me what happens. She can’t quite read yet. And my, my son is not a big fan of reading, but he’s required to read 45 minutes every day because mom said so, so he reads as well. My husband reads 3 books at a time, and I don’t know how he does that. I can’t.

Uh, my parents, my mother has a Master’s degree in social work from Colombia, the country. And my father (laughs) has an engineering degree, it’s not electrical, it’s mechanical.
Mechanical engineering degree from Colombia. Um, the expectation was always for us to go to college, my sister and I, um, because my parents were educated as well. My parents expected me to read and spent a lot of money on buying us books, um, both my sister and I.

My biggest long term goal for my child’s education- Sorry. For my children’s education would of course for them to go to college. Um, I would like for them to do something they’re passionate about, um, not necessarily to make money, of course to be able to sustain themselves, but just something that makes them happy. Um, but it is important for us that they go to college.

How will you know that progress is being made towards that goal? Um, I don’t know, little by little, you know? You start with, can they read? Are they gonna be able to be successful in school? Are they gonna have to have interventions or are they gonna be able to be in the gifted program? And now we’re looking at middle school for my oldest, and we’re trying to decide if he’s gonna go to our neighborhood middle school or if we’re gonna look into a private situation, possibly a scholarship. I don’t know, um, and then go from there. My sister’s of course already looking at Georgia Tech so that he can go there, but he doesn’t even know what he wants to be when he grows up, so the goal is always thinking, what’s the next step for him. And the little, she’ll be going to Pre-K next year, so we’re just getting started with that one.

Um, do you expect your children to read in English? Yes. And do I expect them to read in Spanish? Yes. They’re both very important to me. What do I expect them to read? I expect them to read everything. Of course they favor certain things. My son would read comic books all day if I allow him to, but I also want him to read nonfiction
and fiction, you know, things that are important to his education. Do I tell them that? Absolutely. What do I tell them? Um, about reading and being educated, they know that is the most important thing.

You know, my parents gave up careers and they moved to another country to be nothing. We came here with one suitcase and they, because licenses don’t transfer, my mom couldn’t be a social worker, my dad couldn’t be an engineer. So my mom worked at a Goodwill and my father was laying carpet. You know, that wasn’t, it wasn’t anything that they desired to do at that time, but it was what they needed to do to give us a better life and a better chance, and so I always make sure that my kids know that my parents sacrificed so much so that we could be here and have a better opportunity so that they, in turn, could have a better opportunity. And my expectation of them is that they do better than we have done. Um, and it’s important to me because that’s the, that’s the core of why my parents came here. That’s, that’s the reason why they left everything behind and sacrificed so much so that we could be successful and, um, I would feel almost like all the hard work and determination that they put forth would be thrown away if my kids didn’t follow through with continuing education and being successful as well.

Where do you think that belief or expectation came from? Um, my parents really value education and that was always evident in my house. I mean, they exposed us to as many things as possible. We would go to the zoo. We would go to anything. A play. We’d go to the bookstore. Um, things that were free, things that you had to pay for, because they wanted to make sure that we understood that experiences are important, and education is important. And so that was embedded in us, my sister and I, as kids, and it’s
just something that we continued. And thankfully, my husband feels the same way about our children’s education.

Do you know about the Georgia Standards of Excellence? Yes (laughs). Yes, I am a teacher, so I, um, I have to apply those every day. Do you feel that you understand them and what they’re for? Um, I do understand them. I know what they’re for. I, um, have very strong feelings about some of them. I think some of them are not appropriate. I teach kindergarten, and some of them are not appropriate for the kids that I teach. However, it is my job and responsibility to teach them all, so that’s what I do. Um, is this something you think you’d like to know more about? I’m in the interesting position that I’ve been trained so well on them that I don’t really think there’s much else that I could learn about them. Um, how would you like to learn more about it or why not? Like I said, I know them pretty well.

Do you feel that you know and understand what teachers are teaching and why? So, as a parent, I often, because I’m so busy teaching my kids and, and working on, on the things that I have to do in the classroom, I often don’t know what my son, you know, is studying. Um, I, I would like to be more involved in his course of study. I just am not, and thankfully, I have a child that’s pretty autopilot, so I don’t have to worry a lot about, is he not gonna be making good grades, is he not gonna be retaining information, is he not gonna behave, because all those things he does very well. Um, but I feel that as a parent, I should be more involved in what standards he’s covering. We do have conversations when I say, what did you learn today, I’m learning about rocks or I’m learning about the Civil War. You know, whatever it is, and we talk about it, but I don’t-
I could look up the skills and the pacing calendar and see what they’re covering in each unit and be more proactive in that way. It’s a parent fail, from my part.

Um, okay so do you feel that you know and understand how teachers assess, grade test students? I understand that the, the testing that we do at school, some of it is required by the state, and again, I have very strong opinions about that. Um, and some of it is required because they have to assess what they’ve learned in the unit, so by backwards design, starting with the end in mind, they create the tests- Oh my goodness, I’m sorry, what’s happening? They create the tests, and, um, test the kids that way. Um, I don’t know more about the tests, and I think I should know more. That’s another parent, parent fail there.

How could teachers help you better understand how they assess, grade tests, and why? (Sighs) I think they do a pretty good job when they do curriculum nights and things like that, when we can talk about the major work or the grade and what they’re going to be learning. Um, I think it’s important for parents to go and attend those, um, but it’s also important for teachers to make that material accessible to parents that don’t understand the language or understand why those are the standards that are being taught and how they’re gonna be tested.

Is there anything else you want me tell, you want to tell me about your expectation of your child’s English reading skills? I want him to be passionate about reading, and I think that’s hard for me because he really isn’t unless it’s Pokemon Go or if he’s reading about- I mean, if you ask him any questions about any Pokemon, he has a book that’s super thick that tells you what each one does and what type it is and whatever, but I want him to be passionate about, you know, real world things, not just
Pokemon and comic books. So I think I’m always trying to find like a series that will be interesting to him, or he was a little bit into Greek mythology, so I got him some books. He was not into Harry Potter. We tried. Which broke my heart, because I thought Harry Potter was an excellent series. He didn’t like it. So I just want him to understand that reading is not just because it’s a chore. It’s not because mom said or because the teacher said, it’s because it really does make your brain grow and it helps you learn and it makes you a better learner and, and a more informed person and a better citizen of the world. So hopefully he understands that.

Is there anything else you think it would be helpful for teachers to know? Um, I think it would be helpful for teachers to know that a lot of these parents don’t know how to help their kids. Um, not because they don’t want to, because they just don’t know themselves. They haven’t been educated and, you know, culturally we’re different and our, our schools are different and a lot of them had very limited education and they don’t quite know how to help a child with phonics or phonemic awareness, or, or where to start with site words, and if they can’t pronounce the site words, then how do they help their kids, you know? So a lot of these parents don’t know how to help, and I think that’s something that the teachers should be aware of. That they just don’t know, or they don’t even know the material, you know? A parent may not know about the different kinds of rocks and why they’re important and how they’re divided. For me, it’s very easy. Even if I don’t remember, I’ll just Google it or, you know, look something up. But if a parent doesn’t even know how to do that or use that resource, then they wouldn’t be able to help their kids. So that’s tough for them. And I think that’s it.
APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: FABIOLA AND ANA, INTERVIEWED BY ISABEL
Isabel: Ok. Yo les voy a hacer las preguntas y vamos a grabarlo aquí. La primera pregunta es, ¿qué nombre quieren usar, que no es el nombre real, para poder usar del estudio?

Fabiola: Yo puedo usar el mío, no hay problema.

Isabel: Ok. ¿Tú nombre es?

Fabiola: Fabiola.

Isabel: Fabiola. ¿Y?

Ana: Ana.

Isabel: Ana. Fabiola y Ana es el nombre para el estudio. ¿Y ustedes de que país son?

Ana: México.

Fabiola: México.

Isabel: México. Ok. ¿Quién vive con Fabiola en su casa?

Fabiola: Mi esposo y mis 2 hijas.

Isabel: ¿Quién vive con Ana en su casa?

Ana: Mi esposo y mis 2 hijos.

Isabel: Ok. Igualitas.

[Risa]

¿Cuántos años de educación tiene usted?

Fabiola: Me gradué de la preparatoria. High School.

Isabel: High School. ¿Y usted?
Ana: Igual.

Isabel: Igual. Ambas [Inaudible] Ok. ¿Su educación fue en inglés o en español?

Fabiola: En español.

Isabel: ¿Su educación?

Ana: En español.

Isabel: Ambas en español. Ok. No veo. ¿A usted le gusta leer?

Fabiola: Sí. Me encanta.

Ana: También.

Isabel: A ambas les gusta leer. Ok. ¿Lee frecuentemente?

Fabiola: Sí.

Ana: Más o menos.

Isabel: Más o menos.

Ana: Sí, por ahora.

[Risa]

Pero sí.

Isabel: ¿Sus hijos la ven leer a ustedes?

Fabiola: Sí.

Ana: Sí.

Isabel: ¿Sus padres fueron a la escuela?

Fabiola: Sí.

Isabel: ¿Hasta qué año de escuela tuvieron ellos?

Fabiola: A la universidad.
Isabel: ¿Universidad?
Fabiola: Sí.
Isabel: ¡Guau, que bien! ¿Y tus padres?
Ana: Mis padres nomas hasta la secundaria o primaria. Primaria, en ese tiempo. Sí.
Isabel: ¿Sus padres querían que ustedes tuvieran educación? Que ustedes fueran educadas.
Fabiola: Sí.
Ana: Sí.
Isabel: ¿Cuál es su meta, de la educación de sus hijos, en inglés para usted? ¿Qué es lo ustedes quieren lograr con la educación de sus hijos?
Fabiola: Que se gradúen de la universidad, obviamente.
Isabel: Ok. ¿Y usted?
Ana: Sí, que termine sus estudios, y que sea una persona de bien. Tenga un estudio donde, como prepararse también.
Isabel: ¿Cómo vas a saber tú que estas progresando para esa meta?
Fabiola: Estando al pendiente de su escuela.
Ana: Estar al pendiente de él, que siga con los estudios, y ver que si está aprendiendo.
Isabel: Ok. ¿Ustedes quieren que sus hijos lean en inglés?
Fabiola: Sí.
Ana: Sí.
Isabel: ¿En español?

Fabiola: También.

Ana: También. Escribir y leer.

Isabel: ¿Qué tipo de lectura quieren que sus hijos hagan en inglés y en español?

Ana: ¿Para nosotros o cómo?

Isabel: Para ellos.

Ana: Oh, para ellos.

Isabel: ¿Qué quieren que ellos lean?

Ana: Pues algo interesante. Ya sea de la historia de donde el país que están dedicando ahora.

Isabel: Ok.

Fabiola: Yo creo que cualquier tipo de lectura es bueno, siempre y cuando al niño le interese.

Isabel: Ok. ¡Qué buena respuesta! ¿Ustedes les hablan de la expectativa, de que ellos deban leer en inglés y en español, a ellos?

Ana: Sí.

Fabiola: Sí.

Isabel: ¿Qué les dicen a ellos sobre la lectura?

Ana: Que tienen que aprender también el idioma que uno habla, saber de sus orígenes, también de dónde vienen sus padres. Hablar el español, escribirlo. Y también el inglés, que es otra lengua– tiene que aprenderla. Y si hay otro más–
Isabel: Una tercera lengua.

Ana: Sí.

Isabel: ¡Guau!

Fabiola: Sí. Yo siempre les inculco el español, porque soy latina, sus abuelos son latinos, y siempre tienen que saber sobre su cultura.

Isabel: Claro. ¿Por qué es importante la lectura para usted, para sus hijos?

Fabiola: Porque les enriquece su vocabulario y obviamente, les da facilidad de expresión.

Ana: Sí, igualmente. Y aprendizaje también.

Isabel: ¿Ustedes por qué creen que esta expectativa está dentro de ustedes? ¿De dónde viene ese deseo de que sus niños lean?

Fabiola: En lo personal, mi mamá siempre lo hizo. Entonces, es algo como que está en la familia, tener un tiempo de lectura. Y me he dado cuenta, que uno aprende mucho de eso.

Ana: Sí, igual. Ellos quisieron que uno nos superáramos más que ellos, y ahora quiero los mismo para mis–

Isabel: Claro. ¿Ustedes conocen los estándares de excelencia de Georgia?

Fabiola: No.

Ana: No.

Isabel: ¿No? Ok. Como no conocen los estándares de Georgia, no los entienden.

Fabiola: No. No los conocemos.
Isabel: Los estándares de excelencia de Georgia, son unos estándares que están para todos los grados, de kindergarden hasta el grado 12, en los que los maestros se basan en su instrucción. Por ejemplo, los niños de kindergarden deben aprender sonidos de las letras, deben a aprender a sumar y a restar hasta 10. Ya cuando van, por ejemplo, mi hijo que está en quinto año, tiene que hacer las potencias, al 10 o– Entonces, cada grado tiene unos logros diferentes que tienen que enseñar las maestras, que por el estado, estamos obligadas a enseñar y a cubrir en nuestros materiales. Esos son los estándares de excelencia. ¿Ustedes creen que los estándares de excelencia son algo en lo que quisieran saber más?

Ana: Sí.

Fabiola: Sí.

Isabel: ¿Cómo quisieran aprender más de los estándares de excelencia?

Ana: ¿Nosotros? Un poco de clases. Hay veces, operaciones que en México son diferente a lo de aquí. A veces, mi niño trae una tarea, y yo a veces no entiendo.

Isabel: Sí, sí, sí.

Ana: Son diferentes. Y sí, estaría bien uno, que también aprendiera algo.

Fabiola: Con una pequeña explicación, sería buena ayuda para poder apoyar a los niños en casa.

Isabel: ¿Ustedes entienden que están haciendo las maestras y por qué?

Ana: Perdón, ¿cómo dijo?
Isabel: ¿Entienden que están enseñando a los niños las maestras, y por qué lo enseñan?

Ana: Mm-mm.

Isabel: ¿Qué están cubriendo en matemática, y por qué? ¿Qué están cubriendo y por qué?

Ana: Sí. Enseñanza normal me imagino.

Fabiola: El nivel que tienen que tener los niños, de acuerdo al grado, no, que estén cursando.

Ana: Sí.

Isabel: ¿Cómo saben ustedes que está haciendo la maestra?

Ana: Yo cuando reviso las tareas de mi niño, le pregunto esto– reviso su tarea todos los días.

Isabel: Sí.

Ana: Y ya, cuando yo no entiendo, le digo, “a ver, explícame tú.” Y ya, más o menos yo lo entiendo, y él dice, “no, mira me enseñó esto mi maestra”

Isabel: Ok.

Fabiola: La maestra de mi niña manda una hoja, mandan con la información de la semana y es como se da cuenta uno que es lo que van a aprender durante la semana.

Isabel: ¿Cómo pueden ayudar las maestras a entender lo que están enseñando ellas? ¿Qué pueden hacer las maestras para ayudarles a entender lo que están enseñando?
Ana: Pues enseñarnos un poquito a nosotros también.

Isabel: Ok.

Fabiola: Con una hoja de información.

Isabel: ¿Cómo la maestra?

Fabiola: Como la maestra lo hace. Lo está mostrando.

Isabel: ¿Hay algo más que quieran decirme sobre la expectativa de cómo sus niños deben leer en inglés?

Ana: ¿Cómo leer?

Isabel: De su nivel de lectura en inglés.

Ana: Sería bien.

Isabel: ¿Sí?

Fabiola: No entiendo la pregunta.

Isabel: Como– la expectativa que tienes tú de que ella llegue a su meta. ¿Algo más que me quiera decir sobre eso?

Fabiola: Igual. Dándonos como información, de qué tipo de libros debe leer, de acuerdo a su edad. Porque muchas veces no sabemos nosotros, los padres.

Isabel: ¿Hay algo más que ustedes creen que sería útil que las maestras supieran?

De las familias, del aprendizaje.

Ana: Puede ser que sí, si también ellas, estarían también segura de que también nosotros estamos enseñando y viendo que nuestros hijos si están echándole ganas al estudio. __________también.

Fabiola: ¿Algo que ellas tienen que saber con respecto–?
Isabel: A la familia, a las expectativas. ¿Cómo pueden ayudar? Cualquier otra cosa que sea útil para una maestra, poder saberlo.

Fabiola: No. No tengo idea.

Isabel: Bueno, muchas gracias.
APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW TRANSLATION: FABIOLA AND ANA, INTERVIEWED BY ISABEL
Isabel: Ok. I’m going to ask you some questions and we’re going to record them here. The first question is: other than your real name, what name would you like to use for the study?

Fabiola: I can use mine, there’s no problem.

Isabel: Ok, what is your name?

Fabiola: Fabiola.

Isabel: Fabiola. ¿And you are—?

Ana: Ana.

Isabel: Ana. Fabiola and Ana are the names for the study ¿Where are you from?

Ana: Mexico.

Fabiola: Mexico.

Isabel: Mexico. Ok. Who lives with Fabiola?

Fabiola: My husband and 2 daughters.

Isabel: Who lives with Ana?

Ana: My husband and my 2 sons.

Isabel: Ok. You’re both the same.

[Laughter]

How many years of education do you have?


Isabel: High School. And you?

Ana: The same.
Isabel: The same. You both [Inaudible]. Ok. Was your education in English or Spanish?

Fabiola: In Spanish.

Isabel: And your education?

Ana: In Spanish.

Isabel: Both in Spanish. Ok. I can’t see. Do you like to read?

Fabiola: Yes. I love it.

Ana: I do as well.

Isabel: You both like to read. Ok. Do you read frequently?

Fabiola: Yes.

Ana: More or less.

Isabel: More or less?

Ana: Yes, for now. (gestures to infant son)

[Laughter]

But, yes.

Isabel: Do your children see you reading?

Fabiola: Yes.

Ana: Yes.

Isabel: Did your parents go to school?

Fabiola: Yes.

Isabel: What year of school did they complete?

Fabiola: University.
Isabel: University?

Fabiola: Yes.

Isabel: Wow, that’s great! What about your parents?

Ana: My parents only went through high school or elementary school.

Elementary school, back then.

Isabel: Did your parents want you to get an education, want you to be educated?

Fabiola: Yes.

Ana: Yes.

Isabel: What is your objective for your children’s English education? What would you like to achieve with your children’s education?

Fabiola: To have them graduate from the university, obviously.

Isabel: Ok. And you?

Ana: Yes, have them finish their studies and be good people; have learned, and be prepared.

Isabel: ¿How will you know that you’re progressing towards that goal?

Fabiola: Staying on top of their education.

Ana: Stay on top of him to make sure he progresses in his studies and see if he’s learning.

Isabel: Ok. Do you want your children to read in English?

Fabiola: Yes.

Ana: Yes.

Isabel: And in Spanish?
Fabiola: As well.

Ana: As well. Write and read.

Isabel: What kind of reading would you like your children to do in English and Spanish?

Ana: For us you mean?

Isabel: For them.

Ana: Oh, for them.

Isabel: What would you like them to read?

Ana: Something interesting, perhaps about the history of the country they are studying now.

Isabel: Ok.

Fabiola: I think any kind of reading is good, as long as they are interested.

Isabel: Ok. Great answer. Do you speak to them about the expectation of reading in English and Spanish?

Ana: Yes.

Fabiola: Yes.

Isabel: What do you tell them about reading?

Ana: They need to learn the language that we speak, understand its roots and know where their parents came from; speak Spanish and write it. And English as well, which is another language that they should learn. And if there’s another—

Isabel: A third language.
Ana: Yes.

Isabel: Wow!

Fabiola: Yes. I always instill Spanish in them because I’m Latina, their grandparents are Latino and they should always know about their culture.

Isabel: Sure. Why is reading important to you for your children?

Fabiola: Because it enriches their vocabulary, obviously, and allows them to express themselves easily.

Ana: Yes, I agree. And learning, too.

Isabel: Why do you think that you have these expectations? Where does this desire for your children to read stem from?

Fabiola: Personally, my mother used to do it all the time. So it’s something that runs in the family, taking time out to read. And I’ve realized that you learn a great deal from that.

Ana: Yes, I agree. The wanted us to go farther than they did and now I want the same for my (children) (gestures broadly to the kids’ table)

Isabel: Sure. Are you familiar with the Georgia Standards of Excellence?

Fabiola: No.

Ana: No.

Isabel: No? Ok. If you aren’t familiar with the Georgia Standards, then you don’t understand them.

Fabiola: No. We aren’t familiar with them.
Isabel: The Georgia Standards of Excellence are the standards on which teachers base their instruction for all grades, K through 12. For instance, kindergarten children should learn how letters sound, they should learn how to add and subtract to 10. As they, for example, my son who is in fifth grade, he has to do exponentials to the 10th power. So each grade has its own objectives that teachers need to cover, which we’re obligated by the state to teach and cover with our materials. These are the Standards of Excellence. Do you think you’d like to learn more about these Standards of Excellence?

Ana: Yes.

Fabiola: Yes.

Isabel: How would you like to learn more about the Standards of Excellence?

Ana: Us? Some classes. There are some operations that are different here than in Mexico. Sometimes my son brings homework home and I don’t understand it.

Isabel: Yes, yes, yes.

Ana: They’re different. And it’s would be good for us to learn something new.

Fabiola: With a short explanation, it would be good so we could help the kids out at home.

Isabel: Do you understand what teachers are doing and why?

Ana: Excuse me, what did you say?
*Isabel:* Do you understand what they are teaching the kids and why they’re teaching it?

*Ana:* Mm-mm.

*Isabel:* What they are covering in math and why? What they’re covering and why?

*Ana:* Yes. Standard lessons, I guess.

*Fabiola:* There’s a certain level that the children currently in a certain grade should have.

*Ana:* Yes.

*Isabel:* How do you know what the teacher is covering?

*Ana:* When I review my son’s work, I ask him—I review his work every day.

*Isabel:* Yes.

*Ana:* So when I don’t understand something I ask him to explain it to me and then I more or less understand and he says, “No, this is how my teacher taught us.”

*Isabel:* Ok.

*Fabiola:* My daughter’s teacher sends a note home with the information for the week, which is how I know what they will cover during the week.

*Isabel:* How can teachers help to explain what they are covering? What can the teachers do help you understand what they are teaching?

*Ana:* They could teach us a little, too.

*Isabel:* Ok.
Fabiola: With an information sheet.

Isabel: Like the teacher?

Fabiola: Like the teacher does it. She’s showing it.

Isabel: Is there anything else you’d like to tell me about the expectation about your children reading in English?

Ana: Like reading?

Isabel: Their reading level in English.

Ana: That would be good.

Isabel: Yes?

Fabiola: I don’t understand the question.

Isabel: How—the expectation that you have for her to achieve the goal. Is there anything else you’d like to tell me about that?

Fabiola: Same thing. Give us information about what books they should read according to their age. Because sometimes we, the parents, don’t know.

Isabel: Is there anything else that you think would be useful for the teachers to know? About the family, learning.

Ana: It might be good for them to know that we are teaching them too and making sure that our children are making an effort in school. And ______

[Inaudible].

Fabiola: Something they should know about—?

Isabel: The family, the expectations. How can they help? Anything else that might be useful for a teacher to know.
Fabiola: No. I have no clue.

Isabel: Ok, thank you.
APPENDIX G

EXAMPLE CODING SPREADSHEET
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>PE</th>
<th>AE</th>
<th>GE</th>
<th>VIDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith origin</td>
<td>North Carolina, US, non-religious, WASA</td>
<td>Columbus, GA (Catholic), raised with Catholic influence, non-practicing</td>
<td>Mexico, raised in multi-generational intact family, Catholic</td>
<td>Mexico, raised in multi-generational intact family, Catholic in US (childhood), Catholic</td>
<td>Georgia State Board of Education, Atlanta, GA, USA</td>
<td>WIDA Consortium, Madison, Wisconsin, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>mother, teacher, husband, Girl 10, Girl 9, Boy 7</td>
<td>Husband, Boy 10, boy &gt;1 yr</td>
<td>Husband, Girl, Girl</td>
<td>irrelevant</td>
<td>irrelevant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>HS graduate, masters degree, Ph. D.</td>
<td>HS graduate, masters, PhD</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>standards include PBE-12, specifically address C6-8 standards are not designed for years, but levels of proficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public and private</td>
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<td>public in GA, public in Georgia</td>
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<td>Public</td>
<td>Public</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>only</td>
<td>fluent; my education in Colombia was done in Spanish, however we did have a, an English component</td>
<td>none; English fluency upon arrival in the US - spoken English with nearly no accent</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational goal for research</td>
<td>learn as much as possible, earn degrees to prove it</td>
<td>did not really think about it when I was young</td>
<td>last high school</td>
<td>By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 texts, complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.</td>
<td>Students should be able to process comparisons by comparing and contrasting information from experiments, simulations, videos, or multimedia sources with that of text on the same topics in narrative/compare English language skills and identify factors that contribute to phenomena in explanations in these same English skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like it</td>
<td>absolutely</td>
<td>I love it</td>
<td>I do as well (love it)</td>
<td>enjoyment isn’t mentioned</td>
<td>recurrent, explain, argue, process do not correlate to enjoyment</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>