

2016

Saltine box full of dreams: one Mexican immigrant woman's journey to academic success

Adriana C. Sanchez

Eastern Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://dc.ewu.edu/theses>

Recommended Citation

Sanchez, Adriana C., "Saltine box full of dreams: one Mexican immigrant woman's journey to academic success" (2016). *EWU Masters Thesis Collection*. 337.

<http://dc.ewu.edu/theses/337>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research and Creative Works at EWU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in EWU Masters Thesis Collection by an authorized administrator of EWU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jotto@ewu.edu.

Saltine Box Full of Dreams:
One Mexican Immigrant Woman's Journey to Academic Success

A Thesis
Presented To
Eastern Washington University
Cheney, Washington

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
Adriana C. Sánchez
Spring 2016

Thesis of

Adriana C. Sánchez

Approved By

_____ Date _____

LaVona L. Reeves, Professor of English

Chair, Graduate Study Committee

_____ Date _____

Dana C. Elder, Professor and Director of University Honors

Graduate Study Committee

_____ Date _____

Natalia Ruiz-Rubio, Assistant Professor of Spanish

Graduate Study Committee

Master's Thesis

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at Eastern Washington University, I agree that the JFK Library shall make copies freely available for inspection. I further agree that copying of this project in whole or in part is allowable only for scholarly purposes. It is understood, however, that any copying or publication of this thesis for commercial purposes, or for financial gain, shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature_____

Date_____

Abstract

This auto-ethnography/literacy narrative examines the journey of a first-generation Mexican immigrant woman from birth through completion of the master's degree at Eastern Washington University. The purpose of this single case study is to examine how one first-generation Mexican immigrant college student was able to succeed in higher education despite being part of the least academically successful minority group. It is also important for teachers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to tell their stories about overcoming hardships and barriers to academic success—such as discrimination, low socioeconomic levels (Reeves, 1997; 2012), low levels of education. The author includes photos and written artifacts selected to document her journey from infancy to completion of the master's degree. Like many blue-collar workers, her parents provided "invisible" support that teachers often could not see: hard work, Catholic values, optimism, and determination. Offering both emic and etic perspectives of life in the orchard communities, the author gives voice to Mexican immigrants and their families, hoping that hearing their stories will change "frozen narratives" (Brock, 2007) about immigrants of color. Hers is a story of anomie reduction (Okabe, 2008) during undergraduate and graduate studies, including liminal moments that gave her agency (Soliday, 1994) and helped her reclaim lived experiences, empowering and liberating this daughter of an orchard worker who came to the United States and has worked for the same orchardist in Washington for almost 40 years.

Keywords: autoethnography, heritage-language retention, bilingual, anomie, agency, first-generation immigrant, discrimination, parental involvement, balanced bilingual, invisible support, additive bilingualism, role models, Mexican culture, community, tradition, family, motivation and self-confidence, language acquisition, and language learning.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my parents, Ana Maria and Joaquin, for their unwavering support and for the sacrifices they have made so that we can have a better life. I am grateful that they've given me the opportunity and the freedom to pursue my dreams, and I hope that I've made them proud. I am thankful for *mis hermanas*, Alma, Jazmin, and Ruby. They have been my biggest cheerleaders, and they've taken away every single shred of self-doubt, and filled me with bravery and confidence. I don't know how I would have finished the thesis or the graduate program without you. I am also grateful for my *abuelitos*, who were born and raised in Mexico, for their stories, endless love, and for the beautiful memories. And thank you to Lola for being my constant companion these last three years of graduate school.

I am eternally grateful to Sarah, my friend with a heart of gold, for helping me edit and giving me her input on the thesis writing. Thank you for helping me see the light in times of darkness, and for celebrating every single milestone in my graduate studies with me.

I would also like to thank Dr. Susan Ruby for seeing a diamond in the rough. She believed in me until I was able to believe in myself too. She taught me that the most important thing in the world is for people to have a good heart. Thank you for your constant support through the School Psychology Ed.S. Program, and thank you for encouraging me to do what I needed to do in order to follow my heart.

And finally, a very special thanks to Dr. LaVona Reeves for helping me see the importance and beauty of being bilingual and bicultural—especially within the world of

academia. Our many talks have taught me to be proud of who I am and where I come from. You showed me how to let my struggles transform me—and add to my story—rather than bring me down. I hope that I can continue to inspire others as you have inspired me. You are truly a role model, Dr. Reeves.

Thank you to Dr. Elder, my second reader for your time and encouragement as I completed this project. *Y gracias por los libros y sus consejos tambien!*

Thank you to Dr. Natalia Ruiz-Rubio for agreeing to be my third member with such short notice, and thank you for sharing your experiences during the thesis defense.

I am also grateful for the invaluable internship experiences I had with Mary Parker and Janine Alden in the Asia University America Program at Eastern Washington University; working with the wonderful Iraqi girls and other students with Elizabeth Wilcox at Cheney High School; and working with the sweet children with Mary Sullivan at Betz Elementary. You are all wonderful examples of the type of English teacher I aspire to be—empathetic, kind, open-minded, and dedicated. Thank you to each and every one of you for taking the time out of your busy day to show me the great work that you do with students on a daily basis. I hope I make you proud as I begin my career overseas.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my beautiful nieces, Paris and Emma. Reach for the stars, precious ones. And finally, I would like to dedicate my work to my parents. *Esto es para ustedes. Mis logros tambien son los suyos.* This is for you. My accomplishments are also yours.

Preface

Language Learning Experience

I began to learn English with my older sister, Alma, who was two years older than me and attending kindergarten at the time. I practiced speaking with her at home, and by the time I started kindergarten at Cashmere Vale Elementary, I was in the regular classroom like the other American children. Unlike my sister, I wasn't teased for not speaking English or for having an accent; on the contrary, I remember interpreting for other Spanish-speaking students in the classroom. Something else I'll always remember from elementary school is asking my parents questions about homework and realizing that they couldn't help me because they couldn't read or speak English. At that moment, I told myself I would become better at speaking English to help them communicate with the outside world while at the same time practicing Spanish too, so that I would always be able to communicate with my family.

Although my sister and I were still in elementary, it was not uncommon for an aunt or uncle to call my parents and request that either my sister or I accompany them to a medical appointment to interpret for them. Now I am a Spanish-language medical interpreter, and I get to help families communicate with their healthcare providers just like I did for my family. My parents worked long hours at physically demanding jobs and still came home to make dinner and make sure we finished our homework. For most Mexican immigrant families, having the time or energy to attend English language classes on top of all of that—in addition to having time to study—just wasn't feasible.

Therefore, my sister and I we were a hot commodity amongst relatives that spoke little to no English.

One time, at an appointment with my aunt, there was a little mishap with my translation services. I think I was about six or seven at the time, and my aunt had been having some pain in her hands from working long hours in a packing shed. My aunt told the doctor, “*Me duelen las muñecas.*” Puzzled but obedient, I translated, “My dolls hurt.” My aunt smiled and nodded in agreement as the doctor looked from me to her, trying to figure out if we were pulling his leg. You see, *muñecas* has a double meaning. It means wrists, AND it means dolls too. I did not realize that I had just told my aunt’s doctor that her dolls hurt, when what she meant was that her wrists hurt. I think it’s safe to say that most elementary-aged children aren’t experts at interpreting medical terminology. After a moment, the doctor understood what was happening after the confused look on his face led my aunt to point to both of her wrists. We were convenient interpreters—small, portable, and could accompany the family almost anywhere—but our translations were not always accurate.

To this day, Univision and Telemundo—two popular Latino TV stations—still air commercials about *Ingles Sin Barreras* (English Without Barriers), an English-language learning program similar to Rosetta Stone that allows you to work at your own pace and learn a language from home. *Ingles Sin Barreras* is selling nothing short of *El Sueño Americano* (The American Dream)—better opportunities, steady employment and a high quality of life. Although I learned English quickly and easily, the adults in my life struggled to acquire the language; I never forgot how difficult it was for my parents. At a

young age, I learned that I possessed a valuable skill that I could use to help not only my parents, but also my extended family members and the community.

Teaching Experience

My first internship experience was at Eastern Washington University (EWU) during the summer of 2015 with Dr. LaVona Reeves in English 112. The curriculum was centered on the biography of Eleanor Roosevelt, *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery*. Students completed weekly study guides, studied new vocabulary, and wrote a minimum of 100 words in their journals every day. In their journals, students had to relate aspects of their lives—such as their view of a perfect woman, their favorite childhood place, and their experience learning a new language—to Eleanor Roosevelt’s life. Every Friday in class, students wrote an essay using words from their weekly vocabulary list. The class was made up of primarily Saudi Arabian students and also a few Japanese students.

I attended class for one hour, four times per week. Every intern in the class was paired up with one or two students for the quarter. The interns did partner activities in class with their students and met with them outside of class to help with weekly essays and a final presentation on a chapter of *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery*.

In the Fall of 2015, I had the opportunity to work with Mary Parker in the Asia University America Program (AUAP) at EWU. I attended two classes, American Studies and Life Skills, four times a week for one hour, and I also attended Functions with Janine Alden one hour per week. The classes were composed of about half female and half male students. I saw first-hand that students highly valued opportunities to practice speaking English with a native speaker, and it was an honor to be that person for them. My duties

included helping students work on homework and practice their speaking. Students were able to schedule meetings with me outside of class time to work on their pronunciation, learn English idioms, and further explore American culture.

I am truly committed to helping students improve in every way possible and strive to make learning fun to get students motivated. In both internships, I was humbled by the effort the students put into learning English, and I have an even more profound appreciation for students learning English. Working with students and learning about their culture helped me grow as an educator. Because I am bilingual and have family members and friends who are English-Language Learners, it was second nature for me to empathize with the struggles the students were experiencing. I look forward to moving abroad to spread my enthusiasm for English to other students.

Teaching Philosophy

When my internship in English 112 began, I felt a great sense of responsibility toward the students. As their final class in preparation for college-level English, I sensed the need to be as helpful as possible and felt that I needed to have an answer for every question they might have. The students were bright, eager to learn, and very self-sufficient. I quickly found out that they usually preferred to find out answers to questions on their own. They only asked for help if they needed clarification with a grammar point or if they were unsure about the pronunciation of a word.

My philosophy of language teaching is that each student has her own set of strengths, and that it is better to work with their strengths first and then slowly start to

work on weaknesses so the student doesn't get discouraged. Students need a teacher who believes in them and gives them a sense of accomplishment to motivate them to continue.

One of the most important qualities that I will bring to my teaching that I will incorporate into all of my teaching is an understanding that everyone learns differently: i.e. visual, auditory, tactile, etc. I don't want to limit my teaching style but rather use every single approach in order to reach different learners. As I've gone through school, I have realized that I do much better when I have visuals and examples than when I just hear something and don't get to see it.

After being exposed to multimodality in Dr. Reeves' classroom, I decided I wanted to include poetry, songs, and videos into my lessons too. By activating a multitude of senses—sight, sound, touch—I hope to engage every learner in a way that works for each. Since being given the opportunity to teach a lesson in many classes, I also want to create a positive environment where students are able to express themselves and learn about others. I do this in the hope that students will have the opportunity to participate in a way that makes them feel comfortable—whether it is by writing, sharing a song that is meaningful to them, like “De Colores,” or sharing art with the class. All through school, I was the girl who never raised her hand in class, and I was terrified of being called on. Creating small groups is ideal because it gives students a chance to discuss their ideas with peers without being in the spotlight. Since overcoming my fear of public speaking, I would like to give students advice on how to feel more confident while giving presentations. Public speaking is just an inevitable part of life, and giving my students the skills to practice will help them in future endeavors.

Since having the opportunity to learn about different customs and languages from my peers, I feel that I am more open-minded, and I want to teach my students to be open-minded about others as well. Some students may have preconceived notions about cultures they are not familiar with. I hope I can be a cultural broker for my students and teach them about American culture, traditions, and help to dispel stereotypes. As I teach English, I would like to teach them to think about the world around them.

My experience growing up with parents and older family members who did not speak English taught me that it is important to be respectful of others who do not speak the language, and that everyone learns at a different pace. I believe that having a strong need to speak English makes people try harder. However, I also believe that lack of fluency is not due to a lack of effort. There are multiple factors that affect the rate at which someone learns English, and there should be just as many approaches to facilitate it.

My philosophy of language teaching has become more humanistic over time. While I still believe that teachers have knowledge and skills they can impart on students, I also believe that students have unique insights that they can share with their teacher and classmates. During the first class I ever had with Dr. Reeves, I watched as she created an environment that transformed a classroom full of peers into a small community of friends who respected and valued one another. By sharing our own language-learning experiences and our expertise in our own first, second, and third languages, we were able to have a voice and also relate to the class material much better. At the same time, we were able to teach our peers a little bit about our language and our culture as well.

Working in small groups, doing partner work, writing journals and sharing them with our peers helped establish a sense of openness and trust, not only amongst our peers but also with Dr. Reeves. This is what I hope to create in my future classroom. I want students to have a respectful and meaningful relationship with their classmates, and I want them to trust me as well. I want my students to know that I care about them and their education. When teachers and students have compassion for one another, it creates a safe community where language learning can occur.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v-vi
Dedication.....	vii
List of Figures.....	xix-xx
Preface.....	viii
Language Learning.....	viii
Teaching Experience.....	x-xi
Teaching Philosophy.....	xi-xiv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1-5
The Problem.....	5-6
Purpose.....	6
Assumptions.....	6-7
Research Questions.....	7
Research Methods.....	7-8
Thesis Overview.....	8-9
Chapter 2: Review of Literature.....	10
Introduction.....	10-15
First-Generation Mexican Immigrant College Students.....	15-18
Dominant Pedagogy.....	18-20
Educational Skills.....	20-21

Deficit Model.....	21
Student Identities.....	21-24
Discrimination.....	24-26
Factors that Can Help Students.....	26-27
Relationships Among Families and Schools.....	27-30
Protective Factors.....	30-31
Age at Which Language Learning Begins.....	31
Immigrant Advantage.....	31-32
Role Models.....	32-34
Chapter 3: Autoethnography.....	35
Why Autoethnography?.....	36-37
Autoethnography as a Research Method.....	37-38
Narrative Inquiry.....	38-41
Artifacts.....	41
Tradition.....	41-43
A Marriage.....	43-48
Lessons From My Grandparents.....	49-52
Poverty In Mexico.....	53-59
A Better Future.....	59-63
Pizza Party.....	63-65
My Parents' Learning Experience.....	65-71
Spanish Acquisition and Language Learning.....	71-73

Maintaining the Heritage Language.....	73-75
<i>La Llorona</i> (The Weeping Woman)	75-76
Pictures from the Sky.....	76-82
<i>Viajes a Michoacan</i> (Trips to Michoacan)	83-88
Cashmere High School.....	88-91
Too Late.....	91-92
Entering the Workforce.....	92- 93
Wenatchee Valley College.....	94-96
Undergraduate Studies at Eastern Washington University.....	96
“Invisible” Support.....	97-99
A Different Point of View.....	99
Believing in Myself.....	99-103
School Psychology Ed.S.	103
Becoming a Citizen.....	103-105
Switching Majors.....	105-108
Artifacts.....	109-126

Chapter 4: Reflection and Discussion

Research Questions.....	127-129
Assumptions.....	129-136
Reflection.....	136-139

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Summary of the Findings.....	140-143
------------------------------	---------

Implications for Teaching.....	143
Recommendations for Future Research.....	143-144
References.....	145-149
Appendices.....	150-152
Curriculum Vitae.....	153-155

List of Figures

Figure 1. Baptism Dress.....	1
Figure 2. My Father, Joaquin, Age 17 Washington State.....	2
Figure 3. My mother and father on their wedding day in 1982.....	43
Figure 4. Aunt Imelda and My Mother.....	46
Figure 5. Baby Picture at Grandmother’s House.....	47
Figure 6. My Catholic Church Confirmation.....	48
Figure 7. With My Big Sister After My Confirmation.....	49
Figure 8. Breaking a <i>piñata</i> at a birthday party in Mexico.....	50
Figure 9. With Grandpa on the <i>Patio</i> in Michoacan.	51
Figure 10. Grandparents Blue House.....	52
Figure 11. With Father and Sister in San Isidro.....	53
Figure 12. Playing in Kindergarten.....	54
Figure 13. Snacks in Kindergarten.....	55
Figure 14. Bath in a <i>Tina</i>	56
Figure 15. My Parents’ House in San Isidro.....	57

Figure 16. Riding Tricycles with Alma.....	58
Figure 17. Mama Bibiana.....	59
Figure 18. Wedding in the United States.....	62
Figure 19. Matching Outfits with Alma.....	64
Figure 20. Grandma Bibiana’s Birthday.....	66
Figure 21. A Baby Sister.....	69
Figure 22. Alma’s Birthday Party in the United States.....	71
Figure 23. Trabalenguas.....	73
Figure 24. First School Picture.....	78
Figure 25. Grandma Carmen.....	79
Figure 26. Grandpa Everardo.....	80
Figure 27. Grandparents’ Patio in San Isidro.....	85
Figure 28. De Colores PowerPoint.....	122

Chapter 1

Introduction

I was born in Churintzio, Mexico, in 1985, but I have very few memories of my homeland and very few photos of my first three years of life because poor Mexicans could not afford to own cameras. Although I have only a few photographs from my childhood (Figure 1), there is no denying that Mexico is imprinted in my very being and that it will stay there thanks to the many strong ties to my culture. Family traditions, heritage, language-retention and cultural practices are all things that are always a part of you—even if you move away from your birth land. Nothing can strip you of your culture without your consent—not even leaving everything behind to go to a new country. Despite having left our home country behind, my parents made sure that my sisters and I never forgot our *raizes* (roots) because our identities are connected to our roots (Reeves, 2009).



Figure 1. Me when I was just a few months old wearing my baptism dress.

My grandfather came to work in Washington with the Braceros Program enacted during World War II. When the men left to go fight overseas, the women took over work in agricultural and farm labor, and when they went to work in US factories to manufacture parts for planes, the men came on the Braceros Program. Following in his father's footsteps "trembling with fear, yet filled with courage, a courage born of desperation," my father came to Washington as a seasonal worker in the orchards when he was just 17 (Anzaldúa, 1987). He recalls his first trip to the United States and tells me that his sole belongings fit into an empty cracker box of saltines. He came nearly empty-handed, with just the clothes on his back, not speaking a single word of English, and yet full of determination (Figure 2). Since that maiden voyage to the United States in 1976, he has worked for the same orchardist, David Nierman.



Figure 2. My Father, Joaquin, at 17 while working in Washington State.

While the men worked or aspired to move to *El Norte* (The United States or “The North”), it was every young woman’s dream to get married and have children. Most young men and women from San Isidro didn’t go to school any further than fifth grade. So following *la tradicion* (the tradition) in San Isidro, my mother married my father in 1982. My mother was just 17 at the time and my father was 22. After the wedding, my father stayed in Michoacán for two years until he came to Washington to work once again.

When my father was working here, he lived in a cabin that David Nierman, his employer, provided for all of his workers. These cabins were normally set up for single men who would be coming and going as the seasonal work ended and began. My father would later bring the family to live in these same cabins. The workers’ cabins were small, but they provided a sense of home and community for the men living there.

At the time, none of the men spoke much English, so they drew straws to see who would venture out to run errands for everyone. The person who drew the short straw knew that he would have to risk being harassed by a member of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) or by store patrons who were not so welcoming to the Mexican workers. Oftentimes these trips to the grocery store or to the post office were the only outing and interaction that the men had with the outside world; and often times, it was not a pleasant interaction. But my father and the other men had no choice. They had to go out for food and to the post office to mail letters to their families in Mexico.

After a long hot day’s work, the men were often too tired to head back to the cabins to change out of their work clothes. Sometimes the one who drew the short straw

would head straight out. When it was his turn to run errands for everyone, my dad recalls getting unfriendly stares as people sized up his dirty khaki work pants, his flannel button-ups, and work boots. The Office of Financial Management estimates that there were just about 120,016 Latinos in the state at the time (Office of Financial Management, 2012). That number has grown since. The latest Pew Research Center survey puts that number at 790,000 for 2011 (Migration Policy Institute, 2016). Being a minority who spoke limited English must have been difficult for my father. When I ask him how he managed to not feel intimidated or scared, he often replies with, “*No habia de otra, y el trabajo que hacíamos era honesto. No hay porque avergonzarse. Malo fuera que estuviéramos robando o matando.*” (I had no choice, and the work that we did was honest. There was no reason to be ashamed. It would be bad if we were stealing or killing.)

In 1986, my father gained residency through a program for agricultural workers—granted to only 350,000 “aliens”—called the Special Agricultural Workers II (SAW II).

According to the USCIS website:

Aliens who performed labor in perishable agricultural commodities for a specified period of time and were admitted for temporary and then permanent residence under a provision of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986... aliens who performed labor in perishable agricultural commodities for at least 90 days during the year ending May 1, 1986 were eligible for Group II temporary resident status. Adjustment to permanent resident status is essentially automatic for both groups; however, aliens in Group I were eligible on December 1, 1989 and those in Group II were eligible one year later on December 1, 1990. (USCIS, 2016).

There may be those who object to the word alien because it makes it sound as if

immigrants are “others” and it only serves to promote a sense of ‘us versus them’. The term “alien” has such a negative connotation when used to describe immigrants and the media and politicians with anti-immigration agendas only make it worse. I believe that

lumping everyone together—the hard-working families, excellent students and honest people with the criminals—and judging an entire group of people by the terrible actions of a few has led to a negative sentiment towards all immigrants. No matter how negative the word alien is, I choose to look at it in a positive manner. Essentially we HAVE come to a new and foreign land where we have had to learn about our new environment, a new language, and new customs and traditions—and we have not only survived but also thrived.

As I near the completion of my graduate degree, I can't help but feel fortunate about the direction my life has taken. My parents' decision to leave the economic and political turmoil in Mexico behind—by moving to the U.S.—completely altered my life. Thanks to the values they have instilled in me and the role models they have been for me, I am who I am today. Although I had some barriers along the way, I overcame them, and I am pleased to be able to tell their story as well as mine.

The Problem

Though the lives of Cesar Chávez, Richard Rodriguez, and Gloria Anzaldúa sometimes appear in university courses, there is a conspicuous absence of contributions made by Mexican Americans. In 2015, however, my cousin, Maria Isabel Morales, wrote a doctoral dissertation at Washington State University, *Conocimiento Y Testimonio: An Exploratory Case Study of Mexican American Children of (im)migrants Learning With(in) Cherry Orchards*, which focuses on childrens' learning experiences as told from their perspectives. While I have read only small parts of the dissertation, our backgrounds are very similar. I am eager to read the entire document as I complete this

thesis, and I will include it in the review of literature in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Further, young Mexican Americans in Washington, as discussed by Leiva (2014), have high dropout rates and few role models for academic success. The purpose of this autoethnography is, therefore, to trace my own path from birth in Mexico to completion of the master's program in English. There are not enough stories of successful first-generation college students of migrant parents.

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is (1) to trace my own path from birth in Michoacán, Mexico to the completion of the master's degree; (2) to tell my parents' story as Mexicans who completed just a few years of elementary school; (3) to explore the stability and continuity of the migrant worker's family; (4) to reflect on my education as a bilingual and bicultural child of migrant workers; (5) to search for themes in childhood and family photographs and articles written in during the two-year period of graduate studies in the master's program; and (6) to discover what traits my parents possess that have helped me in my pursuit of higher education.

Assumptions

In all ethnographic research, Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), our international professional organization, requires us to disclose our assumptions, biases, and backgrounds. To that end, I want to explain that I made the following assumptions as I began this reflection project:

1. Children of immigrants should work harder than others so that their parents' efforts are not in vain.

2. I learned to work hard by watching my parents work in hard in the agricultural industry and by working in the fields myself.
3. Reflection is a valuable way to learn about oneself and one's heritage.
4. Education is a privilege that not everyone has in the world.
5. The more aware of their ethnic and linguistic roots people become, the more likely they are to be academically successful.
6. Telling family stories is important to future generations in order to retain rich historical background information.
7. I experienced anomie reduction as I began to succeed academically at the university level.

Research Questions

Through a retrospective analysis of artifacts and autoethnography, my goal was to explore the following questions:

1. What traits do immigrants' children have that contribute to their academic success?
2. What environments foster a strong sense of identity in bilingual and bicultural children?
3. What attitudes and behaviors did my parents demonstrate that laid a foundation for my academic success?
4. As someone who struggled in high school, how did succeeding academically at the university level help me become a more confident individual?
5. How did I get from Point A to Point B?

Research Methods

This thesis is mixed methods and multi-genre. It is qualitative and reflective, incorporating autoethnography, written artifacts and photographs which will provide the groundwork for the autoethnography appearing in Chapter 3 of this thesis. I chose 42 artifacts and organized them in chronological order—from the oldest to the most recent. My selected artifacts are visual as well as written artifacts such as excerpts from my actual journal entries as a student in the master's program and as an intern in English 112 and in the Asia University America Program at Eastern Washington University, so it is a concurrent diary in part as well. I chose to include the following sections because I feel that they will give future migrant students a glimpse into my experience as a minority graduate student and give some recommendations to children of migrant workers and to those who are looking for a role model or example of someone who has reached higher education. In Chapter 4, I reflect on the autoethnography further, especially how I reached academic success and how my parents helped me get here. I also review how my assumptions were challenged and answers to my research questions. Chapter 5 is the conclusion with recommendations for future research that might help scholars build on the findings of this thesis.

Thesis Overview

This thesis includes four more chapters. Chapter 2 is a brief review of literature with commentary about (1) the barriers immigrant students must overcome in order to achieve academic success, (2) traits displayed by immigrant parents and how the environment they provide fosters successful students, and (3) why it is important for teachers—especially those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds—to tell

their stories. Chapter 3 is the autoethnography itself as defined by Canagarajah (2012)—a collection of artifacts—essays, photographs, travelogues, and journal entries that pertain to my journey from birth in Michoacán, Mexico to graduate studies in the United States. Chapter 4 is the discussion and reflection on the autoethnography in Chapter 3, and Chapter 5 is the conclusion with recommendations for future research that might help other scholars build on the findings of this thesis.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature with Commentary

Chapter 2 is a brief review of literature about (1) the struggles of Mexican immigrant students and protective factors that help increase educational attainment; (2) traits displayed by Mexican immigrant parents and how the environment they provide fosters successful students; and (3) why it is important for teachers—especially from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds—to tell their stories.

For this reason, this review is a bit different in that I have chosen not to take a distant, detached academic view. I reduce the authorial distance and engage with the sources on a personal level. This chapter, therefore, is more reader-response than objective literature review.

Morales (2015) chooses to emphasize the experiences of immigrant children in cherry orchards in a way that “resists adult-centric research by shedding light on the daily lives of children” (p. 4), I also choose to emphasize my own experience. Instead of looking at immigrants through a deficit approach, Morales (2015) offers researchers, educators, and the community stories about Mexican American children—as told by children—in order to give them voice (p. 7). Like Morales, I’d like to give voice to the countless Mexican immigrant students like myself and families like mine who have not had a chance to tell their stories.

Introduction

Because of the sensitive nature of the topic of this paper, I would like to clarify that the purpose of this literature review, and the entire paper itself, is not to talk

negatively about anyone but rather to speak some truths and share facts surrounding the topics of Mexican immigrant students, their families, culture, and struggles they face in education. Some barriers are limited or no English, low socioeconomic status and education levels (Leiva, 2014; Zugel, 2012, Baum and Flores, 2011), discrimination (Morales, 2015; Garza & Garza, 2010), and loss of identity. Demographics are changing, and immigrants and their children are more present than ever in American society, so it is necessary that they not only enroll in but also succeed in postsecondary education (Baum & Flores, 2011, p. 171). The success of every student matters, and it is in the best interest of the U.S. economy and the country as a whole if immigrant students attain postsecondary education. Academic success would “not only improve prospects for both economic and social mobility for individuals but also confer benefits on society as a whole” (Baum et. al., 2011, p. 173). These benefits would include a more educated population, happier individuals, and a productive society.

This review of literature will be on first-generation Mexican immigrant students. I will also discuss second- and third-generation Mexican immigrants, although it will be primarily to contrast their academic achievement with that of first-generation Mexican immigrants. In order to discuss achievement gaps and to understand the differences among generations, I will define each generation first. In Baum and Flores (2011), generational status is broken down in the following way:

First-generation immigrants are foreign-born; second-generation immigrants were born in the United States and have at least one foreign-born parent; natives—third-generation or higher—include individuals who were born in the United States and both [sic] of whose parents were born in the United States. (p. 173)

According to this definition, I am a first-generation immigrant because I was born in Mexico, and both of my parents were too. “While it is important to recognize that the experiences of U.S born and foreign-born students differ in several respects, it is immigrant parents that they have in common (Morales, 2015, p. 11). Therefore, while my two younger sisters—whom I mention throughout the thesis—were born in the U.S., the focus will still primarily be on the experiences of first-generation immigrants. This will help illustrate how we as a group continue to struggle and how we are overcoming educational barriers.

In the review of literature, I will be discussing Mexican immigrants specifically, and I will be using the terms “Latino/a” and “Hispanic” interchangeably in this thesis. However, Latino/a is considered an umbrella term which references the “commonalities in language of peoples in Latin America who share a language in Latin America,” and Hispanic refers to “people of Spanish-speaking decent [sic]” as described by Gonzalez & Gándara (2006) (as cited in Morales, 2015, p. 10). However, because different Latin American countries—such as Cuba, Argentina, Chile, and El Salvador—have distinct cultural practices and histories, I will refer to myself as Mexican or Mexican American within this paper.

To be more specific, I am a Mexican immigrant. While there are those who believe that all immigrants that come to the United States are constantly moving, that is not always the case. Since coming here 27 years ago, my family has lived in the Wenatchee Valley. Like my family, I firmly believe that other people immigrate here to find work, and once they do, they tend to stay put in order to keep their jobs. Because

immigrant and migrant are words that tend to be used interchangeably, it is helpful to embrace the definition of the word (im)migrant in order to have a deeper understanding of what the word implies. Instead of using the words “migrant” and “immigrant” throughout her study, Morales (2015) chooses to “borrow” the term (im)*migrant* from López (2001). She explains that she does this

to illustrate that the experience of being a ‘migrant’ and ‘immigrant’ (especially for those communities employed in agricultural jobs like the orchard) is intersectional and complicated. The traditional definition of ‘migrant’ was solely used to describe groups of people who migrated around the nation for purposes of employment. While this is still the case for many people in the U.S (as is for a few of my participants), the definition of ‘migrant’ is beginning to encompass those families who switch from one job to another with the change of agricultural seasons but do not necessarily move homes to search for employment. I use parentheses rather than a slash mark to affirm, rather than split, the intersectional and complicated experiences of the communities participating in this study. (Morales, 2015, p. 11)

It is quite the complex experience indeed. Though the days of being new to this country are long gone, the experience has left me with a unique experience of “I am from here, but I am not from here.” Writing this thesis has been the first time that I have examined my own life and experiences in depth—those of a Mexican immigrant child and student. Narrowing the scope of this thesis to first-generation Mexican immigrants will put my background in context for my audience. My aim is to show how significant it is that I have done so well, in spite of being part of a group of students who is classified as having the lowest attainment rates of higher education. According to a 2009 U.S. Census, only 9% of first-generation Hispanic immigrants between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-four had earned a bachelor’s degree, compared to 30% of Black immigrants, 63% of Asian immigrants, and 54% of White immigrants (p. 174). The numbers are far lower than they should be. It is disappointing that although “even the most traditionally

disadvantaged immigrants, such as Mexicans, show some gains in educational attainment,” they do so more in terms of graduating from high school than from achieving postsecondary success (p. 172).

While more Hispanic students are graduating from high school and enrolling in a four-year college with each passing generation, in 2009, first-generation Hispanics still had the lowest percentage of individuals aged twenty-five to thirty-four with bachelor’s degrees. In 2009, young Hispanic college students were also less likely than their white counterparts to enroll in a four-year college (56% versus 72%). They were also less likely to attend a selective college, less likely to be enrolled in college full time, and less likely to complete a bachelor’s degree.

However, more recent figures from PEW show that recently, high school dropout rates have been reduced by half. While in the year 2000, 28% of 16- to 24-year-old Hispanics dropped out of high school, in 2011, this figure fell to 14% for the same population (Leiva, 2014). An all-time record seven out of ten (69%) Hispanic high school students in the class of 2012 enrolled in college in the fall of that same year, compared to 67% of their White counterparts. As more Hispanics graduate from high school, more Hispanics will have the opportunity to enroll in college as well.

According to the most recent data gathered from USCIS 2016 demographics, educational attainment still showed that Hispanics reported the lowest percentage of attainment at every level of education—67% who had completed high school to 5% with advanced degrees like the two college presidents who were the focus of Leiva’s (2014) thesis. In contrast, Whites reported the highest percentage of adults with at least a high

school education (93%), and Asians had the highest percentage of individuals (54%) with a bachelor's degree or higher. When looking at trends for Hispanics, the data can be skewed by the inclusion of foreign-born individuals. While the percentage of foreign-born members of every race with a bachelor's degree or higher—Asians, non-Hispanic Whites, and Blacks—is as high or higher than native-born adults, the opposite was true for Hispanics:

Hispanics were the only group where the percentage of the native population with a bachelor's degree or higher was higher than the percentage of the foreign-born population with this level of education. Twenty percent of native Hispanics had a college education compared to 12 percent of foreign-born Hispanics. (USCIS, 2015).

You could say I have surpassed what was expected of me; because I not only graduated from high school—with a few difficulties that will be discussed at length in Chapter 3, the autoethnography—but also earned the B.A. and am now completing the master's degree. I never wanted to be just another statistic—just another Latina who didn't graduate from high school. But I am proud to be part of the 12 percent of foreign-born Hispanics who have a college education. It is amazing that despite the low odds that foreign-born first-generation immigrants have, I made it, and I would argue that being an academically successful first-generation Mexican immigrant should not be the exception, but rather the norm.

First-Generation Mexican Immigrant College Students

Parental education, a “strong predictor of children's educational attainment” (Baum & Flores, 2011, p. 174), can help alleviate students' uncertainty and confusion that are a normal part of attending college for the first time. Because they were first in their family to attend college, parents can provide their children with a map to guide them

through the process. Students, armed with firsthand knowledge passed down to them from their parents, are better equipped to deal with any curveballs school throws their way. This isn't to say that just because their parents went to college they will have an easy time, but at least the door has been left ajar for them. They can choose to step through if they wish with the added reassurance that their parents can help advise them or advocate for them, if necessary.

Starting in high school, Mexican immigrant students might not even know that they should already be planning ahead in order to go to college—by studying for the SAT's, looking at programs of study, applying for scholarships, and filling out the Financial Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). And when these students do decide to enroll in college, they have no idea what to expect. They may reach their start point, but upon arriving, find themselves without a map to guide them, and no one to really turn to for help.

First-generation immigrant students attending college for the first time can feel lost and confused in the process if they have no one to help them. Problems that all new college students encounter can be particularly disheartening and challenging for Mexican immigrants. Immigrant parents can also be a great resource for their children, but, unlike highly skilled professional immigrants from Asia who come to work in high-demand positions such as engineering and medical professions, immigrants from Latin America, the Caribbean, and some Southeast Asia countries are primarily unskilled laborers and manual workers (Leiva, 2014, p. 172.) Because the majority of Mexican immigrant parents have left their home in part because of limited educational opportunities, it is not

likely that they possess the educational background or the skills necessary to assist their children in the process. While some parents will have knowledge from their own experiences in college—or high school—a 2006 American Community survey found that only 7 percent of immigrant parents from Mexico had at least a bachelor’s degree, and “almost half of Mexican-origin youth [had] parents with no high school degree” (p. 174). My parents only went to school through fifth grade.

A lack of information about getting into college is just the tip of the iceberg. “Inadequate information about college opportunities and how to access them, cultural differences, citizenship issues, language barriers, and, too frequently, discrimination” all play a role in preventing these students from gaining easy access to education (Baum & Flores, p. 172, 2011). Furthermore, when they do successfully enroll and start attending classes, they may find that they are not performing as well as their peers, even if they work just as hard—or harder. Several social and structural variables identified by Bohon, Macpherson, & Atilas, 2005; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; and Marschall, 2006 as contributors to this achievement gap include “language barriers, limited parental education, poverty, discrimination, and residential instability” (as cited in Walker, 2011, p. 411). This seemed to be the case in Cashmere schools. Luckily for me, I didn’t experience the uprooting and separation from relatives, friends and school that many migrant children and adolescents experience as their families migrate seasonally for work.

When you look at everything that could possibly go wrong for these families, you see that many of them experience multiple risk factors which greatly hurt their chances of being successful—not only in reaching higher education, but also in meeting their

everyday needs. In order to establish a clear understanding about the current struggles that await these students—and their families—when they graduate high school and enroll in a four-year college or beyond, it is necessary to examine how these factors impact them.

In the process of shedding light onto the lives of Mexican immigrant students within the education system, Zúgel (2012) identifies four central themes which presented barriers towards education for students: dominant pedagogy, educational skills, deficit model, and student identities” (p. 4). The master’s program in English that I am completing now addresses all of these themes.

Dominant Pedagogy

Gee (1996) found that “it has been demonstrated that dominant practices within the classroom make it difficult for students from diverse cultural and linguistic groups to succeed in school (1996) (as cited in Zúgel, 2012, p. 4). Immigrant students and their families are challenged with the conflict of wanting to maintain and be proud of their heritage languages and cultures while also trying to fit in—and even join—the majority group. Souto-Manning (2006) asserts that by doing so these students begin to erase “their heritage language and culture to adopt the powerful one” (p. 294). The usage of the word *powerful* seems to suggest that other cultures are inferior, and, therefore, Mexican immigrant students may view themselves and their own culture as inferior. Pressured to lose their own identity, students not only lose a part of who they are, but also “remain marginalized no matter how much they adapt” (Garza & Garza, 2010, p. 204).

This did not happen to me in graduate school because linguistic and cultural diversity are valued in TESL at EWU.

While the dominant practice is to focus on education within the classroom, Morales (2015) discusses the value of finding out more about how students learn outside of the classroom. We must learn as much as we can about cultural values, societal and community ties, and how learning outside of the classroom occurs in order to “improve the learning environment for students and create a more positive learning experience, resulting in higher achievement and success” (Zugel, 2012 p. 3). Morales (2015) details how immigrant childrens’ education begins long before they are enrolled in school. Their education starts in the orchard while working with their families:

In many cases, working in these orchards becomes a family experience. Parents bring their children to these sites and from what I have come to learn, they do so for more reasons than just to earn money. For example, a few summers ago I was helping my father pick cherries in an orchard in Kline, Washington. I was at the bottom of the tree while my father was on the seven-foot ladder picking at the top of the tree. He was speaking to a man hidden within the leaves, branches, and fruit of a tree next to us. My father asked the man about his son who was there picking along with him. ‘I bring my son,’ he responded, ‘so he can learn to do more than one thing. So he has options. He needs to learn to do more than one thing.’ I was amazed and dumbfounded by his words that illuminated a lesson about community, relationship, survival, culture, and so much more. It was then that I began to learn the meaning of the orchards for my community— the powerful epistemological implications of this place on families and community, and most importantly, children. (p. 3)

During the summer season, or “cherry season” as it is most commonly known, my parents and many of my family members are employed in the agricultural business working with cherries—either in orchards, like my father, or in packing sheds, like my mother. Morales (2015) describes how (im)migrant childrens’ summer vacation differs from what you might expect school-aged children to be doing. “While some children

spend their summers in camps or other recreational activities, many (im)migrant children in central Washington spend them picking cherries and learning with(in) orchards. From sunrise to late morning, they pick at times and at times play games with cousins and other children” (p. 4). This is true for my sisters and me as well. We worked cherries during our summer vacations in high school. We learned many valuable lessons working in the packing sheds. Our parents always told us, “*Es importante que aprendan a valorar el trabajo y como se gana el dinero Estudien para que no tengan que trabajar en la huerta u en un empaque como nosotros.*” (It’s important that you learn the value of work and how money is earned. Study, so you won’t have to work in the orchard or in a packing shed like us.)

Educational Skills

Bruna & Chamberlin (2008) found that because the vast majority of Mexican immigrant students who come to the United States are likely doing so because of limited educational opportunities and a low quality of life in Mexico, students may already be behind their American peers in terms of education. While some Hispanic students have the advantage of starting school in the U.S. in kindergarten, others do not until much later, such as in middle school or high school. The former group will have certain advantages but will also have lower math and language skills as noted by Reardon & Galindo (2007) (as cited by Zugel, 2012, p. 5). However, the latter groups will have significantly more catching up to do. Even though students start school right in kindergarten, they might not be able to close the educational gap between themselves and their peers even by the fifth grade. This study found that the biggest obstacle noted in

bridging the gap for these students by the fifth grade was socioeconomic status (Zugel, 2012, p. 5)

Deficit Model

Cuero (2009) explains that when Mexican immigrant students undergo academic assessments to gauge their grade-level proficiency, their lack of educational skills is viewed primarily through a deficit model lens (as cited in Zugel, 2012, p. 6). “In this model, students are assessed and labeled for the skills they are lacking instead of the skills they have” (Zugel, 2012, p. 6). In one qualitative study of four White female elementary-school teachers working primarily with Mexican American students, researchers Garza & Garza (2010) examined the beliefs, perceptions, and life experiences of those teachers. They found that minimizing student strengths and focusing on student deficits led to an atmosphere where teachers “blamed the parents, families, students, and community for the disconnect between the school and the home.” In addition, the teachers “suggested that the students would be able to overcome obstacles if only they worked harder” (Garza et. al., 2010, p. 203). Telling students they “just need to work harder” isn’t conveying the message that their efforts are appreciated, but rather that what they’re doing isn’t good enough. This is something I experienced in high school. Luckily, during my undergraduate and graduate studies at EWU, I found professors who I could connect with, and who always encouraged and believed in me.

Student Identities

Often, it is the largely unspoken and implicit issues which affect Mexican immigrant students the most. These students face the remarkable challenge of

developing their identities in an environment centered on the premise that their very being—education level, culture, language—is considered subpar (Zugel, 2012, p. 7). Although Mexican immigrants and other minorities are increasingly present in the classroom, there still seems to be a resistance to cultural diversity within the classroom, even in Washington, an English-Plus State (Reeves, 2005). Even though linguistic and minority groups should be encouraged to maintain their L1, some educators feel that it is not in the students' best interest to learn a language other than English.

It seems that languages other than English are not always considered a gift, but something to be looked down upon because they are not the norm (Lavine, 2011). On many occasions, I have been told to speak English and not my native tongue, and I can attest to the fact that this is damaging to a person's self-worth. It hurts to feel as if you should be ashamed of your language—and by extension, your very being. There have also been instances where people have made racist and offensive comments about Mexicans around me—in English—because they assume that I don't speak English. People assume that I'm "just another uneducated illegal immigrant" because of the color of my skin. When I make a point to smile at them and greet them—in perfect English—they don't have much more to say. I always believe in taking the higher road, although hearing messages—implicit or explicit—like this on a daily basis is harmful enough to make even the strongest person feel ashamed and confused about the value of their identity. It is difficult for Mexican immigrant students to have a solid foundation of who they are when they "are expected to abandon their native culture and language and expected to accept and become part of the new" one (Zugel, 2012, p. 7). No one should

have to abandon or change an essential part of their culture in order to be accepted or to be successful.

While immigrants should adapt in some ways in order to succeed, teachers could also benefit from having cross-cultural experiences as part of their education training in order to understand students' feelings of displacement or culture shock (Brock, 2006). Some teachers may have “frozen narratives” (p. 59) about children in the classroom and their families which impact how students and their families are perceived. Cultural experiences can help teachers transform these unchangeable and rigid views and help them be more empathetic towards the students and their families. As a result, students would feel more comfortable retaining their identities while being more successful in the classroom.

One very important way to achieve this is to talk about cultural challenges faced by immigrant students—especially Mexican immigrants. Since no one understands the experience better than someone who has lived it, there should be more written about Latinos by Latinos. It is worth noting, however, that both etic and emic views are needed. One such example is Morales (2015). As an immigrant who was brought to the United States from Michoacán, Mexico, as a child, Morales (2015) found herself drawn to finding out about the experiences of children in cherry orchards. She was inspired by her cousins to question the “adult-centric frameworks” found in research, education and society. She was also inspired “in a painful and complicated way, by the rampant dehumanization of Latina/o (im)migrant peoples that continuously (re)emerges in the

media” (p. 2). In her study, she intends to inform educators and society about topics which influence children’s identities and, later, their experiences within education.

Discrimination

Although racism and discrimination are nothing new, today we find ourselves living in a time where free speech has led to people openly expressing everything from subtle to very blatant racist remarks. Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco (2001) argue, “While blatant racism is largely confined to the fringes of society, anti-immigrant sentiments are more freely indulged in public opinion, policy debates, and other social forums,” (p. 6). While I love living in a country where my right to free speech is protected by the First Amendment, I am deeply saddened by how it has been used to target specific groups of people based on race and ethnicity. For example, thanks to extensive media coverage of his presidential campaign, Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump, has time and again made generalizing hateful, discriminatory and false declarations about immigrants—and particularly Mexican immigrants. During one such campaign speech he stated:

When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. . . . They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people. (2016, web)

Openly racist remarks such as this one being aired on national television only spread hate and misinformation and add to the general “racist and xenophobic dominant discourses that surround Mexican people in the United States (especially those with recent immigrant experiences)” (Morales, 2015, p. 6). His words are not just hateful and offensive; they have led to people being physically hurt in the name of “making America

great again.” After an incident where two men claimed they beat a Hispanic man in Trump’s name, and Trump was asked to respond, his reply was: “I will say that people who are following me are very passionate. They love this country and they want this country to be great again” (2015, web). What is great about inciting hate and pitting people against one another? This complete disregard for human life and respect for others not only sanctions but also glorifies these hate crimes that are committed in his name and in the name of intolerance. This is the reality of the world we live in because of the misinformation that some media outlets continue to propagate about Latino immigrants—and in particular about Mexican immigrants.

It isn’t just adults who are suffering the consequences of this hateful rhetoric. Children feel it too. Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco (2001) (as cited in Morales, 2015) found that even children express anti-immigrant sentiments. Sadly, this hatred has trickled down to the children and has crept its way into the one place where every child deserves to be safe—school. Suárez-Orozco et. al., (2001, p.7) ask, “How does a child incorporate the notion that she is an alien, or an illegal— that she is unwanted and does not warrant the most basic rights of education and health care?” (as cited by Morales, 2015, p. 6). Children have to grow up hearing these messages about themselves—believing that what they are told is true. Stereotypes about immigrants—ranging from the misperception that they are “lazy and prone to violence” to “high-achieving book-obsessed competitors”—do a disservice to immigrants of color who are seen as “unmeltable” and ill-equipped for a life in the United States (Nieto, 2004) as cited by Morales, 2015, p. 6). Children internalize the negative messages about their particular

communities, particularly when they are perpetuated in schools (as cited by Morales, 2015, p. 6)

Factors that Can Help Students

According to a 2009 Pew Hispanic Center survey, “88% of Latinos ages 16 and older agreed that a college degree is necessary to get ahead in life today.” In contrast, another survey of all Americans ages 16 and older found that fewer people (74%) said the same. Although Latinos highly value education, they still aren’t as academically successful as their White peers. As suggested by Souto-Manning (2006), four crucial components in education which “influence the degree to which ‘minority students’ are empowered or destitute” are as follow:

- (a) including the minority students’ culture and language, (b) involving minority communities in the education of their children, (c) addressing classroom pedagogical assumptions and practices, and (d) addressing the evaluation of minority students. (p. 301)

Creating an accepting environment enables the students and their families to feel that they are part of the educational process instead of feeling like it is out of their control.

“This feeling of belonging is directly related to student achievement and success.

Students are then also able to value their native culture in the process of building their identity in a new country” (Zugel, 2012, p. 9). Moore and Ritter (2008) explain that involving parents and the community in the educational process helps foster parental involvement—a tool which can lead to improved academic success for students.

Teachers and the community can always benefit from learning about their students and Garza et. al., (2010) add that “we must find ways to honor, dignify, and incorporate the

knowledge of Mexican American children, families, and communities in our classrooms” (p. 205).

Relationships Among Families and Schools

Crane (2012) cited several scholars who have found a positive correlation between parental involvement and student achievement—as parental involvement increases, so does student achievement (p.2). One can make educated guesses about how this correlation happens. Perhaps the parents who are more involved with their children in activities in and out of school are also more invested in their education. Perhaps students feel accountable when they know that their parents will be inquiring about their grades. Perhaps it is intrinsically motivating for students to get good grades because they know they will be praised for their hard work. In order to clear up misperceptions about parental involvement in their children’s’ education, it is necessary to explore the definitions of involvement such as personal beliefs, motivators, and levels of home and school-based involvement (Walker, 2011, p. 410). Because parental involvement often takes place within the home in ways that educators aren’t aware of and rarely see, it is not easy for educators to gauge its actual extent. Crane (2012) asks very important questions regarding parental involvement:

What does involvement mean for these parents? What influences the parent involvement choices they make? How are they involved in their children's education at home? Are they involved in ways that are perhaps not recognized by educators and many researchers alike? (p. 2).

Parents and educators don’t always see eye-to eye-in every situation because everyone defines involvement differently, and this affects how they perceive their own efforts and those of the other party.

First of all, Latino parents tend to view their involvement with school in terms of home-based involvement, which includes but is not limited to helping with homework, supervising homework time and inquiring about grades and classes. On the other hand, Walker (2011) identified many studies that show that educators often define parental involvement as something that is more school-based (p. 410). Examples of school-based involvement from the educator standpoint could mean attending PTA meetings, volunteering for school activities such as school dances, or helping in the classroom. Neither definition of involvement is wrong, but the two are polar opposites of one another. Just because parents don't participate in extracurricular activities, join the PTA or volunteer, doesn't mean they aren't equally invested in the education of their children. It is easy to see how parents and educators might not agree about parental involvement when they are all defining it differently. While parents feel they are doing their best, teachers may feel as if they are not doing enough.

Carvalho (2001) found that a perceived lack of parental involvement can lead some educators to believe that parents just aren't interested in their children's education, although that isn't always the case (cited in Crane, 2012, p. 2). When immigrant students are new to the education system, it is very likely that their parents are unfamiliar with the academic culture and roles expected of them. They might feel as if they are already doing everything they can do for their children. In some cases, parents might truly be doing everything they can because of a limited English proficiency or because of their own low levels of education which may prevent parents from helping their children with their homework assignments or from attending school functions. Limited knowledge of

the English language and confusion about their role in their children's education can make parents feel overwhelmed and ill-equipped to know how to help their children. Because parents strongly believe that teachers are the ultimate authority on the education of their children, some parents may also feel uncomfortable with assuming the role of "teachers" at home. The parents may be under the impression that they are doing everything they can to help their children and that educators will fulfill their duty to help their children as well. Unfortunately, these factors influence both parental and teachers' perceptions of parental involvement.

Secondly, one of the strongest predictors of parental involvement is dependent on the parents' perceptions that they are valued by their children and the children's teacher. It is suggested by Balli, Demo & Wedman, (1998); Epstein & Van Voorhis, (2001) that in order to enlist the help of their parents, students need to 1) invite their parents to attend activities or meetings at school; 2) request help with homework; and 3) display behaviors—such as frustration, procrastination, or difficulty with an assignment (as cited in Walker, 2011, p. 410). Students should be taught to voice these requests in order to engage their parents before students reach this point. And in order for teachers to enlist parents, they can help parents feel that they are a valued part of their children's education, they can 1) invite parents to participate in specific events such as volunteering at school functions, like school dances and parent-teacher conferences or 2) request help for certain homework assignments. These invitations will help parents feel that they are a part of their children's' education. If parents feel that they are involved, then they can also feel that their efforts have a positive impact on their children. Walker (2011) found

that his sense of self-efficacy—parents’ beliefs about whether or not their involvement is likely to positively influence their children's education, affected how much they helped and were involved in their children’s education.

However, as Anderson & Minke, (2007); Green et al., 2007 found, the third, and final predictor of parental involvement, has the least measureable impact on student achievement. Parental resources are often defined as time, energy, knowledge and skills about how to be involved. Anderson et.al (2007) noted that when parents identified a need for involvement, “they find ways to be involved regardless of their resources” (p. 319). This supports the idea that parents want to be involved and will do what they need to do in order to help their children.

Protective Factors

If you have come this far, and you have read all about the obstacles that have kept first-generation Mexican immigrants from reaching academic success, do not despair. Now we are going to talk about the protective traits that help them and about the type of environment that parents provide in order to foster success for their children. Four significant themes which Leiva (2014) identified during her interview of two successful Latino university presidents are 1) resilience; 2), optimism, drive, and motivation; 3) parental support; and 4) future planning. Other factors include age at which language learning begins, the “immigrant advantage” (Kau & Tienda, 2009), good role models, stability and resourcefulness. Some students are lucky to have even a handful of these.

Individuals are supposed to magically ‘have’ these traits in them, but often times, students who have experienced discrimination, loss, and hopelessness forget that these basic traits will help them get passed [sic] obstacles. (Leiva, 2014, p. 96)

While poverty and discrimination are not something we can always control, we can choose to focus on our goals and work hard towards achieving them.

Age at Which Language Learning Begins

The sooner children start going to school when they first come to the United States, the better they will do overall. Immigrant children who start school under the age of thirteen will have an easier time learning the language, internalizing societal norms, and will generally perform as well as their native-born peers:

By contrast, those who immigrate between the ages of thirteen and nineteen have the lowest levels of educational attainment. In 2005, only 26 percent of immigrants aged eighteen to twenty-four who arrived in the United States between the ages of thirteen and nineteen had enrolled in college, compared with 42 percent of those who immigrated before age thirteen. (Baum & Flores, 2011, p. 175, 2011)

This is a factor that most children don't have control over. Fortunately, my parents brought me to the United States when I was only three years old. I consider this a big factor in performing as well as my native-born peers—academically and socially.

Immigrant Advantage

An interesting phenomenon, known as the “immigrant advantage,” is described by Kau & Tienda (2009 p. 712-49) as built-in advantages that immigrant children have over their parents and their native-born peers. Immigrant children are more likely than native-born students to enroll in college, and they also tend to attain higher levels of education than their parents do. One explanation for this is “immigrant optimism,” or the idea that “immigrants come to the U.S. with hopes and dreams and therefore have the psychological mindset that they will be able to do well, so they do, in spite of the barriers

they face” (as cited in Baum & Flores, 2011, p. 177-178). Having the ability to hope and dream despite the barriers they face shows how resilient and determined Mexican immigrants are in their pursuit of opportunities and a better life in *El Norte*.

Role Models

Having a greater number of positive role models will help students pursue higher education. As the number of educated Mexican immigrants grows, it will become the norm and not the exception to hear about students succeeding in higher education. As a result, younger children will have more role models to look up to—like me, hopefully.

There seems to be a scarcity of academically successful Mexican role models in and out of school. By centering her double case study on interviews of two Latino university presidents, Leiva (2014) gives a perfect example of why it is important for teachers—and educators—to tell their stories. By interviewing Dr. Baldwin and Dr. Sánchez (names were changed to keep their identity anonymous) , she not only gives a voice to two minority professionals but also helps spread their stories so that other Latino students can be inspired by how they faced obstacles and overcame them to become successful.

In her interview, Leiva (2014) identified several themes—resilience, optimism, drive, motivation, parental support and future planning—which were displayed by both Latino university college presidents and their parents. Many of these themes are traits displayed by my parents. My parents have always worked hard even though they have faced barriers such as discrimination, learning a new language while working full-time and raising a family, adapting to a new country, and helping their children do well in

school despite language barriers and having low levels of education themselves.

Although they had limited resources, they made do with what they had so that we could live in better conditions than they did when they were growing up.

My parents have always been optimistic about our future in the United States. In fact, they were so optimistic that they were willing to risk everything to come here. Their optimism has been inspiring for me, and it is what pushed me to pursue higher education. This optimism is in part what drives them and motivates them as well. They believe that in order to get what you want, you must work hard for it. When parents are constantly striving for more, it motivates children to follow in their footsteps. Thanks to my parents supporting my dreams, although they are different from their dreams when they were younger, I am able to make their visions of a better life come true. Just like my parents have paved the way for me, I hope to pave the way for others by being a role model when there aren't many Mexican American role models in higher education.

One way to do this is by telling my story as a teacher. Dr. Baldwin validates the importance of students hearing our story so they can

learn from you, from your success, and they also learn from the hurtful, or the failures because we have them along the way. They say, 'wow, you went through that and you are a teacher!' you went through it and you are ok, and so it's really important to share that with them and then you become the example. (Leiva, p. 87, 2014).

Thanks to other role models I've had in my life—my older sister, grandparents, professors at EWU—I was able to see that obstacles are there for a reason: to be conquered. It took me a while to realize this, but once I did, it made me want to share my

story with others in the hopes that at least one person will look read it and be inspired to overcome their own obstacles.

Chapter 3:

Autoethnography

Chapter 3 is research methodology, data collection, and analysis of the findings—that is the autoethnography itself as defined by Canagarajah (2012)—a collection of written artifacts—essays, journals, travelogues, and letters written by me during the two years of graduate studies at Eastern Washington University. Like Lee’s (2012) project, it is an autoethnography reflecting on my experience growing up as the child of migrant seasonal workers which traces my path from my birth in Churintzio, Michoacán, to a completion of the master’s degree in English. In writing this thesis, I followed TESOL’s guidelines for ethnography which encompass autoethnography as well:

Note that because of its firsthand, experiential nature, ethnographic knowledge is necessarily tied to particular contexts and periods of time...However, most contemporary ethnographers view it as important to acknowledge the instability and ever-evolving nature of the cultures under study, and to explore their nestedness in and interdependence with broader sociocultural contexts.
(TESOL, 2015)

I describe my experience with both an emic and etic perspective, as an insider and an outsider of both cultures—although it is important to note that both perspectives are important on their own. However, I have had many insights into both cultures from my early years in Mexico to my family’s immigration to the United States. This passage from one country to another has helped shape my views on tradition, culture, and education and the importance on heritage-language retention while acquiring the target language.

Looking at the experiences of particular individuals—such as Mexican immigrants—will lead to a better understanding of how these and other “marginalized

students of color experience educational institutions in order to acquire more specific knowledge of their academic successes and failures” (Chávez, 2012, p. 355). Just as Morales (2015) gave voice to children by allowing them to tell their story, I am giving myself and my family members a voice to tell ours. Chávez (2012) declares that “*testimonios*” [testimonies], autobiographical educational experiences, must be used as valid ethnographic research to contribute to existing knowledge around issues of educational equity” (p. 334). Single case studies are valuable even though findings cannot be generalized to an entire group of people. The value of an in-depth look at one individual’s experience is that it provides rich insight, thoughts and reflections which cannot easily be found in a study with a large number of participants.

Why Autoethnography?

Chávez (2012) argues that story telling is important in many genres—oral stories, song lyrics, fairy tales, and personal narratives, just to name a few. Autoethnography, as a literacy narrative and case study, is a powerful platform which allows writers, like Chávez, to share their stories by “immersing” themselves in the “the field of another culture” (p. 341). Since this is primarily a literacy narrative, I will “immerse” myself in my experiences as a first-generation Mexican immigrant student and share my story in the hope that future immigrant and first-generation students will learn from my struggles and my success. Soliday (1994) writes that “Observing how others use narratives to reshape their identities may also suggest ways to redefine oneself desirably” (p. 51). If students don’t have access to role models, literacy narratives are way they to learn how others in their same situation have dealt with adversity. In order to understand that

“one’s current worries are not diagnostic of one’s future prospects,” students must see examples of students who faced obstacles and overcame them through perseverance (Manke, 2011, p. 276). If students can identify with the struggles of others, they can see that it is possible to channel difficult experiences into a successful outcome.

Autoethnography as a Research Method

What is narrative inquiry? Ellis (2004) describes the intimate and retrospective nature of autobiographical writing and its relationship to culture as a process where writers delve into their societal and cultural experiences in order to reveal an inner “vulnerable self.” This unique perspective makes autoethnography rich and “multilayered” (p. 38). These experiences are the lenses through which we interpret and give meaning to our lives. Josselson (2006) details how autoethnography, grounded in interpretive hermeneutics and phenomenology, is a form of qualitative research that involves the gathering of narratives—written, oral, visual—that focus on the meanings that people ascribe to their experiences (as cited in Trahar, 2009, p. 5). Hermeneutics, “a mode of analysis used to interpret artifacts” is utilized in the thesis in order to look at “many perspectives in order to provide the most accurate frame of understanding for the object under study” (Renning, n.d.). By analyzing my experiences through multiple perspectives—emic and etic—I am able to create a multidimensional reflection. Throughout the autoethnography, I draw from the practices of phenomenology, a “school of thought that emphasizes a focus on people's subjective experiences and interpretations of the world” (Trochim, 2006, par. 3). Together, hermeneutics and phenomenology give meaning to the autoethnography and provide a framework for interpreting my story.

Because no two people have had the same life experience, autoethnography as a research method provides novel insights which contribute to existing research about first-generation Mexican immigrant students.

Narrative Inquiry

Employing narrative inquiry as a research method for intercultural communication, writers must be aware of their audiences—themselves, and their readers—and how the story will be interpreted. Some variables that will affect how the story is told—and consequently interpreted—are who the reader is and in what context the story is being interpreted. The story will take on new and different meanings for each reader as they interpret the story within the context of what they know or have experienced (Mishler, 2004).

It is important to accept this type of research without making any changes to it. Making changes to it would only detract from its content instead of allowing the research to speak for itself in its multifaceted and culturally rich ways. Because autoethnography as a research method can be “messy research,” it is important to be up-front about how I made choices (Trahar, 2009, section. 6). This includes what I chose to focus on, what I wrote about, and especially what I omitted. When reading autoethnography, it is important to momentarily disengage with a “restrictive pattern too often found in academic texts and discourses” in order to oppose the idea that the author’s identity is somehow “inconsequential” (Chávez, 2012, p. 335). As I begin my story, I pause to honor my family and other writers who have modeled the genre for me.

From Anzaldúa, a feminist compositionist and theorist (1987), I learned that even though I left home, “I did not lose touch with my origins because *lo mexicano* is in my system” (p. 18). And although I left my birth country 27 years ago, Mexico will always be a part of me. “I am a turtle, whenever I go I carry ‘home’ on my back” (p. 18). Furthermore, as a woman who has grown up bilingual and bicultural, my speech communities cross languages, dialects and regional language varieties—both in English and Spanish. I think that by constantly crossing these borders, as Anzaldúa describes it, I have become adaptable to different situations, and it allows me to claim these border crossings as my own without any feelings of guilt or shame.

From Rodriguez (1982), a first-generation college student and first-generation American, who lost his first language but became proficient in English, I learned that sometimes you must lose something in order to get what you want. “I remember what was so grievously lost to define what was necessarily gained” (p. 5). Like Rodriguez, I lost touch with many people in my family because I’ve been gone from home for five years, but I have gained a valuable education. While it was not always easy for me, “It is education that has altered my life. Carried me far” (p. 4). School has changed the course of my life for the better and it has made me who I am, and “If my story is true, I trust it will resonate with significance for other lives” (p.5). I hope that my audience will be inspired to write their own story, and that they will be inspired to pursue their dreams.

From Songho Lee (2012) I learned that if you can understand yourself better, you can understand others better too. Songho Lee said, “I rediscovered something hidden or something forgotten and something I thought was not important, but now I think it might

be important and meaningful" (p. 97). Because he overcame some fears about teachers and negative memories, Songho Lee understood himself better than before, and, as a result, he felt that he would be a more empathetic teacher with his students.

From Reeves (2012) I learned that it is normal to experience deracination, "the feeling of being uprooted when torn from our communities where we are safe and enter those where we feel unsafe, confused, and devalued" (p. 1). Like Reeves, I often ask myself, "How did I get from barnyard to Harvard Yard, from a one-room schoolhouse to Cambridge?" I was destined to attend school in a one-room schoolhouse, and to finish a few years of school, and to get married young and start a family. So how did I get here? To graduate school? It hasn't been easy, and I have made many sacrifices. Reeves speaks of "losses that scar our spirits, though we cannot speak of them. We fear we dare not name them if we want to be seen as "real Americans." And I firmly stand by my choice to focus on the good—rather than the bad—that has come out of my journey as I've reached the culminating point of my graduate studies.

When weaving in the voices of Anzaldúa, Reeves, Lee, and others, with my own, and constantly analyzing the cultural, societal and linguistic contexts of my life, I am creating a multi-layered single case study which can be used to share my experiences with others. Although some will relate to the literacy narrative and autoethnography approach, others will not because no one has had the same lived experiences nor will anyone have the same context when reading and interpreting the story (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006, p. 166). However, autoethnography is a genuine way to do research because it is about language learning and it demands constant reflection during the

process. The spiraling and cycling nature of the data collection and constant reflection during the process—defined as “iterative” by TESOL—has changed my understanding of my life experience. My hope is that after reading this thesis, people will reflect on their own perspectives and analyze their beliefs of the subjects discussed.

Artifacts

The following artifacts will be presented in chronological order from the oldest artifacts to the most recent. I chose to include them in this way because I believe that they reflect personal growth and changes in my life as I have approached completion of the master’s degree.

Tradition

Tradition is a very important aspect of the Hispanic culture. It dictates who we are and shapes our thoughts and beliefs. Living in the United States has meant that my parents have made choices about adapting to life here while still retaining aspects of our culture such language, customs, and food. The values that are prevalent here—individualism and freedom, for starters—were not the norm in San Isidro, Michoacán, when my parents were growing up. There, collectivism and duty to one’s family were valued about all else. Being raised with Hispanic values in the home—and yet also being immersed in a Western culture with values and views on life that we have adopted—has influenced how we go about our life and how we make important life decisions about things like dating, marriage, and education.

My father constantly encourages me to do what I feel is best for myself and always tells me “*Primero estás tu, y luego tu, y luego tu*” (First there is you, then you,

then you). Although my parents don't always agree with my choices, I know that if I am truly happy, they will be happy for me too. However, I don't always throw caution to the wind because my parents are always in the back of my mind whenever I make any life-altering decisions because I know that they will be affected too. At the very least, I know they will hold me accountable for my choices, and no matter how old I am, I would also like to keep some aspects of the customs they have instilled in me.

Growing up, the women in my life—my mother, my grandmothers and aunts—always told me “*te tienes que dar a respetar*” (respect yourself so others, meaning boys, will respect you). My dad never really talked to us about dating. I think he got the gist that dating was *otro mundo* (another world) here and I'm sure he would have preferred if things were done *como antes* (like before). The few times we have talked about it, it's because I insist on hearing the story of how they met. My parents both grew up in San Isidro—where everyone knew everyone—and they saw each other at the ranch at weddings and other events in the community. When did started dating, my parents' courtship was very formal. They did not spend any time alone together or go out on dates. Sometimes, they caught brief glimpses of one another or exchanged a few quick words if they ran into each other while taking their donkeys to fetch water from the river or while going to buy liters of fresh milk from a woman in the ranch who had dairy cows. Women and men—but especially the women—were expected to save themselves until marriage and they dated only *por correspondencia* (through letters). My mother and father wrote each other letters and left them in designated improvised mailboxes—either a hole in the *cerca* (stone fence) or a slot in the wooden gate outside my grandmother's

home—so they could continue their written exchanges. And sometimes, my father would ride by my mother’s house on his horse—probably to impress her.

A Marriage

When courting became more serious and there was talk of marriage and the desire to start a family together, my father went with his father, Everardo, and another male relative to talk to my maternal grandmother, Bibiana, to ask for my permission to marry my mother. Even after they were engaged, they did not go out on dates but continued writing letters back and forth until they were wed. My mother and father were 17 and 22, respectively, when they were married in 1982 in a traditional Mexican Catholic wedding (Figure 3). After the church service, guests were served the traditional *carnitas* (pork slow-cooked in lard), and both sides of the extended families celebrated and danced late into the night.



Figure 3. My mother and father on their wedding day in 1982.

The young newlyweds, Ana Maria and Joaquin, lived with my paternal grandparents, as was the tradition, until they were able to build a house of their own. Although my mother was just 17 at the time, she had been helping her mother, Bibiana, with the cooking, cleaning, taking care of her two younger brothers, and even working in the fields to help make a little extra money. My grandmother, a single mom, was left to care for her children after my grandfather left the family when my mother was just twelve years old. He claimed he left to go work in California to help improve the family's financial situation, but then didn't send money home regularly to help take care of his wife or children. When he did go back home to see my mother and her family in Mexico, it was hard on everyone. Sometimes, he would show up with gifts, such as entire bolts of cloth for my grandmother to make dresses for my mom, but other times, everyone hoped he would leave soon.

My grandmother, Bibiana, grew up in poverty and without a reliable partner to help her. She didn't have much, but she made the most of it and used every skill and talent she had to make a little extra money for the family. After working in her *milpa de maiz* (cornfield), she harvested corn for other people too. When her children would go to sleep, she would make intricate needlepoint pillowcases and beautiful crochet doilies by candlelight and sell them. For a little bit of money, she would find families who needed to have their laundry done and washed theirs along with hers when she went down to the river on wash days.

Although she did the work of at least two hard-working grown women and she worked from sun-up to sundown, it wasn't always enough. There were days when the

children would have nothing but *tortillas y chile de molcajete* (tortillas and salsa made in a mortar and pestle) to eat, and, sometimes, she would abstain from eating so her three children could share an extra tortilla amongst themselves. My grandmother, Bibiana, recalls, “*Se me llenaba la panza con ver que mis hijos tenían que comer, aunque solo fueran tortillas con chile* (My stomach felt full just seeing that my children had something to eat, even if it was only tortillas with salsa.) As a single mother with little to no help from others, my grandmother Bibiana, worked tirelessly to provide a better life for her family. And as the daughter of such a strong woman, my mother inherited her resiliency and strength. She would later draw from these life lessons when it came time to move to a new country and raise my sisters and me.

Having experienced what she did as a young girl, my mother, already mature for her age, was forced to grow up even more quickly as a result. A difficult upbringing to be sure, but it was an upbringing that ultimately helped her, and one which taught her that sometimes you have to make it work no matter what. While my mother was just seventeen when she became a young wife, she already knew how to cook and clean when she moved in with her in-laws. As time passed in her new home, my mother continued to acquire new skills from my grandmother, Carmen, and her sister-in-laws (Figure 4) after moving in with the family.

My older sister, Alma, was born on October 24th, 1985, in my paternal grandmother’s living room. She and several women from the *rancho* served as *parteras* (doulas). Going to a hospital was expensive and it wasn’t really something that was done either. Most women just had traditional home births. When mothers gave birth, they

were on bed rest for *una cuarentena* (a forty day period). During this time, a new mother was taken care of by her mother or mother-in-law. She was shielded from extreme heat and cold, and was fed nutritious food—such as oatmeal, and *caldo de pollo* (chicken stew)—and did not leave the home unless absolutely necessary. Visitors came to meet the new baby and bring food for the family, but the mother would not leave the home yet. This meant that babies were not officially given a name until about the fortieth day of life. Once the forty-day bed rest period was over parents went to *la presidencia* (the city hall) to fill out a birth certificate—and the baby was finally given a name.



Figure 4. From left to right: My father’s sister and my godmother, Imelda, another aunt and my mother on the far right.

Two years later, on December 31st, 1985, I was born in a hospital in Churintzio, a nearby town (Figure 5). As part of the Catholic practice, *padrinos* (godparents) were bestowed the honor of naming their godchild. Since babies were not named right away,

my godparents had plenty of time to compile a list of names for my mother. Afterwards, they met with her and let her choose the one she liked best. My mother, who always dreamt of naming a future daughter after her favorite *telenovela* (soap opera) character and her favorite Mexican singer, Beatriz Adriana, was elated that Adriana was one of the options. My middle name, Cristina, was given to me by my paternal grandfather, Everardo.



Figure 5. Me at a few months of age at my grandmother's house in Mexico.

Living in *el rancho* truly was a small community, and much like the expression, “It takes a village to raise a child,” everyone was involved and contributed in any way that they could—even to help name a new baby. The honor of choosing names for a baby created a bond between members of the community. Another way that the community is brought together is by establishing *padrinos* (godparents)—an essential part of the Catholic Church and a role that is taken very seriously. Godchildren and godparents are

part of each other's lives from the moment they are chosen, so, therefore, they must be carefully selected individuals. Godparents must be willing to uphold the teachings of the Catholic Church and should encourage their godchildren to be good Catholics and follow in the teachings of Jesus Christ. *Padrinos* also vow to take care of their godchildren as if they were their own in case (*Dios no quiera*—God forbid) both parents should pass away. Godparents become like a second set of parents, and children love and respect them. For this reason godparents are chosen from family—usually an aunt or uncle—or close friends. The network of *padrinos* continues to grow from the time a child is born. In the Catholic Church there are *padrinos* for baptism, confirmation (Figures 6 and 7), first Holy Communion, *quinceañeras*, and weddings.



Figure 6. With my godmother during my Catholic Church confirmation.



Figure 7. Alma and me with Grandma's bougainvillea's after my confirmation.

Lessons From My Grandparents

Since I didn't have a lot of hair as a baby, my maternal grandmother, Bibiana, would rub tomato juice in my hair so that it would grow. She is also superstitious in her beliefs: don't clip a baby's fingernails or it will affect their eyesight; don't tickle babies and make them laugh too much because they might lose their voice; pregnant woman must wear red if there is a full moon to prevent miscarriage; and don't sweep at night because it brings bad luck. Whether I believe those or not, there is no denying that some of her beliefs are real and were passed down to her probably from her great-great-grandmother, down to her grand-mother, and to her grandmother and so on.



Figure 8. Breaking a *piñata* at a birthday party in Mexico.

Her *remedios caseros* (home remedies), such as tomato juice for hair growth, are fascinating. To this day she continues to use *remedios caseros* for everything from cuts and bruises to colds and nausea. Despite having only gone to elementary school for a few years, her knowledge of home remedies amazes me because these cures have been proven to be effective and are still used to this day. It really shows how knowledgeable her ancestors were. She also knows dozens of recipes by heart, and like most of my Hispanic relatives, never measures when she is cooking. She can eye a meal while it is being prepared and knows if it is the right consistency, and one quick taste will help her assess whether it contains the right amount of ingredients.

My mother learned by watching her mother and practicing with her. This used to be a struggle for me when I first moved away to college and had to start cooking for myself. Because I tend to forget key ingredients or miss entire steps while cooking—unlike my mother and grandmother who seem to never make these mistakes—I like

having a list of ingredients and instructions. After a few years of failing to obtain definite recipes from my mother or my grandmother, I learned to pay attention to their techniques. For years, I struggled with the most basic skill: kneading dough to make homemade flour *tortillas*. Unlike the beautiful, edible ones my mother and grandmother made, for years mine were too thick, tough as leather and usually burnt on the outside and raw on the inside. They may have only finished a few years of elementary school, but they have other types of knowledge—cooking, *remedios caseros*—that I hope to fully learn from them someday. The other skills, like finding ways to make something out of nothing, and starting over fresh in a new country—are things that I truly hope I have inherited from them.

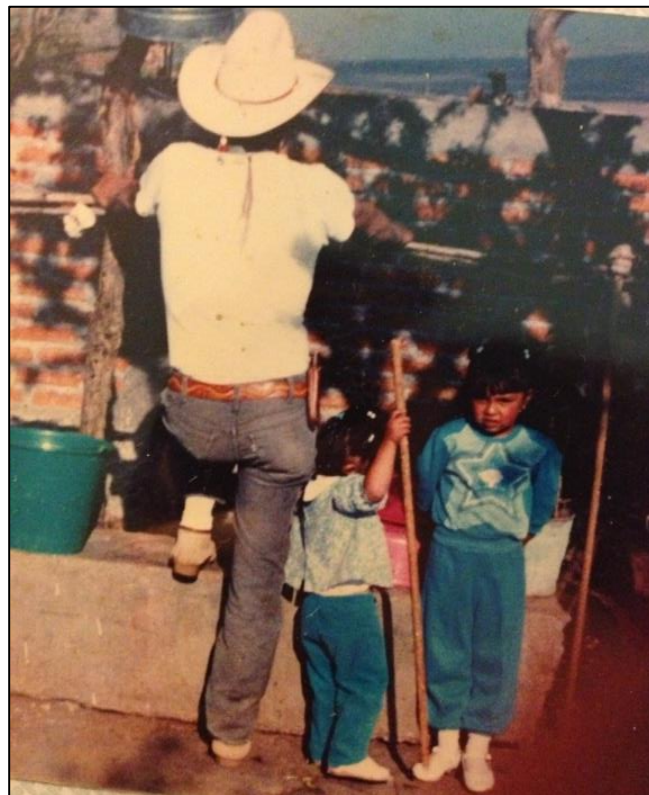


Figure 9. With my grandfather, Everardo, on his *patio* (courtyard) in Mexico.

My life has been built on the strong foundation that my grandparents have provided. My desire to stay close to them has been a motivating factor for me not to “lose” my Spanish. It would have been devastating for me not to be as close to them as I am. Since 2013, both of my paternal grandparents have passed away. Only my maternal grandmother is still with us, but I now have an adopted grandfather—a very nice American man that my grandmother Bibiana has been dating for the past five years. My grandparents have been a constant source of love and support for me.



Figure 10. With my older sister in front of my grandparents’ blue house in San Isidro, Michoacán.

Poverty In Mexico

My grandmother has always had a knack for knitting, crocheting and cross-stitching to make doilies, pillowcases, bedsheets and baby clothes. Later, she taught my mother who spent hours making crochet doilies and beautiful flower designs in cross-stitch by candlelight. My mother befriended a young woman who taught in the one-room schoolhouse in the ranch and later gave her lessons on how to use a sewing machine. These are all useful skills when one is poor and clothing is expensive. When my mother or grandmother bought a bolt of cloth, that cloth was often used to make several outfits for my sister and me.

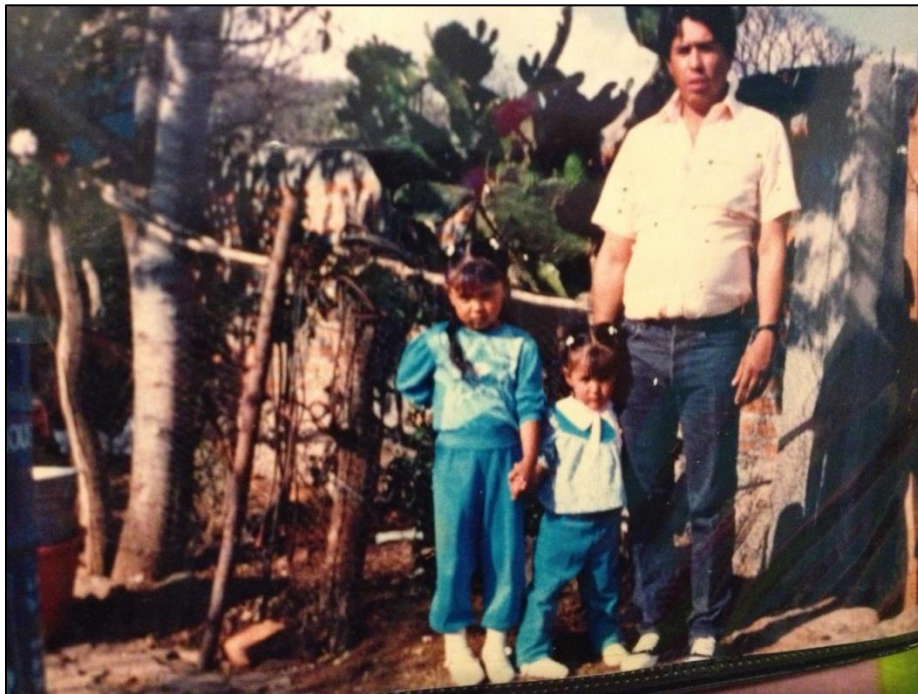


Figure 11. With my older sister and father at my grandparents' house in Mexico.

Since these were special outfits made out of new cloth, this was often a good time to take pictures if someone had a camera that we could borrow. Looking back, I noticed that I wore many outfits made of the same materials in many pictures (Figures 8, 9, 10,

and 11). I was the little girl in blue. Not only are these pictures a beautiful memory of my childhood, but also a useful way to piece together what we did in a day. It is like a photo journal—more pieces of the puzzle of my life falling into place. I still have the one of the dresses she made that I am wearing in the pictures from kindergarten (Figure 12). It is lacy, beautiful and still in great condition. It is blue, like many of my other outfits that I am pictured in. Someday, if I have a daughter of my own, I will tell her about the little girl in blue. This dress is very special and even more so because my mother made it so many years ago and because she found a way to keep it all this time for me.



Figure 12. Attending kindergarten in Mexico with my older sister at age three. I am in the upper right hand corner wearing a blue dress and white bow in my hair.

It is a curious feeling hearing stories about your childhood and yet not be able to actually remember anything. It feels as if I have picked up a book about my life and skipped ahead to Chapter 2. Luckily, I am fortunate enough to have a few pictures from

my first three years of life, and I get to hear stories from my family. From the time I could walk, I was always following my older sister, Alma, everywhere she went. The two of us made quite a pair. Me, the little *remolino* (bundle of energy) leaving a trail of destruction everywhere I went, and my older sister, the sweet and obedient one trying to do damage control. I insisted on going everywhere she went, and this included going



Figure 13. Having a fruit salad with my older sister's, Alma, in Mexico. I'm in the upper left corner wearing a white bow having a snack at school.

along to kindergarten with her even though I was only three years old at the time. Of the many stories I am told of my three years spent in Mexico, the one that stands out the most is of me tagging along with my older sister, Alma, when she went to Kindergarten (Figures 12 and 13).

The construction of my parents' house would take about six years. My father began working on the house after he and my mother got married. There were no bank loans, so he worked on it bit by bit whenever he had time to spare and money to pay for

materials—cement, roof tiles. When it was finally completed, we moved from my grandparents' house to my parents' but we only lived there for about six or seven months (Figure 15). It was a small pink house with a red iron door. It had two bedrooms—one for my parents, and one for my sister and me—and a kitchen and a living room.



Figure 14. My mother bathing my sister and I in a *tina* (metal tub). The water for our baths had to be heated in several pots over a large outdoor fire.

We didn't have an indoor bathroom until I was in high school. When I was little, my mother would bathe my sister and me in a metal *tina* at my grandparents' house (Figure 14), and when we visited Mexico, we would go there and bathe the same way

until they finally built a shower and an indoor bathroom at their house. Around the same time, my father sent money to Mexico to have a bathroom added onto the house so we could shower at home. Whenever we visited San Isidro, we had to learn the water schedule because although there was running water, it was only available a few times a week. We used a water reservoir on top of the house for bathing and a *pila* (small above-ground well) for washing dishes and clothing. There was no sink, no faucet, and no washer or dryer—it was all done by hand without running water.



Figure 15. My sister Alma and me at our parents' house. The cross-stitched pillowcases and the doilies on the headboard made by my grandmother, Bibiana.

Since we only lived in our house for about six or seven months, my parents never got around to fully furnishing it (Figure 15). The living room is bare except for a television stand, an old television, a record player, a few old records in Spanish that my mother had, and some pictures collecting dust on the walls (Figure 16).



Figure 16. This picture was taken after we moved to our parents' house.

After obtaining temporary residency for himself, my father applied for my mother—his young wife—to come to Washington while my older sister and I stayed back in Mexico with our maternal grandmother for several months. Living with my grandmother, my sister and I became so close to her that we didn't call her *abuelita* (grandma) anymore. We started calling her *Mama Bibiana* (Figure 17) because she really was like a mother to us. Even years later, when we were living here in the U.S., we still called her that. When she was here, she continued to treat us like granddaughters but took care of us like we were still here little children. Finally, my mother obtained her permanent residency and she and my father returned to Michoacán. My grandmother tells me that “*fue muy difícil, y mas para ti, Adriana. Llorabas mucho por tu mami*” (It was very difficult, and more for you, Adriana. You cried a lot for your mom.) The year

after my mother obtained her permanent residency in 1988, my older sister and I were brought to the U.S. by our parents.



Figure 17. Clockwise from the upper left: My mom, my *Mama* Bibiana, my older sister, Alma, and my mom's brother, Jose Luis, and me at my great aunt, Josefina's.

A Better Future

When I asked my parents about the most difficult thing when we were leaving Mexico, my father's answer took me by surprise. I was expecting to hear that the hardest part was leaving our family and Mexico behind and coming to a place where we didn't know many people and we didn't speak English. His answer was that the hardest thing

for him was seeing my sister and me crying because we were leaving San Isidro. *Esteban muy tristes*. (You were really sad). I was too little to even remember, but Alma remembers that Dad told us we were moving to Zamora, a nearby town. Alma knew there had to be something our parents were not telling us, but she did not know what.

She remembers Mama Bibiana crying, and our uncle Jose Luis, my mom's brother, crying too. He was only a few years older than Alma at the time, and we had grown up like siblings together. Alma remembered a lot of people went to the house. She kept asking Dad, "*Vamos a Zamora o otro lugar porque todos estan llorando*" (Are we going to Zamora or to another place because everyone is crying). Alma said they didn't explain much to either of us when we were leaving. They didn't want us to worry. When I asked my dad how he felt about having moved to the U.S., he replied that he was used to being here, although he did miss home. "*Si extraño Mexico, pero me alegro que ustedes tengan mejores oportunidades. No me arrepiento de habernos mudado para Estados Unidos. Comparando la calidad de que vida en Mexico, y aqui, todo es muy diferente. Todos habiamos escuchado cosas muy bonitas de Mexico y todos sonabamos con vivir en E.U.*" ("I do miss Mexico, but I am happy that you have better opportunities here. I have no regrets about having moved here. Comparing the quality of life to Mexico and here, everything is very different. We had all had heard nice things about Mexico, and we all dreamt about living in the U.S.") "*No hay ley en Mexico. Las mujeres no tienen proteccion y las pueden golpear y ni quien haga nada. Por ese lado, esta muy bien estar aqui.*" ("There are no laws in Mexico. Women have no protection and they can be hit, and there is no one who will do anything. Because of that, it is very

good that we are here.”) I asked, is it different because we are women? “*Si, en parte porque son mujeres y hay que cuidarlas. Esta bonito el lugar, el clima, pero el sistema de gobierno que hay ahí no está bien. Allá no manda la ley, está vendido el gobierno.*” (“Yes, in part because you are women and I must take care of you. The place is pretty, and the climate is too, but the government system is not so good.”)

My parents both felt sad because they were leaving their *tierra* (land) behind, but my dad says, “*Yo estaba acostumbrado a irme de México para Estados Unidos porque sabía que me iría y después regresaría, pero esta vez sería diferente*” (I was used to coming here, I knew that I could leave and come back, but this time it would be different). We caught a bus in Purepero, a nearby town, first. He remembers that there was a soap opera on TV at the time, and he remembers thinking, “We’re going to miss that episode.” From Purepero, we went to La Piedad. And that was how our journey from Mexico to the U.S. began.

When I asked my parents why they decided to move, they thought for a minute before answering me: “*Porque nos fuimos de México? Nos fuimos para buscar un futuro mejor. Comparando que ganamos mucho mejor aquí que allá. El 95% de personas se quedaron aquí cuando vieron que aquí es mejor que allá para nosotros. El clima está muy bonito allá pero el trabajo y el dinero es mucho mejor aquí. Los pesos y los dólares no son lo mismo. Si allá ganas 150 pesos en un día, aquí puedes ganar 150 dólares en un día, fácil. Aquí hay seguro social, pensión, desempleo. Hay pensión para cuando las personas sean mayores no tengan que trabajar. Y en México también hay pensión para las personas grandes pero es diferente. Lo que dan en México es una despensa de a*

arroz, harina, azucar y cosas asi. Tambien hay un seguro popular y eso ayuda algo. Todas las vacunas son gratis ahi, la hepatis b, y otras mas. Aqui mas que nada hay mas oportunidades.” (Why did we leave Mexico? We left to find a better future. Comparing the fact that you earn a much better salary here than there, 95% of people stayed here when they saw that it is better here than there for us. The weather there is very beautiful but work and salary are both much better here. Pesos and dollars just aren’t the same. If there you ear 150 pesos a day, here you can earn 150 dollars in a day’s work, easily. There is also Social security, retirement, unemployment. There's a retirement plan for when old people can’t work. In Mexico, the retirement plans are different. What they do in Mexico to help out the elderly is give them supplies of rice, flour, sugar. There is also an insurance plan called the Popular plan and that helps somewhat. All shots are free there, hepatitis B and others. Here, more than anything, there are simply more opportunities.)



Figure 18. Me on the left, and my older sister, Alma. Picture taken in Washington.

When we first moved to the United States, we arrived in Washington at same cabins for orchard workers near David Nierman’s orchard where my dad had lived when he was single. In Washington, both my mother and father began working almost immediately. It was May of 1989, and it was almost time for cherry season to begin. We had some time to get settled in and for my parent’s to register my older sister for kindergarten. When June—cherry season—rolled around, my father resumed working for David Nierman in his pear orchard, and my mother starting working cherries in a packing shed near the orchards where my father was working.

One of my few memories, which I only vaguely recall, is more of a snapshot paired with a sensation than a full memory. I can picture Alma and me covered in calamine lotion and sitting in front of a cool breeze. We were itchy and feverishly miserable, covered with chicken pox, and our poor mother had slathered us in calamine lotion and sat us in front of a fan so that the cool air on top of the lotion could provide some relief for us. My mother says that Alma and I got the chicken pox in June, shortly after arriving to Washington. You could say that it was our welcome to the United States. We hadn't been in our new home for even one month and we were already being toughened up by our new environment.

Pizza Party

My father bought a blue Toyota Corolla while we were still living in the cabins. While my father worked in the orchard and my mother worked in a packing shed, my older sister attended kindergarten at Peshastin Dryden Elementary (Figure 18). Every morning, my father drove my mom to work at the packing shed, took me to my aunt's house where my grandma Carmen, my paternal grandmother, babysat me, and then took Alma to school.



Figure 19. At a wedding in the U.S. with my mother, father, and older sister, Alma.

Since I don't have any memories of our early days in the U.S., I've asked my older sister, Alma to tell me about her memories from kindergarten and her learning experience. English was completely new for her and she often felt lost in the classroom. "I remember the feeling of being shuffled around from one activity to the next, and from one room to another. No one tried to explain what was happening, so I just did what everyone else did," she recalls. When I asked her what she remembers about learning English, she said, "One time, the teacher asked everyone what their favorite food was, or to my understanding, that's what she asked. When it was my turn, all I could think to say was, 'Pizza party!'" She said she didn't even know what it meant exactly, but she heard it on a commercial, and it sounded like a food item. For the first few months, school was

like this for Alma. She found herself in the midst of a flurry of activity and guessing at foreign words which floated around her like falling leaves.

Until my parents could save up enough money to improve our living situation, we stayed in the cabins (Figure 19). We left later that same year in November. The first house we lived in was a brown house we rented next to the Cashmere Middle School and the Cashmere High School. Although we were living in Cashmere, the school year was still not over at Peshastin Dryden Elementary, so my father continued to take my sister to school there. On his way to work, he would drop her off at an aunt's house that was near the elementary, and she would walk with her to school. Since work was seasonal, my mother was not always working, which meant I could stay home with her. My mother tells me that when my older sister, Alma, would leave to school with my dad, I would sit by the window, watching the yellow school buses go by, waiting for her to come home. I would get excited every time a bus drove by. "*Mira, mami, ahí viene la india!*" (Look, mom, there comes 'la india'). *La India* was the name of the yellow buses in San Isidro that we took to go into town. At the age of three, I don't think I was aware that we were not in Mexico anymore. To me, all the yellow buses were the same.

My Parents' Learning Experience

My parents' learning experience was very different from mine and my sisters'. They didn't have access to free education when they were growing up. And their parents didn't go to school for more than a year or two. My paternal grandparents did know how to read and write, but at very basic levels. My mother tells me that since her mother, my grandmother (Figure 20), only went to first grade, she barely learned to write the alphabet

in school. After my grandmother was married, and my grandfather first left to go work in California, he wrote home to my grandma. She struggled to read his letters and to reply to them. When my grandma wanted to write back to my grandfather, she paid a woman to write the letters for her. Later on when she was in the United States, my grandma continued learning to read and write as an adult.

Because she never really learned to read and write as a little girl, she taught herself by copying phrases from a workbook while she taught herself English too. When my sisters and I were little, she would ask us for the spelling or the pronunciation of words and she would write them on a piece of paper to practice them later. To this day, she likes sitting down with a notepad and pen and slowly and carefully writes sentences with new phrases she has learned.



Figure 20. My grandmother, celebrating her birthday.

My parents attended school for a few years but, unfortunately, poverty prevented them from continuing their education. Because they were poor, they did not go to school

past the fifth grade. The uniforms and cost of school supplies were too much for families to afford. And education was limited as well. The highest level a child could go to school was fifth grade, so some kids simply stopped going altogether if their parents couldn't afford to send them to a nearby town—and most parents could not do that. So when they aged out, or it got too expensive, parents stopped sending their children to school. Other times, children were kept at home because they were needed to help work in the fields. Instead of reading books and memorizing multiplication tables, the children were up as soon as it was light enough to see outside, tilling the hard soil under the hot sun alongside their relatives until sun down.

My father, Joaquin, attended school for a year longer than my mother because his family was slightly better off—financially speaking. But still, he only completed fifth grade. Since it was the highest level of education offered in the ranch, he actually went to fifth grade twice. He asked me to clarify, “*No fui a quinto grado dos veces porque reprobe. Fui a quinto grado dos veces porque queria seguir aprendiendo y no habia de otra.* (I didn't go to fifth grade twice because I failed or got held back. I went to fifth grade twice because I wanted to keep learning and there weren't any other options). Afterwards, he began helping my grandfather with tending the cows and working in the fields. My father's youngest brother, Everardo, got to go to school for a bit longer. He and my father would often go tramping into a nearby town to get my uncle to *la secundaria* (similar to middle school, it was the equivalent of 7th grade to 10th grade). At the beginning of the day, he and my father had some *pesos* for bus fare and to buy food for the day. Some days, they could only afford the bus fare, and other days, they bought

something to eat. When they didn't have any bus fare, they had to hitchhike into town or hop on the bus as it was pulling it away. Sometimes they didn't get caught, but other times they would get yelled at and the bus driver would throw them off. All too often, my father and uncle were out of bus fare and food money by the end of the day, so they had to make tramp their way back to San Isidro, hungry, and wait until they got back home to eat. I am dumbfounded by the fact that my father didn't even get to attend classes; he was just going with his little brother to make sure that he got there and back safely.

My mother, Ana, went to school until fifth grade and then had to stop too. She loved school and remembers being the girl with the highest marks in math in her grade. Unfortunately, she wasn't able to continue because my grandmother couldn't afford to pay for the uniforms—which were a required in order to attend classes.

My maternal grandmother, a single mother trying to raise three children by herself, barely made enough money to put a roof over their heads and food on the table. When it took every ounce of strength to provide food, shelter and clothing, school was put on the back burner indefinitely. When she was no longer able to attend school, my mom would stay home and take care of her two younger brothers so her mother could go work in the fields. Other times, she and her little brothers would go my grandma. As they worked, my mother and grandmother kept an eye on her siblings to make sure they didn't get into any trouble. Two years later, they started teaching 6th grade in the ranch, but my grandma could not afford it, so my mother had no choice but to stay home. *Llore porque me daba mucha tristeza. Yo queria ir a la escuela como los otros ninos. Pero no*

teniamos para el uniforme. (I cried because it made me very sad. I wanted to go to school like the other children. But we didn't have any money for the uniform.

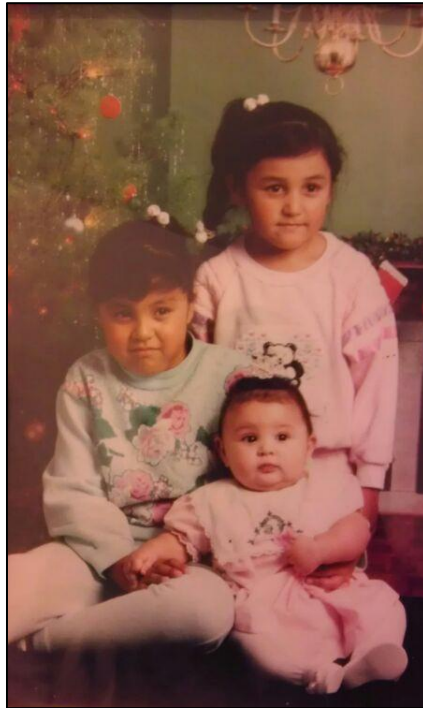


Figure 21. Clockwise from left, my older sister, (Alma), me, and Ruby

Like my grandmother, my mom learned to read and write in English using a workbook. My mom worked in various fruit packing sheds for about five or six years, until she got her daycare license. She always felt sad having to take Ruby, the second youngest, to daycare (Figure 21) even though it was with my grandma Carmen. When she got her daycare license, she was able to stay at home and take care of my youngest sister, Jazmin, and had more time to dedicate to learning English. “*Tenia muchas ganas para aprender Ingles. Recuerdo que el libro decia cosas como ‘a apple.’*” (“I had a strong desire to learn English. I remember that the book said things like ‘a apple.’” Then she self-corrected. “*No, no. Se dice ‘an apple,’ verdad?*” (“No, no. It’s ‘an apple’, right?”)

Y unas frases que tenía el libro eran, ‘La casa es blanca, el árbol es verde’ y cosas así. Y ya después aprendí del presente y el futuro. Y después leía los papeles de ustedes de la escuela. Fue durante el tiempo que cuidaba niños. Siempre prendía la televisión para ver caricaturas y escuchar Inglés. (Some phrases in the book were, ‘The house is white, the tree is green, and things like that.’ And then later I learned about the present and future tense. And after that, I would read your papers from school. This was during the time that I took care of children. I always had the television on to watch cartoons and to listen to English.)

My dad also had to find time in his busy day to take English classes. He was motivated and was interested in learning English in order to find a better job and to communicate with other members of the community and at work. Gardner (2001) defines these traits as essential to integrativeness (as cited in Ortega, 2009, p. 170). He took ESL classes in 1990, the year my younger sister, Ruby, was born. After work, he attended classes three times a week at the high school in Cashmere. My sister, Alma, was the helper. My dad says he was taught about present, future, and past tense. *La maestra hablaba con nosotros y nos hacía que habláramos con los otros estudiantes. Y cuando empezaron las clases, la maestra les hacía preguntas a todos para saber en qué nivel estaban. También me entrevistaron en el Cashmere Valley Record. Me preguntaron porque estaba tomando clases y porque quería aprender Español. Yo les conteste, “para tener un mejor trabajo.” Recuerdo que leí la entrevista y decía, ‘Joaquín fue entrevistado en Inglés.’”* (The teacher would talk to us and make us talk to the other students. When classes first started, she asked everyone questions in English to

see what level of English we were at. I was even interviewed by the Cashmere Valley Record. They asked me I was taking classes and why I wanted to learn English. My response was, “to get a better job.” I remember reading the article later, and it said, ‘Joaquin was interviewed in English’”. Alma remembers being in first or second grade and being his homework helper (Figure 22). My dad asked her to translate *planchar* (to iron) to English. After thinking about it for a minute, she told my dad that *planchar* was “straightening out the clothes.” Later, she found out that it wasn’t quite the right way to say it, but the teacher understood what my father meant.

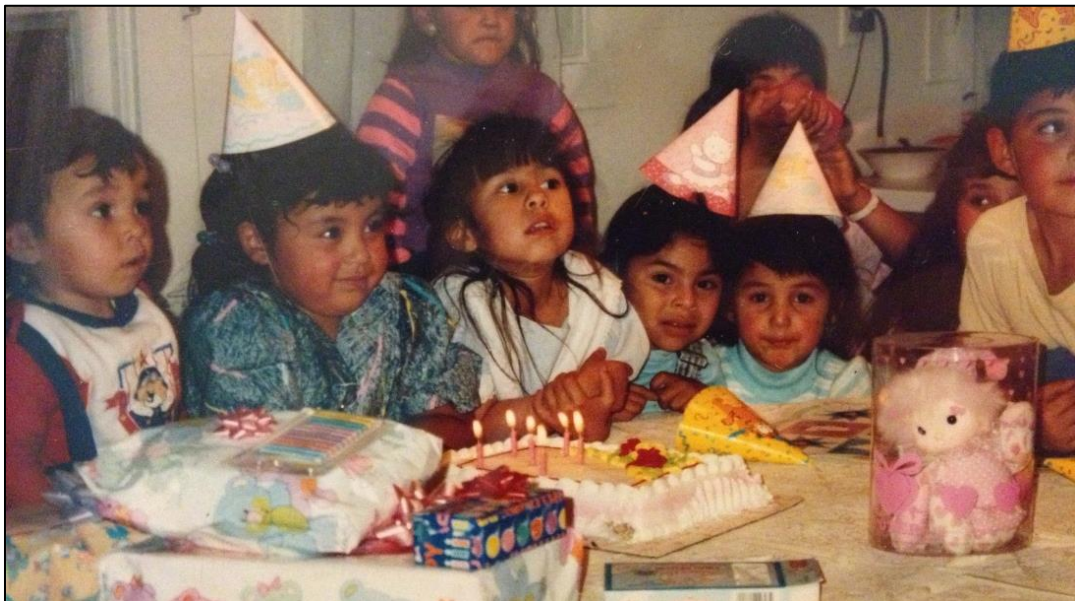


Figure 22. Alma’s birthday party (second from the left) in Washington.

Spanish Acquisition and Language Learning

Although Spanish is my first language, I feel as if my learning experience was much different than that of most native Spanish speakers. Unlike my Spanish speaking peers, I did not have formal education—which occurs in institutional settings, such as school, college, or a university—in reading, writing or speaking the language. I acquired

my Spanish orally in a natural setting. Natural settings are social settings—such as the home or community—where informal education occurs and language is acquired from *caregivers* (Ellis, 1994, p. 215-216). Fortunately, I had caregivers at home from whom I acquired both English and Spanish—I acquired English from Alma, my older sister, and Spanish from my mother, father, and extended family

In kindergarten, I officially began to learn English. For the past twenty-four years, I have been in school learning—thinking, analyzing, reading, and writing—almost exclusively in English. In contrast, I’ve only had four or five years of formal education in Spanish—a few classes in high school and Spanish for Heritage Speakers class in my undergraduate studies at EWU. Because of the English-dominant instruction, I consider English to be my dominant academic language. Though I primarily learned Spanish informally, I have many opportunities to use it because it is still spoken in the home and in the community. Since my grandparents, who I see as a second set of parents, only speak Spanish, I have yet another reason to speak the language. All of these opportunities to use Spanish have helped me preserve my language skills, and I consider myself to be a balanced bilingual.

Since I was a child, my family and I have attended Catholic mass—in Spanish—and I know all of the prayers in Spanish, but struggle with full comprehension of Bible passages in Spanish. However, when I go to mass in English—my formal “learned” language—the opposite happens. I don’t feel a strong spiritual connection to the prayers in English, but it is easier to comprehend sermons and passages from the Bible because I’m able to interpret the intricacies and the nuances of words in English.



Figure 23. *Tres Tristes Tigres trabalengua (tongue-twister)*

Maintaining the Heritage Language

Perhaps my father sensed the challenges that would come if we were to lose one language or another. He sometimes expressed concern that we would forget our Spanish because we were immersed in English all day. Because of this, he really encouraged us to practice our Spanish. My father he taught us *trabalenguas* (tongue twisters) which were meant to challenge us and entertain us. He loved reciting them for us and my sisters and I would giggle as we tried to repeat them as fast as he did without making any mistakes. My favorite one (Figure 23) is *tres tristes tigres tragaban trigo dentro de tres tristes trastes* (three sad tigers were eating wheat in three sad dishes.) Although our

parents were happy that we were in the United States, and they were excited for us to learn English and do well in school, they also wanted us to stay in touch with our *idioma* (language) and to be proud of where we came from. Maintaining the first language (L1) while adding a second language to the repertoire (L2), is called additive bilingualism (Ellis, 1994). This occurs when one has a positive view of our own ethnic identity and that of the target language. Since my parents were proud of our heritage and always expressed positive messages of our language and our country—despite the fact that we had moved away from it—my sisters and I felt a fond longing for Mexico and our language. We never felt that it was a bad and terrible place. Growing up, we always went to Michoacán to visit every few years, or more often, if my parents could afford it. We loved everything about our culture—the food, the language, our family—and we saw no reason to abandon any part of it just because we were now living here. All of these familial connections are what led me to become a balanced bilingual.

On the other hand, some language learners experience subtractive bilingualism which occurs when the L2 replaces the L1 completely. This can occur because of a negative view of their own ethnic identity and a desire to assimilate completely into the new culture (Ellis, 1994, p. 214-215). This is the way Ellis perceives it; however, in the United States, it is not always that the speakers themselves have a low estimation of their L1, but that others perceive it as low-status so they feel forced to dissociate themselves from the language. In this case, individuals may feel pressured to “forget” their Spanish in order to be accepted, or parents might wish for their children to forget their language in an attempt to fit in and assimilate completely into the new culture. On the other hand,

acculturation is when learners adapt some traits of the new culture while retaining the old one as well. Ellis (1994) has found that all too often, some children fail to develop proficiency in either language. “When learners have negative attitudes towards their own culture and that of the target language, *semilingualism* may result.” (p. 208). My parents, who have always been proud of their *raíces* (roots), and worked hard to maintain our heritage language, have taught me to love everything about our culture—our language, food, family traditions and our tightknit community.

At times, thinking of Mexico is bittersweet for me, because I know I’ll probably never return to live there. If I can’t live in Mexico, at least part of Mexico will always be with me. For this reason, it is essential for me to retain my heritage language. I can’t fathom losing half of my culture because doing so would mean losing half of my identity—relationships with my Spanish-speaking family, my language, music in Spanish—something I have fought to retain all these years.

***La Llorona* (The Weeping Woman)**

Thanks to the many literacy events in Spanish that occurred in my home as a child through school, and because my parents have been supportive of me learning both English and Spanish, I can say that I am a balanced bilingual. When I was little, my parent told us stories or *leyendas* (legends). My favorite stories I ever heard while growing up were Mexican urban legends and explanations about life. My mom used to read to us at bedtime and tell us about her childhood in Mexico, and about *La Llorona*. This story was used to instill fear into the minds of children when they would disobey their parents, not unlike the Boogeyman, and many Mexican children hear this story as

they're growing up. The *leyenda* of *La Llorona* is a story about a mother who went crazy one day and drowned her children in the river. Afterwards, she was so consumed with grief that she would go to the river every night and cry out for her children. Never mind that Michoacán is surrounded by the Sierra Madre and that the nearest body of water was no more than a watering hole for livestock, our parents still told us that *La Llorona* would come up from the river and kidnap us for herself if we misbehaved. After hearing this story, I would be inspired to come up with imaginative stories of my own.

Pictures from the Sky

We heard not only Mexican urban legends, but also imaginative explanations for how the world worked. My favorite story that my father ever told my sister and me, was during our first winter in the United States. We had never seen snow before, so naturally we were mesmerized by this white stuff falling from the sky. We had so much fun learning to make snow angels and making *monos de nieve* (snowmen). One day, my older sister and I were outside in the driveway, wearing our snowsuits and catching snowflakes on our tongues. We asked our dad, “*Papi, de donde viene la nieve?*” (Dad, where does snow come from?) He laughed heartily and told us, “*Dios esta desplumando gallinas y las plumas blancas se convirtieron en nieve.*” (God is plucking chicken feathers and the white feathers turned into snow). We should have known by his mischievous smile that he was pulling our leg.

Another time, during a particularly scary lightning storm, Dad reassured us, “*No tengan miedo. Dios les esta tomando fotos y los relampagos son solo la luz de la camara*” (Don't be afraid. God is taking pictures of you and the lightning is only the

flash from the camera). We felt relieved, and to this day, during thunderstorms, I think of what my father told me.

Heath; Labov; Scollon and Scollon found that ethnographic research shows that telling stories at home is a rich and complex social practice through which family members establish their identities as language users in culturally specific ways (as cited in Soliday, 1994, p. 513). This story telling also played an important role in laying the foundation for a better understanding of stories as a beginning, middle and end, and it also helped us find meaning in events that occurred around us. It also served to explain new situations and to normalize events that might otherwise be startling, like snow, which we had never seen before.

Cashmere Vale Elementary and Cashmere Middle School

For me, home has always been Washington State. All of my earliest memories are from here, and most of my family members are here also. My parents still have a home in Mexico, but since moving here twenty-seven years ago, they consider Washington their home too.

Growing up in Cashmere, Washington, I never felt different than any of my American friends at Cashmere Vale Elementary (Figure 24). I never thought about the color of my skin or much less about my race. I felt just as American as they did. Sometimes I took Lunchables to school, and sometimes I took *tacos de frijoles* (bean tacos). I learned the American National Anthem before ever learning *El Himno Nacional de Mexico* (The Mexican National Anthem). To me, it was perfectly normal that at home

we spoke Spanish and at school I spoke English. Switching between these two languages was automatic



Figure 24. My first school picture, in kindergarten.

Since she is two years older than I, I feel that reading books above my grade level improved my reading skills immensely. My sisters and I all love to read. My mom worries about our eyes and always tell us, “*Descansen sus ojos, porque no quiero que hagan tanto esfuerzo con la vista.*” (Rest your eyes, because I don’t want you to strain your eyesight too much.) Before the days of the Internet, we played outside all day, and when we were not riding our bikes or playing with the neighborhood children, we read many, many books in English.

The highlight of my elementary-school and middle-school years were family trips to San, Isidro, Michoacán, and my paternal grandparents’ visits to the US. I distinctly recall talking to my parents in Spanish about looking forward to either going to Mexico to see my grandma Carmen and grandpa Everardo, or waiting anxiously for them to

arrive. My grandparents visited the US often because most of their children—my father, his three brothers, and one sister—live here. When they came here, we always had great big get-togethers with lots of food. Word always spread quickly when they arrived and everyone wanted to see them, or take them out to eat, or simply spend time with them. We idolized them and often argued about whose house they would get stay at—we all wanted them to stay with us—and even who would get to drive them to their doctors' appointments.



(Figure 25. My grandmother in front of the special outdoor kitchen wear she made *tortillas* on a large *comal* (cast-iron skillet) over a fire.

My grandma Carmen (Figure 25), a devout Catholic, attended church and *novenarios* regularly and spent a large part of her day praying. She always woke up by 5A.M. and went to bed later than everyone—but not before blessing the house and everyone in it. I hardly ever saw her eating at the table. She always stood near the stove, heating up

tortillas as everyone ate—they had to be warm, because it is considered rude to serve someone cold tortillas—and ate her food in bites at a time. She was a selfless person who didn't want to inconvenience anyone—even in case of an emergency. One time, she was at her house in Mexico talking on the phone, when she was stung by a scorpion. It had been in her *reboso* (shawl), and when she picked it up and wrapped it around her shoulders, the scorpion crawled in her blouse. Rather than interrupting the person on the other end of the phone to tell them what had happened so she could go tend to the scorpion sting, she just killed it and continued her conversation. She always put the needs and feelings of others first. Grandma Carmen was the epitome of selflessness and taking care of others—highly valued trait in Mexican women in my culture.



Figure 26. With my grandfather Everardo in Mexico. He never went anywhere without his *sombrero* (hat). Michoacán weather is chilly at night, so he was also wearing a traditional *gaban* (poncho).

My grandpa Everardo (Figure 26), made every doctor's appointment lively. On the drive there, he would tell us stories about Mexico and especially about his *paseos a Zamora en el serrano* (his trips to Zamora on the bus) and afterwards, would insist on taking us out to lunch. We could never say no, of course. When he visited us in Washington, we were regulars at el Taco Loco, a local Mexican restaurant, in Wenatchee. And in typical grandpa Everardo fashion, he would get offended if we tried to pay for his meal. He would insist on paying for everyone, and he said that he enjoyed doing something nice for his grandchildren.

My charismatic grandpa Everardo and grandpa Carmen united the family and gave us a reason to get together; therefore, their departure was always bittersweet. As much as we enjoyed having our grandparents here, we knew that they were happier living in Mexico. Just as easily as they became a part of our lives when they came to the United States during late spring, they inevitably flew south—like migratory birds—to escape the cold winters here. The end of fall, with its cold mornings and frozen blades of grass, when all the trees had shed their leaves and were nothing but naked branches, was a sad time, because I knew winter was approaching, and so was my grandparents' departure.

My grandparents felt like they needed to go home in order to be near their daughter, my dad's sister, who did not come to the United States. My grandparents have helped raise the grandchildren, and as the grandchildren grew up, they helped my grandparents with anything they needed—cooking, cleaning around the house, running errands—although my grandparents were both pretty self-sufficient and active even in their 70's and 80's. Mexican families are very united and they help take care of one

another. Children do everything they can in order to continue taking care of their parents, especially when they are elderly. Sending parents to a retirement is practically unheard of within my extended family.

Mis abuelitos (my grandparents) were always happy to be back in Mexico in their own home. They felt happier in the ranch than in the U.S. because they had more freedom and could walk anywhere they needed to—to the neighbor's, or to run errands. In the U.S., my grandparents always felt *que no querian molestar a nadie* (that they didn't want to burden anyone). My grandparents stayed active—both mentally and physically—and lived happy lives in the ranch. My grandma cooked, and took care of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren and was very involved in the Catholic Church. My grandfather enjoying taking the bus by himself and going on trips to nearby towns. He also liked to garden and had a very active social life visiting friends and family in the ranch.

Life in San Isidro—where everyone knew each other and homes were close to one another—was beautiful and idyllic. There is no need to lock your door and visitors can drop by anytime for tea or *pan dulce* (sweet Mexican bread). You always say *buenos dias* (good morning) to everyone as they walk by, the cattle roam freely as they are let out of their corral to go to *el ojo de agua* (the watering hole), and days stretch out in the hazy Michoacán sun. Grandma could walk everywhere—*para comprar leche recién ordeñada* (to buy fresh milk from a woman who had dairy cows), *al molino para llevar el nixtamal para hacer masa* (to the mill where corn, or *nixtamal*, was ground into dough),*u*

a casa del vecino (or to the neighbor's house)—and she didn't need to rely on anyone to drive her around since everything she needed was within walking distance .

Viajes a Michoacán (Trips to Michoacán)

When my grandparents couldn't visit, we went to see them. When we arrived at our grandparents' house, my grandma always had a pot of *de te de limon* (lemongrass tea) waiting for us. Remembering the comforting taste and smell evokes images of my parents sitting with my grandparents' in their kitchen, smiling and happy to be in their hometown where everything first started. They lived through many experiences in that home—from getting married to our time spent there—and I imagine that being in that home, and in that kitchen, brings back other long-forgotten memories each time they are there. For me, being in San Isidro was unsettling, but in a good way. It was like experiencing *déjà vu*, only it wasn't just a feeling that I had been there before. I really HAD been there before. I had lived there for three years, but I didn't remember any of it.

What I do remember is waking up on my first morning in San Isidro at my grandma's house. The first thing I saw when I opened my eyes, were four eager faces peering at me and giggling. They were my aunts' children, cousins whom I had never met because their family had not had the documents necessary to move to the US. *Ya levantate. Ya casi son las ocho! Vamos a jugar.* (Wake up. It's almost 8am. Let's go play). These early risers were curious to see this cousin of theirs that had come from *El Norte* (The North).

As adults, these same cousins who married US citizens and obtained their residency or came to the US on work visas, finally got to see and experience *El Norte* for

themselves. They told me that they always thought it was like paradise. They were under the impression that every city was big and full of lights, like Los Angeles or New York City, and that everyone was rich. When my cousins moved to the United States, they were shocked to find out that I did not live in a mansion. They told me that because I had an American passport and could afford a plane ticket to Mexico, they assumed I must be wealthy.

After living here, they realized that yes, it is a beautiful and wonderful country, but everyone here works really hard in order to have what they want—a home, a life, and an education. My cousins found jobs, primarily in agriculture because of limited English and very little education; after they started working here, they concluded that *“El Norte no es como nos imaginabamos. Aqui si se gana dinero, pero todo lo que se gana, se gasta igual de rapido. Y aqui siempre estas ocupado y no hay tiempo de ver a la familia como en el rancho.* (The North is not like we imagined it was. Here, you do earn money, but you spend everything you earn, just as quickly as you earn it. And here you’re always so busy and there’s no time to see family like in the ranch).

My older relatives are amused at their surprise and newfound awareness of what it truly means to live here. They never miss an opportunity to say, *“Querias Norte”* (You wanted to come to The North). Those who have always dreamt of *El Norte*, are extremely grateful to find themselves living in the land of opportunity. However, it is during pursuit of the American Dream that one discovers that sacrifice, hard work, and sweat and tears are a package deal with El Norte. Just as newcomers experience culture

shock when coming to the US, there were many aspects about Mexico that I found surprising too.

During my first visit to Mexico after moving to the US, there were many things to discover. For example, I first learned about the joys of outhouses because my grandparents and my parents both had one. This meant that you had to go outside of the house if you needed to use the bathroom in the middle of the night. Since I was scared to go alone, I remember waking up someone and walking outside with a flashlight to use the bathroom which was in the corral by their house. Years later, my parents had a bathroom added to their house, and my grandparents had a bathroom built in their *patio* (courtyard). The patio was an enclosed area, but you still had to walk out of the front door to get to it (Figure 27).



Figure 27. Grandma in her patio, and barely visible in the upper left, my grandpa.

I saw people and places that I recognized from pictures that I'd seen growing up and many unfamiliar ones. From the brightly colored homes--pink, purple, blue, orange—to the chorus of animals--hens clucking, roosters saying *ki-ki-ri-kee* (cock-a-doodle-do), to donkeys braying, horses neighing, and cows mooing—everything seemed new to me. Eggs came from the chicken coop on the *patio* and not from the grocery store; *el mande o venga* (send or come) , a man on a loudspeaker inviting people to come buy or send someone to buy fruits and vegetables while alternately playing music as the produce truck slowly cruised around the dirt roads as it patiently waited for clientele; the gas stoves that had to be lit with a match; the announcement of *la marcha* (the call which was like a bell announcing that kids should go to school) playing over the speaker when it was time for children to go to school; and then there were the herds of cows and bulls roaming freely through the streets as if they owned them. They always caused cars to have to find alternate routes to pass, or in my case, sent me running back the other direction until the danger had passed. I was in fourth or fifth grade, and I had never been that close to livestock in the wild before, and I was terrified of them. Other children simply pushing their way through the cows, disappearing for seconds at a time—as I anxiously held my breath and watched on my tiptoes—until finally emerging unharmed on the other side. These kids were *muy valiente* (very brave), I thought to myself.

Since my parents' house was uninhabited for years at a time, an aunt or another relative would go tidy up the house and spray it down with Raid to try to get rid of any *alacranes* (scorpions) in the house. The effect of scorpion stings varied by person and could result in anything from a bad mosquito-like bite to severe anaphylactic shock.

When we stayed at our parents', we took every precaution to avoid being stung—we didn't want to find out what that would feel like. We learned to vigorously shake out our sheets, blankets and even pillows before going to bed. In the morning when we woke up, we did the same thing with our clothes before getting dressed. We always wore shoes around the house after a near-miss with a scorpion—my sister almost stepped on one while she was barefoot.

During one of the family's semi-annual/annual trips to Mexico in December, I had the opportunity to attend school for a few weeks when I was in the fourth grade. Ironically, this is about how far my parents were able to go to school because their families did not have money to pay for uniforms. I can't help but think that some people don't realize how lucky they are to have free education in the U.S., and, sometimes, they take it for granted. It still breaks my heart that because they were poor, they couldn't go to school. Something as simple as not being afford to pay for a uniform kept them from school. While my parents both loved school, I can see from the looks on their face when we talk about it that it is a bittersweet memory for them.

One day, my parents decided that my sister and I needed to experience school in Mexico. My mom talked to teacher one day and asked if we could go to school. There was no enrollment process and no fees to pay because we were only there for a short while. The school was a simple one-room schoolhouse with rusty window panes and a wrought-iron door that were always left open to let a cool breeze come in. The teachers came and went from San Isidro and a new face appeared at the beginning of the next school year. They always came by bus from the largest town nearby and lived with a

family who also gave them meals as part of the salary. At 8A.M. every day, *la marcha* (the march) played over the loudspeaker, and when the children heard this song, they knew it was time to head to class. Boys and girls would file into the school yard wearing neatly-pressed uniforms and shiny black dress shoes and white knee socks as the loudspeaker blared overhead. I stood by and watched in my jeans and Velcro-strap tennis shoes. Up until this point, I had never seen anyone wear a school uniform in real life. Because I only went for a few days, I was exempt from wearing one, and classmates shared their books with me.

Although I had never received formal language instruction in Spanish, I knew how to read and write. I credit my parents for having taught me this at home through their story telling, and constant exposure to the Spanish language. This generation of parents could afford to send their children to *la primaria* (elementary school) in *el rancho*, and also took turns driving them to Churintzio, the nearest town, to attend *la secundaria* (middle school), and even *el colegio* (high school). This is something that my parents only dreamt about as children, when no one had cars to take them to school outside of *el rancho*, and parents couldn't afford school uniforms.

Cashmere High School

I attended the Cashmere School District from kindergarten through senior year of high school. The high school I attended had less than 500 students total, and my graduating class in 2004 had 107 students. It was a relatively small town and everyone knew everyone. In some ways this was good and it had a sense of community, but in other ways, students formed groups of friends based on common interests—such as

sports, music, acting, studying—and in Freshman year of high school, I had not developed any interests of my own yet.

Since my only strength had been my grades, my friends had been other students who also earned good grades. For some reason, even though I was working really hard, my grades were starting to slip. This meant that we no longer had anything in common. Although no one singled me out or said anything to me in particular, I sensed an implicit lack of incompatibility between my friends and me. When I was with my American friends, I felt that I was different from them, and that I stuck out—a symptom of deracination (Reeves, 2012). I felt as if someone had drawn a line on me with chalk—from head-to-toe, right down the middle of me—and labeled one half American, and the other half Mexican. And I felt as if one half of me was invisible—my Spanish, my *telenovelas* (soap operas), my parents' agricultural jobs. I would look down at my brown skin and wonder how I hadn't noticed my "brownness" before. This sudden awareness of self and a complete lack of self-confidence made me feel completely alienated from my friends.

It wasn't just alienation from my American friends, but from my Mexican friends too. I had been spending a lot of time with my Mexican friends because they didn't belong to a particular social group either. All of them stuck together, and they welcomed me to their group, but I felt as if I did not fit in with them either. I felt as if some of them didn't care about school, and they called me a "nerd" because I liked school and I liked studying. I was always in the library reading or doing homework in the hallway. I didn't

have anything in common with my friends anymore, and much less with the popular kids. I felt lost and I had a difficult time feeling like I fit in anywhere.

During my sophomore year in high school, I began to experience what Okabe (2008) calls anomie—feelings of exclusion, cultural loss and identity crisis. I felt as if I spent my high school years on the sideline. I watched as all of the popular kids—including my sister and some other Mexican American athletes—played sports and were admired by everybody. But I was not one of these athletes. There was stratification within the student body, and it was widely known which ones of us were top athletes, great students and college material. We also knew which parents owned orchards and which parents were teachers in the district and it seemed these students had many advantages—monetary and educational advantages, respectively—over the rest of us. I felt shame that I didn't have the same advantages as other students and more so because I didn't have any talents—social, academic or athletic—with which I could compensate for them.

What hurt even more was feeling as if I couldn't relate to the one person I had always counted on, my older sister and role model, Alma. All my life, I had spent years following her around, and suddenly, I was cut off from her. It hurt to feel as if I had lost the one person who I always depended on for my identity. At first, everyone expected me to be just like her—popular and friendly and someone teachers loved—but then they didn't know what to make of me when they saw that I was shy and kept to myself.

Like her friends, Alma was popular, earned good grades, played sports—soccer, softball, and volleyball—and she was also the class secretary. In short, she was all the

things I wasn't, and I didn't feel as if I could ever measure up. I didn't know who I was, but I but I did know that I felt insignificant in comparison. Being the unknown and plain little sister of the smart, pretty, athletic, older sister hurt. And I felt too ashamed to talk to her about my failures. And this only made me feel more alienated and excluded, as if something was wrong with me. Actually, I think it was easier to stop trying to be like her because it felt worse to try and fail, than it did to finally just stop trying altogether. I wasn't athletic or outgoing, so I didn't even try anymore. I felt like a loser.

It was the sudden recognition that I was not an athlete, I was not an honor roll student anymore, I was not an American citizen. I was the daughter of the man who came here with nothing but a saltine cracker box filled with his sole possessions. I had a feeling of "normlessness" Okabe (2008). Who gets to go to college? When is it okay to speak Spanish at school, if ever? These were questions I was trying to figure out. My older sister, a top soccer player and the ASB secretary, who had been my role model since I was a child, had made different choices than I had, and by default, we went on separate paths.

Too Late

No matter how hard I worked, my grades didn't improve. By senior year, I was completely unmotivated and had given up. I had alienated most teachers, and they didn't try to engage with me anymore—I felt as if they couldn't see that I was drowning. I had counted myself out, and they counted me out too. This was also the case with the high school counselor. Early on in my high school career, during a career advising meeting, I remember expressing an interest in applying for college. I will never forget what my

counselor told me when I said I wanted to go to college. “I don’t think that’s a good idea. Someone with your background just isn’t smart enough to go to college.” Although it crushed me to hear that, deep down inside, my inner Jiminy Cricket was nodding sadly in agreement. “She’s right,” I thought to myself, “I’m a loser—a nobody. I’ll probably never go to college. I will never be as smart as Alma.” The counselor was an adult, and adults are always right. Aren’t they? This is something I had not discussed with anyone before, and the experience made me feel as if I had no future.

Well, I wish the high school counselor could see me now. Not only was I able to retain my heritage language and culture, but also have paved my own path and rewritten my own story, which may surprise that individual. Thanks to the fact that I am secure in my identity as a Mexican-American and in my heritage language now, I have been able to defy all odds and succeed as a graduate student despite being a minority and coming from a lower-class immigrant family. And although I come from a blue-collar family, and children from lower socioeconomic status groups generally aren’t as successful as those from higher socioeconomic groups, I am proof that this is not always the case (Ellis, 2006). I would like to think that my struggles only made me more resilient and gave me the motivation to fight and do well. I am a classic example of how heritage language retention and strong ties to one’s culture can have a positive impact on students’ success and self-identification as Mexican American.

Entering the Workforce

After I graduated from high school, I wasn’t sure what I wanted to study, but I felt like I might want to go to college someday. After graduation, I began my third summer

working cherries. When the season ended two and a half months later, I worked as a cashier at the Craft Warehouse. While I was working there, I applied at American General Financial Services, a loan office in search of a bilingual receptionist. I was offered the job immediately.

As it turned out, the job was more than just answering phone calls and filing papers. At just 18 years old, I was processing loans, closing out paid-real estate loans, helping repossess cars and even going door-to-door to collect payments from delinquent accounts. I learned as I went. My branch manager—a young, successful Hispanic business man who had bought his first house when he was just 19 years old—called my learning experience “baptism by fire.” It was inspiring to see a successful Hispanic at work in a managerial position. One time he told me, “The secret to success is to work twice as hard as everyone else.” It was a lesson I never forgot.

My parents, who both worked agricultural jobs—my father in the orchard and my mother in a fruit-packing shed—told everyone about my job. They were so proud of me and always told everyone about my job in an air-conditioned office where I answered phones all day while sitting in a comfortable chair at a nice desk—to my parents, this job represented *El Sueño Americano* (The American Dream). At 18, my first full-time job—not just seasonal summer work in cherries—taught me financial responsibility and the ability to adapt to new situations. I also saw the benefits of being bilingual—I was able to help customers who spoke both English and Spanish. The Wenatchee Valley, with its large Hispanic population, needed a bilingual person in the office. During the year that I worked at American General Financial Services, I was enrolled part-time at WVC.

Wenatchee Valley College

I wasn't ready to leave home yet and go to a four-year school either, so I decided that my best plan would be to take classes locally while I decided what I wanted to do. I could live at home and continue to work to pay for classes. Starting the process to take classes was a daunting task because my parents had never gone to college; I had no one to ask for help. Applying, figuring out Financial Aid (FAFSA), and deciding which classes to take by myself seemed like insurmountable tasks. It made staying at AGFS full-time seem more appealing. It was a well-paid job with many benefits and my parents were very proud of my grown-up job. However, the job became very stressful after a different branch manager was hired—a blessing in disguise—and I quit after one year. It never occurred to me to attend WVC full-time and find a part-time job. It was nice getting a steady paycheck and helping my parents pay bills—although they never asked me for rent money.

Living at home, I was happy to buy groceries and help around the house. It seemed selfish to quit working and spend my time studying, even though my parents encouraged me to do so. I decided to look for a job in a clinic because I was interested in the Registered Nurse program at WVC and I wanted to get a feel for the medical field. Looking around town, I decided to submit a resume to Columbia Valley Community Health—who didn't have any job vacancies at the time—and I hired for the job because they were growing and needed bilingual customer-care staff. Once again, I was grateful

for being bilingual. I wonder what my job prospects would have been if I had forgotten or “lost” my Spanish.

At Columbia Valley Community Health, I worked in the call center answering the phone, scheduling appointments, and interpreting at the clinic. There was only one bilingual nurse on the staff which further motivated me to become a nurse so I could help both English and Spanish speakers. Working full-time, I began take nursing pre-requisites at Wenatchee Valley College part-time. Unfortunately, I discovered that I had a fear of blood after donating blood on campus one day and nearly fainting at the sight of the blood filling a donation bag. Or I guess you could say it was fortunate, since I found out before I applied to the nursing program. Afterwards, I decided that the best plan would be to continue taking classes to fulfill requirements for the Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree. I only planned to be at CVCH for one year—just long enough to save up money and finish the degree—but before I knew it, five years had passed, and I was still at CVCH. It felt as if I would never finish my A.A. degree at this rate. I had a hard time quitting because my father taught us to never quit anything, and I felt a sense of responsibility towards my supervisor, Dave Lane, who had been like a mentor for me during the time I had worked there. Working for CVCH had many benefits, but I knew the job might be temporary. On the other hand, education lasts a lifetime. It something no one can ever take away from you. After deciding to turn in my letter of resignation, I enrolled full-time at Wenatchee Valley College.

A friend from work at CVCH who was attending Eastern Washington University encouraged me to apply. After she took me on a tour around the Cheney campus—which

was the perfect size, warm and inviting—I decided I wanted to transfer there. After I completed the A.A. degree, my friend helped me fill out an application for an apartment and for the university; I will forever be grateful to her because she simplified the process for me and inspired me to attend EWU. It seems that at each step of my way, I have had a mentor to help me transition into my next stage of life, and I wonder where I would be if I had not encountered each and every one of them.

Undergraduate at Eastern Washington University

How do you acquire a taste for higher education when it is something that no one in your family has ever had? You have to have a tiny bit of it first in order to really begin craving it. The first time I truly got a sense for the value of education was when I started my undergraduate career at EWU. As I received good grades and recognition from my professors, I thrived and grew as a student. Although my parents always praised me, it wasn't for specific acts. The feedback I received from my parents was more general and consisted of encouragement to keep working hard and do well in school. Now more than ever, I appreciate the fact that my parents have consistently modeled what it means to work hard to attain a goal.

I have always been moved and inspired by my parents' hard work, and I feel that nothing I could ever do would be as difficult as what they have done for me their whole lives. My greatest source of motivation stems from gratitude towards my parents and a desire to somehow repay them for the sacrifices they have made for me. I also want to make them proud, and, by completing my master's, it will be as if we have all completed it together.

“Invisible” Support

As an economically disadvantaged student, I am grateful that my parents have done all they could to help me in school. When we were growing up, my dad—a hard-working, grounded, dedicated man—always told my sisters and me that he worked hard to put food on the table and a roof over our heads but that was all he could give us financially. This is the hidden or invisible parental involvement that teachers often don’t see, and don’t know exists. It is thanks to this constant support from my parents, and their behind-the-scenes involvement, and their commitment to helping us get a better education that I am preparing for graduation with a master’s degree.

My father always said if we wanted anything more for ourselves, that we would have to work for it, and he would help us in any way he could. Since enrolling in college, my parents have not paid my tuition. I’ve paid my way through college while working full-time and with the help of loans and grants through Financial Aid. However, when I go home, my parents often give me groceries whenever they can, and fruits and vegetables from their garden. My grandmother and parents also give me gas money whenever they can. I used to feel embarrassed and guilty accepting these gifts from them, until they told me that it was an honor to help me in any way that they could. Thoughts like these are what keep me going when I feel as if school and classes are overwhelming—I have someone who believes in me. When I’m having fresh tomatoes or peaches from my parents’ garden, or when I’m filling up my gas tank on the way from Cashmere to Cheney, I always feel so grateful for having my parents unconditional

support—in any way that they can help—and I remind myself that these things are much more than just gas and groceries.

I wish these were the things teachers saw when they looked at a student and wondered if her parents help her to succeed in school. If only teachers could see that parents often work beyond the point of exhaustion, and still come home to their children with a smile on their face. Parents do what they can with the resources they have, and they make the most of it. Sometimes the best that parents can do is provide their children with a roof over their head, a belly full of food, and a loving supportive family. Other times, parents will spend their hard-earned money on buying their children nicer clothes or a pair of new shoes or new toy that they have been asking for, because they know this will help their children feel as if they fit in with other children at school. And sometimes the best thing that parents can do for their children is give them a healthy dose of respect for the teachers and educators at school. If teachers saw these “invisible” ways that parents help, they would know that parents often go above-and-beyond what they are able to do in order to be involved in their childrens’ education. Although I am now 30 years old, my parents have not stopped being there for me and helping me in any way they can.

I realized just how much my parents helped me get through school when I left home and I had to figure things out on my own for the first time. Leaving my family was the biggest adjustment for me when I moved away from home and started attending classes at EWU. At 25, I felt too old to live in the dorms, so I decided to live on my own. Coming from a big and lively family, living alone was painfully difficult. My parents teased me because I went home at least three times a month the first quarter I was away.

For the first time ever, I realized that I had taken so many things for granted: my mom's cooking, spending time with my sisters', having my dad help me with car problems, and most of all the safety of having someone in the room next door. For the first month or two, I slept with a nightlight in my room, left every light in the apartment on, and left the television playing just to have some background noises.

More than anything, my parents have demonstrated their “invisible” support by supporting me as I pursue my dreams, although they differ from their dreams when they were younger. Although at my age, my mother was married, had four daughters and was working full-time, she has never told me that I must follow in her footsteps. My parents support and encourage me to do what I feel is best for me. I am painfully aware that my parents did not have the luxury school to attend school because their families were not in the position to put their “wants” above their basic needs—food, clothing, shelter. My parents understand that for me, being an independent educated woman is not a “want,” but a “need.”

I often talk to my parents about my resistance to the idea that women must choose between having a career and a family—which is perpetuated in the Hispanic culture. In recent years, their stance on the matter has changed, and though they still place a high importance on marriage and family, they understand that education is not just a frivolity for me, but that it has become a basic necessity in order to be happy. Because I have never felt pressured to marry at a young age or forced to quit school to work full-time, I know that my parents love for me is greater than their love of tradition. And to me, this is the greatest gift and source of “invisible” support they could have given me.

A Different Point of View

At school, classes were exciting and I instantly fell in love with the diversity of students on campus. In Wenatchee, there isn't a very diverse population. It is roughly fifty-percent Caucasian and fifty-percent Latino. At EWU, I heard different languages—some that I couldn't identify—and I liked to imagine where they might be from. I was happy to be surrounded by a diverse group of students because I felt a sense of belonging among them.

Prior to my first year at EWU, I had never even heard of any prominent Latino names mentioned in school courses. I finally had the opportunity to do so during a Latin American History class taught by Dr. Joseph Lenti. The lectures and readings were often sad and I learned about the oppression of many people all over Latin America. This was the first time I ever heard about revolutionary and influential Latinos, like Rigoberta Menchu, mentioned in school. It was eye-opening, and I identified with their struggles. Seeing that they overcame difficult and transformative experiences was encouraging. I wonder, “If I had been exposed to these stories before, would I have struggled with my identity less in high school and enrolled in college right after completing my high school diploma?”

Believing In Myself

The single most transformative experience of my undergraduate career overcoming my fear of public speaking when I presented at the EWU Student Symposium for the first time. All throughout classes at Wenatchee Valley College and EWU, on the first day of a new class, the first thing I would do was scan the syllabus to

see if there was a required class presentation. If there was, I would drop the class. My intense fear of public speaking dictated what classes I took. I did everything to avoid presenting, even offering to write a long research paper as an alternative. When Dr. Theresa Martin encouraged us to present our study on Interracial Dating at the EWU symposium, I agreed, even though I was still absolutely terrified of having to speak in front of an audience. I decided that I was not going to avoid it this one time, and I practiced my presentation in front of a mirror every day until I had learned it by heart. After the presentation, two of my psychology professors complimented my presentation. One said: “You were so smooth up there, great job!” And the other professor said, “Adriana, that was such a great presentation. I just had to tell you how great you did.” It was very gratifying, because I had taken classes with both of them, and I had never raised my hand once in their classes once because I had been too shy. From then on, I felt like I could do anything and my fear of public speaking evaporated.

As senior year drew to an end, my undergraduate advisor, Dr. Susan Ruby encouraged me to apply for the School Psychology Educational Specialist Degree (Ed.S.). We did research together for Assistive Technology and I helped her administer Curriculum Based Measures (CBM’s) for reading and writing. This led to my second presentation at the EWU Symposium. That same day, I also presented with a research group for Dr. Theresa Martin on a Friends with Benefits research study. Clearly, I was beginning to feel more comfortable with presentations. Instead of leaving me with sweaty palms and a sickening feeling, presentations had started to give me an adrenaline rush and a feeling of control.

This feeling of invincibility gave me the motivation to start thinking about graduate school. When I talked with Dr. Ruby about it, I said that I would like to apply but that I didn't think I could get in. She would always say, "Yes, you can, Adriana. You'd be a wonderful candidate and a great fit for the program." I still remember going in to her office feeling overwhelmed and leaving with her words of encouragement echoing in my mind. Between my first presentation in the EWU Symposium and Dr. Ruby's encouragement, I was slowly starting to feel more confident about myself and about my academic future.

Encouraged to apply for the School Psychology, I began to prepare for the Graduate Records Examinations (GRE). Again, I found myself in unfamiliar territory—I had no idea what to expect. A GRE prep class on campus helped me prepare for the test, but I also had a friend tutor me on the math portion—not my forte—as well. The morning of the GRE, I could barely eat a bite of food—I was extremely nervous. After I took the GRE, I was relieved that it was over, but anxious to hear back about it. I submitted my graduation and all I could think was that if I was accepted into the program, I would be the first in my family to attend graduate school.

All throughout my undergraduate years, I was on the Dean's list every single quarter, and in June of 2013, I graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a minor in Spanish. This was such a stark contrast to my high school career when I barely graduated and almost didn't attend my own graduation ceremony. Seeing my name in print on the degree was surreal. I felt as if that piece of paper was evidence contrary to everything I had ever known and been told before. It was physical

proof that I was no longer the extremely shy and struggling student from high school who never imagined she would go to college. It was extremely validating. Now I had my sight set on graduate school.

School Psychology Ed.S.

When I found out I was accepted, I was thrilled but terrified. The first quarter I felt like an imposter, a common symptom among graduate students (Weir, 2013). School was exhausting and the workload was heavy. Most quarters, students in the Ed.S. program were enrolled in fourteen credits, and I feel as if one class alone was the equivalent of four undergraduate level classes. It was not uncommon for me to stay up until two or three in the morning doing homework. One evening after a particularly long homework session of hours of reading and studying, I was contemplating whether I should shower or have dinner; I only had enough time and energy to one or the other. I was so sleepy that I hopped in the shower fully dressed. Even though it was difficult at times, it taught me to persevere, and I learned to enjoy pushing myself to do well. It was extremely satisfying to do well in classes, and I was grateful for the challenge.

Becoming a Citizen

My parents both became citizens when I was about seventeen, but I didn't become a citizen until I was in graduate school. After a long day at work, I remember that my parents would attend citizenship classes to prepare for the test. For years, my parents were fine with their lawful permanent resident status but then decided to become citizens so they could vote and try to make a difference. Before becoming a naturalized citizen myself in October of 2013, I was a long-time legal resident of the United States just like

my parents. During the ceremony, I got a little tiny American flag, and I sang the National Anthem with about 30 other newly sworn-in citizens; it was a beautiful ceremony. I had never felt the need to have a piece of paper that stated that I was American, since I had always felt as if already was, but having a certificate made it official.

The process to become a citizen is long and confusing. Even the first step, filling out the form, is challenging because it contains legal jargon and complicated terminology, and it was difficult for me although I'm a native English speaker; I can't help but imagine the struggle that those with a limited English proficiency go through as they apply to become citizens. Throughout the span of about six months, you have several appointments during which you fill out an application, pay the necessary fees, have fingerprints taken, and then finally undergo a background check. Then if all goes well, you receive a letter in the mail with a date for the citizenship test and naturalization ceremony. The final step, the test itself, was easy for me, but again, how easy could it be for someone whose dominant language is not English?

According to the Migration Policy Institute, my parents and I are not alone in our decisions to put off becoming U.S. citizens. In 2014, the year after I became a citizen “around 47 percent of immigrants (20 million) were naturalized U.S. citizens. The remaining 53 percent (22.4 million) included lawful permanent residents, unauthorized immigrants, and legal residents on temporary visas (such as students and temporary workers) (website accessed on 5/5/16). One Latino university president, Dr. Sanchez

spoke about how his parents, first-generation immigrants, expected to return to Mexico in the future. Therefore, his father did not become a citizen, but eventually became a “green card” holder, while his mother eventually became a citizen of the United States in her 60’s (Leiva, 2014, p. 39). It seems to me that Dr. Sanchez’ parents did not express a sense of urgency in becoming citizens because they imagined that they would be returning to their homeland.

A 2011 survey by Pew Research center conducted on 243 foreign-born Latino legal permanent residents found that Latinos cited many different reasons for not naturalizing. 26% cited language and other personal barriers; 26% had not tried yet or were not interested; 18% reported financial aid and administrative barriers; 13% were not eligible or were waiting for their green card; while 4% were currently applying or would do so soon. The remaining participants said ‘I don’t know’ or ‘not interested.’ However, an overwhelming total of 93% of Hispanic immigrants who had not yet naturalized say they ‘would’ do so if they could. While most people reported wanting to become naturalized, 65% of Latinos who listed personal barriers as a reason said they needed to learn English, and 23% found the citizenship test too difficult. Another significant barrier found—application fees—accounted for 94% of those citing administrative barriers as the reason they hadn’t become citizens yet. In addition, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security mandates that legal permanent residents must have their resident’s card for 5 years—or three years if they are married to a U.S. citizen—before they are eligible to apply for citizenship.

Switching Majors

Year one of my School Psychology Ed.S. program flew by as I had been busy with classwork and applying for my citizenship. However, during the second year—which is half classes and half practicum—I started to have doubts about whether the program was the right fit for me. I had A's in almost every class, but I was starting to notice a discrepancy between what I thought I would be doing, and what I was actually doing during practicum. From what I could see, there were a lot of assessments, meetings with parents, and reports to be written as part of the job description. There was no doubt in my mind that I could handle the coursework, but I wasn't sure if the school psychology career was something I could imagine myself doing for the rest of my life. Thoughts of withdrawing often occupied my mind, but part of me wanted to wait until the practicum began the first quarter of the second year. After expressing an interest in working with English Language Learners, my supervisors did their best to accommodate me. All summer, I waited to hear who I would be placed with for practicum, and I remained hopeful that wherever I was assigned, I would have the opportunity to get to interact with children learning English.

Year two of the program began and so did my practicum. During the first few weeks of practicum, it quickly became clear to me that being a school psychologist was not what I had envisioned when I first applied for the program. It is a wonderful job that helps children, families and staff working in schools, but it wasn't what I wanted to do. After being placed with one of the best school psychologists in Spokane, I was anxious about telling her and my program director that I no longer wanted to complete the Ed.S.

program. Withdrawing from the program is one of the hardest decisions I've ever had to make, and it wasn't one that I made lightly. Getting into graduate school had seemed impossible, and now I was trying to withdraw from the program. Once again, I was at a loss for what to do. It reminded me of when I quit working at Colombia Valley Community Health, and I couldn't bring myself to turn in my two-week notice. I thought of my father as I tried to decide what to do. I did not want to disappoint my father, or my professor. Quitting his job is a luxury my father never had, and working in the orchard was far more difficult and demanding and yet he continued to work hard. And I felt guilty about disappointing my professor who I felt had believed in me and invested so much time in me. Looking back, it is clear to me that when I commit to something or someone, I don't give up or quit easily. That drive comes from my father, and I have applied it when it comes to making decisions in school and work.

A day that has always stuck with me from my school psychology program, was the day I did an observation in an ESL high school classroom. I was amazed by the stories and the lives of English Language Learners (ELL's), and especially the migrant students. They reminded me so much of my own upbringing, yet I couldn't put myself completely in their shoes. The majority of the students in the classroom were children of seasonal migrant workers who'd had their education interrupted many times. By some stroke of luck, my parents had found stable jobs and settled down in Cashmere, but I felt as if I could have easily been one of them. The ESL teacher I spoke with had a clear understanding that she only had a small window of time to help catch these kids up in order for them to be able to graduate from high school. Most students had been moved

from school to school following the seasonal labor around Washington State and coming from as far as California, Arizona, and Texas as well. Some students were attending classes full-time in high school and working alongside their parents picking fruit in the orchards. Their grades were starting to slip, but many felt they had no choice. They were caught between wanting to finish high school and helping their families. Although I was in the school psychology program at the time, I remember feeling a strong desire to help these students that were so close to falling through the cracks if no one helped them. Languages and cultures are beautiful, but they can also be a double-edged sword if you are caught on the side that is disadvantaged and marginalized like these children were.

Before I had decided to formally withdraw from the program, I had been looking at different TESOL programs and certificates around Washington. When I looked into the program at EWU and met with the director, Dr. LaVona Reeves, I felt instantly at home. The day of my interview with Dr. Reeves, I arrived to her office and saw a Saudi female student dropping off a plate of food for her. There were about five people waiting to see her and they all looked happy when they left her office. When it was my turn to speak with her, I was greeted by a warm and cozy room decorated with pictures and posters and writing in Arabic, Japanese, and other languages displayed prominently in her office—I had never seen an office like it. After speaking with me to make sure I wanted to withdraw from the program, Dr. Reeves informed me I was accepted into the program. When I finished my final quarter of School Psychology at EWU, I began the Master of Arts in English with an emphasis in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) program on the same campus.

Artifacts

Some of my favorite aspects about classes in the TESL graduate program have been the multimodality in the classroom, multivocality in reading material and humanistic approach to teaching. Classes in the master's program have validated parts of me that I've never been able to acknowledge in any other class or setting. I've had multiple opportunities to share my culture and my language with others. Being able to teach a lesson in my first language has made the program interesting because I had the opportunity to share a small part of my culture in an academic setting. Learning about other cultures and languages has given me a more global perspective and a more positive outlook on the world. In class, we discovered that we have more in common with others than we realize and the more we share these commonalities, the closer we become as a whole. The lessons I've learned have been invaluable and I hope to create the same sense of community and in the future when I am working with my own students. Within this program, I have found a way to use my passion for cultures, English, and travelling to make a career for myself that will allow me to help others.

English 112 Internship

My first internship with Dr. LaVona Reeves in English 112 at EWU was highly instructive and a great first experience working with international students. The majority of the class was made up of Saudi students, and there were two Japanese students as well. It felt as if the students were transforming right before my eyes. Students had vast opportunities to be critical thinkers, and read and write as well. The class was taught

around the biography of Eleanor Roosevelt, and Dr. Reeves had the students—and every intern as well—write daily journals on topics related to Eleanor’s life. Each intern was paired up with two students for the quarter, and together we made a PowerPoint and taught a chapter to the class. We also had to act out two scenes from our chapter. I have selected some journal entries written by me during the internship because they are relevant to my story.

In class, the students were reading Eleanor Roosevelt’s biography, by Russel Freedman. Eleanor, a poor little rich girl was orphaned young but lives a comfortable life because of her family’s money. She isn’t happy because all her life, her mother had told Eleanor that she was ugly. Living with her extended family is hard, but being in her favorite place, Oak Terrace, provides her some comfort. She describes it as a place to spend time relaxing with family. After learning about Oak Terrace, students then wrote an essay about their favorite place. This helped the students give meaning to the story by connecting their own life to Eleanor’s. It is important to note that although I was not orphaned at a young age, nor was I poor, Eleanor and I both had a favorite childhood place which we connected to at a deep level because we both spent time there with family. “My Favorite Childhood” place is an important memory of a place that I don’t get to visit often anymore. It is an important tie to my childhood of a time before my family and I moved to the United States; it will always remind me of home and of who I am and of my first three years of life spent there that I don’t recall. However, just because I don’t remember living in Mexico and I don’t have many photographs of my childhood, it doesn’t mean the memories are any less vivid.

English 112

Journal 1: Favorite Childhood Place

My Grandparents House in Michoacán

San Isidro, Michoacán is a small ranch with a current population of less than twenty people. My hometown, once vibrant and bustling with people coming and going to milk the cows, feed the chickens, and gather at the mill to grind corn to make homemade tortillas, is now just a quiet little ghost town with dust settling on every corner of every little pink, blue, and turquoise house in sight. Of all the houses there, one in particular is especially dear to me. My grandparents little blue house in San Isidro, Michoacán- now painted a peach color- is my favorite place in the world because it symbolizes family. When I was in middle school, my family and I would make the long drive from Washington down to Michoacán every December. Nothing made me happier than packing my bags to go see my grandma Carmen and my grandpa Everardo. We had our nightly tradition of having *té de limon* [lemon tea] in the kitchen, of watching my grandma make blue homemade tortillas in the special kitchen outside on the patio and spending time trying to convince my grandpa that I was his favorite grandchild.

I still remember the way the patio door squeaked as you unlocked it and opened it to step onto the patio. Walking into the patio, you would hear the sleepy chickens wake up and cluck softly from their perch high above in the guava and lemon trees. Stepping inside their house, we were welcomed by a pot of lemon tea simmering on the stove. Grandma Carmen always had company at all hours of the day- family and neighbors who stopped by as they pleased- and there was never a shortage of Mexican bread or cookies to serve with the tea. Every time I smell lemon tea, I close my eyes and imagine sitting with my grandmother in her kitchen and holding a mug of hot tea in my hand. I loved the way her eyes crinkled when she smiled and how she covered her face with her hand every time she giggled. At night before going to bed, she would walk around the entire house praying and blessing every room; I was never afraid of anything when she did that- not even of scorpions or lizards or the coyotes howling outside.

In the morning as soon as it was light enough to see outside, I was too excited to stay in bed, so I would go outside to look for my grandparents. My grandmother had a habit of waking up at four in the morning to go sweep her patio and start the daily chores. When my cousins and I were up late having bonfires in the patio, we use to joke, "*Vamonos a dormir. Ya casi se levanta mi abuelita para barrer el patio.*" (Let's go to sleep. Grandma is going to wake up any minute to come sweep the patio.) After finding her, we would head to the chicken coop to go look for eggs. She taught me to be careful of snakes—they liked to eat the eggs too. It was such an adventure collecting eggs and shrieking with excitement every time I found one. The chickens didn't even seem to mind it and I always thought, "How strange, at home, I always get my eggs from the refrigerator and not from a chicken coop." The first food I ever learned to cook was

scrambled eggs. One of the neighborhood kids taught me how to use a match to light the gas stove—I could hear my mom scolding me for using matches—and how to measure out the precise amount of vegetable oil into a frying pan. As a child, it always amazed me that nature could provide something so perfect and delicious as scrambled eggs from a chicken. The yolks from the fresh eggs were always such a bright orange in comparison to the pale yellow yolks from eggs out of the carton from Washington.

While my grandmother loved all of her grandchildren equally, my grandpa would make us work for his attention. It seemed that each day, a different grandchild was the favorite. I loved the moments I could have alone time with him. Sometimes we would go feed the chickens on the patio together and sometimes he would clean his dentures and I would just sit and watch him; not an opportunity was wasted. I constantly asked him if I was his favorite and he would reassure me that, “*Si, Cristy. Tu eres mi favorita.*” [Yes, Cristy. You are my favorite.] Yes, I was definitely his favorite, he would reassure me, and I remember feeling that nothing made me happier. I would have bragging rights for the day; then of course my cousins would claim that grandpa had told THEM that they were the favorite. It was a constant battle for affection- one that would continue on for years- and one that carried on until even after he passed away. My childhood was full of vivid colors, the pink, blue, and salmon-colored homes and even the bright orange egg yolks- but as time has passed, the memories have faded like the corner of a worn old photograph and the image seem a bit duller without my grandparents around (Adriana Sánchez unpublished manuscript (2015) (824 words) (First draft 2015)

The format for journal entries was such that the instructor—or an intern leading the journal for the day—selected a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt’s biography, then explained it and gave an interpretation for it in a journal entry. After reading the instructor’s journal, the students would then respond to a prompt in a journal entry of their own. This particular journal was from the following quote:

“By her own account, she had been an ‘ugly duckling’ whose mother told her, ‘You have no looks, so see to it that you have manners.’ Before she was ten, both of her unhappy parents were dead’ (Freedman 3).

Because Eleanor Roosevelt’s mother, Anna, gave Eleanor the message that she was not beautiful, Eleanor was told that she had to be a nice and polite girl. Eleanor wrote about not being a beautiful person (since she was called an ‘ugly duckling’) which

can be viewed in a positive manner since all ugly ducklings become beautiful swans. Perhaps that made Eleanor focus less on herself and more on helping others. Thanks to her contributions to the world, it was a good that that she was less concerned with looks and spent her time on helping individuals that truly needed it.

Students had five minutes to respond to the following journal prompt written by the instructor:

“What is considered the perfect woman in your country? Explain what she looks like and how she acts and what kind of lifestyle she has. Remember that we don’t know anything about your country. If possible, name a person you consider a perfect woman.”

English 112

Journal 2: Perfect Woman

In my country, a perfect woman is strong, oversees the household, and is the glue that holds her family together. There is a stereotype about Mexican men being the macho men who “wear the pants in the family,” but in reality is the woman of the house—or the mother of the man if he is single—who exerts their power over the men. I don’t mean power in a negative way. It is more as if they are a strong influence or a guiding force. Usually men do what they can to keep their wife or mother happy. This includes being responsible about work, taking care of the children, and being a protector and a provider. A woman is seen as the center of her family and is like a compass who helps directs others to a good path. She is the glue who unites family. Everyone in my culture values and respects women and especially those who are mothers. The biggest sin in our culture is to ever disrespect one’s mother, wife, grandmother or any other important female figure. Mexican women command respect by how they act, and how they carry themselves. (Word count 194)

First of all, this format for journaling, and the act of journaling daily, helps students become better writers. This format is easy to follow: a quote from the book, a sample journal entry for students to model, and a prompt for students to write a journal entry of their own. At the beginning of the quarter, students were required to write a

minimum of 100 words in five minutes, and as the quarter progressed, they needed to write as much as possible in the five minutes. All students showed improvement in the number of words they were able to write with every day that passed.

In English 112, while reading about the life of Eleanor Roosevelt, we found out that Eleanor always dreamed of being a teacher. Although she was wealthy and was expected to do what all socialites did and go to balls and spend money on lavish clothing, Eleanor did not care for material things and took great joy in helping others. Thanks to Ms. Souvestre who encouraged the girls, Eleanor found the support to do something more meaningful and found ways to volunteer in the community and help disadvantaged and marginalized groups of people such as women, blacks, and immigrants. Like Eleanor, I also believe that material possessions shouldn't matter as much as helping others and pursuing your dreams. Dreams are more meaningful when they fulfil your personal satisfactions and you can help others in the process.

English 112

Journal 3: My Fantasy

My greatest fantasy would be to become a travel writer or blogger. I would love to share my adventures with others and inspire them to travel. I especially want to help other minorities see that hard work and dedication will help overcome barriers and will take you to new places, literally. I have always felt that I was stuck on a path, but after a made the decision to apply to the master's program and withdraw from the School Psychology Ed.S program at EWU, I knew I was one step closer to achieving my ultimate dreams of travelling, writing, and teaching abroad. It was a hard decision, but once I was honest with myself about what I truly wanted to do and found the courage to change my career path, I finally felt as if I grew wings and really began to fly.

For this journal, students selected one of three quotes about orphans from either the Bible or the Quran to reflect about. Students copied the quote in their journals and

then explained the meaning and connected it to their own personal life and culture. Since the majority of the students in classroom were Saudi Muslims, it would be interesting to see how many of them chose a quote from the Quran instead of the Bible or how many selected a quote from the Bible and not the Quran. I chose the following quote and what follows is my journal response:

“Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.” Psalm 82:3

English 112

Journal 4: Orphans

I believe it is the natural tendency of most people to try to work to help others, especially those that are in need. In the Hispanic culture, like other cultures, vulnerable populations are especially deserving of care and help. We highly value our elders and care for them as if they are children who have been orphaned. Many families come together to give whatever they can as long as they can be helpful, even if the family does not have much to give. It is the intention that counts.

English 580

In English 580, we read *Middle of Everywhere: Helping Refugees Enter the American Community*, by Mary Pipher. Her book opens with her *I Am From* poem and so we did stylistic imitation, following the format and spirit of her poem. We wrote our “*I Am From*” poem in order to honor our ancestors, our heritage and all parts of who we are—both good and bad—in order to have a voice. From the free-write in class to the final edited copy, I found that writing this poem was very empowering and liberating. I found myself opening up about my life and sharing details such as about my alcoholic grandfather. Naming things about your life is the best way to honor them and by

claiming them, you use them to give yourself authority and ownership instead of giving someone power over you. In *Soliday* (1994), she discusses how writers have narrative agency to construct their stories and give them meaning through an interpretation of them.

English 580

“I Am From” Poem



I am from Everardo and Carmen, Federico and Bibiana,
Joaquin and Ana.

From the hot arid Sierra Madre of Michoacán and the
Evergreens and fruit orchards of the Wenatchee Valley.

From the cold glittery currents of the Columbia River
And the sparkling blue waves of Lake Chelan.

I am from pinto beans, tortillas, tamales and fiery *salsa*
de molcajete eaters.

I am from resilience, overcoming struggles, humor and love.

From tilling the red San Isidro soil under the hot Mexico sun, to
Brazeros of the 1960's working in Washington fruit orchards
And packing sheds.

I'm from “*Queremos que tengan una mejor vida que nosotros,*” “*Si Dios quiere,*”
“*Portate bien.*”

I'm from first-generation college students, a bilingual home, *Espanol e Ingles*

también, a Rosary praying grandmother and a grandfather who worshipped alcohol until it killed him.

Field workers, migrant workers, daycare providers, agricultural workers.

I'm from *fútbol* on Sundays, '85 Jimmy Blazer and *novelas*

Asia University America Program Internship

During my second internship, AUAP during winter quarter of 2015, I worked with Mary Parker, a professor for AUAP. Before this internship, I had minimal experience working English language learning Japanese students. I was very interested in working with them because I knew so little about their culture. Working with the students was important for me so I could have some background and experience working Japanese students in case I go teach English in Japan. During the internship, I worked with both level one and level two students. Level two students were in a class called Functions and level one students were in American History.

Journal 5: Week 4

This week there was a mix-up when two students were supposed to be each doing a front and back worksheet each but they were both on the front page and didn't know where everyone else was getting the information (from the back). As soon as I cleared up this misunderstanding they were fine but even in a small classroom such as these, it is hard to make sure everyone is following along.

Journal 6: Week 6

The students are excited for Halloween and they have been talking about going trick-or-treating and dressing up. I have finally discovered why students fall asleep in class so much. Mary gave a few strikes in her afternoon American Studies class today. I feel like I'm too nice because I wouldn't have the heart to give the students strikes either. I find it very interesting and most revealing about why students fall asleep in class. In the United States, this is super frowned upon, but in Japan, it is okay and even acceptable for students to doze off in their university classes because they have succeeded in high school and now that they are in a university, they can relax a bit. In several classes, I have noticed that students get to hear different accents. The two I have heard are an English accent and a New Yorker/Boston accent. I noticed they had a little bit of trouble

and can only imagine how confusing it must be. The way I explained it to them is that they are all saying the same exact thing, but it would sound a bit different, just like I imagine that people in different regions—the north, east, west, and south—of Japan speak a bit differently as well.

There are so many things that Americans are not aware of about other cultures, including how their education system works. For example, I had no idea that high school in Japan is much more rigorous and strict than the university level. Several students explained to me that from their experience working with Japanese students, they were told by Japanese students that it was okay to take small naps in class during university. But it was not okay to do something like this during high school when you had to be working really hard in order to get good grades and be accepted into a good university.

Journal 8: Week 7

Since reading *The App Generation* by Gardner and Davis in a Psycholinguistics course, I've been paying more attention to the way that students use technology, and whether it benefits them or if they are too dependent on it (2014). In class, students take advantage of technology available within the classroom in a way that benefits them. First of all, every student gets to use an iPad which helps them do homework, study and take notes. They also use it in Mary's Functions class to vote for which restaurant they wanted to go eat to- they chose the Spaghetti Factory. It reminded me of Who Wants to be a Millionaire, a talk show where the audience gets to help the contestant select the correct answer. This is also the first time where cellphone use is encouraged. When Mary and Janine assign homework, every student pulls out their cellphone and starts snapping pictures of the whiteboard. The first time I saw a student pull out a cell phone and take pictures, I thought they were taking pictures of someone and I was wondering whether I should scold them. Then I realized that it was a picture of the board, and I saw the other students pull out their phones. Mary sometimes will smile and give them the peace sign. Other than that though, the students seem to be App Enabled because they use their cell phones and their iPads responsibly.

Week 8 Journal

I have noticed that Janine and Mary work with some of the same students but they have different approaches. Janine prefers small group work while Mary likes partner work and lots of class activities. I like the variety in activities in the classes because with all of the moving around and singing to number off into pairs, the students seem quite alert. My favorite thing about Janine is that she talks to each and every student and takes the time to connect with them. Mary does as well. I think that I want to take something

away from each of their teaching styles and adopt it as my own. I am definitely going to incorporate music into my future classes. The students love it and they are more engaged.

Journal 9: Week 10

Final Reflection

When I first started volunteering, I didn't know what to expect. I dressed up as if I were going to give a presentation, and I nervously showed up to my first class, Functions, with Mary. She had me introduce myself to the students and share three things about myself: My name, what I'm studying, and a random fact. The students were fascinated and I noticed that the girls were a bit more reserved with me at first than the boys were. The boys were always so sweet and welcoming right away.

I hope that I am able to work with Mary again next quarter. Dr. Reeves did a great job matching me up with her. Mary and I have so much in common, and I think we have a similar personality. She is very sweet with the students and likes to incorporate different methods of teaching into the classroom. It made me so happy to see her. She was always early to class and did everything to engage with the students. She even posed with students when they would take photos of the whiteboard for class assignments. She isn't afraid to joke around with them to build a good repertoire, and she was never mean or angry. She didn't need to be because the students were so well behaved, but there were times when any person might have thrown her hands up in frustration, but she never did that. That is a necessary and admirable disposition in a teacher.

The most important thing I learned from my first quarter is cultural information about a lovely group of students that I may be working with in the future. First of all, Japanese people are a bit more reserved, at least until they get to know you better. Second of all, students don't mean any disrespect if they fall asleep. It simply happens when they have had a long day and they need a little rest; their work gets done regardless. Last of all, and this was the most surprising, is that Japanese students stick together so much and sometimes this can have negative consequences. One of the reasons I wanted to meet with students after class was to help them get out of their comfort zones and also to help them make friends outside of their AUAP circle of friends. Mary told me about a particular student who became friends with the Hawaii club at Eastern and things did not go so well for him after that. His AUAP friends started ignoring him here in Cheney, and it continued long after they had moved back to Japan. I think the issue was that he went alone as opposed to going as a group. In a collectivistic culture like in Japan, it is important to take this into consideration. I would encourage the students to hang out with non-Japanese friends as often as possible.

Next quarter, I am so anxious to pick up where I left off with the students. I can see that they have been improving a lot and I only hope that they will continue to blossom with my help. Some friends and I are starting a Talking Time group with the Japanese students from class. We want them to branch out a little and just have to relax

and watch movies and listen to music in English. We feel that if we help them make connections with other EWU students outside of AUAP that they will have more opportunities to practice their English. I hope to be able to have teaching opportunities. I have to admit that I was a bit scared and I feel like it is such a huge responsibility. The thing that made me feel that way was seeing the students assess how many hours of homework they would need to increase their scores in the TOEIC class and knowing that just because we have fun in class, that it is something that shouldn't be taken lightly. I am really thankful for the opportunity to have gotten to know these amazing students and I hope that it is not the last.

“De Colores”

During one lesson, I taught, “De Colores,” a song about hope in peace, which originated in Spain but is now well-known as a traditional Mexican folk-song. I chose to teach this song because it has two very significant cultural and historical meanings. “De Colores” was originally used in the Catholic Church in the United States during the 1950’s “*Cursillo* movements” (Catholic Church weekend retreats meant to strengthen the Catholic faith). In the 1960’s and 1970’s, it was adopted and used during farmworker movements (UC San Diego Libraries, 2012).

De colores, de colores se visten los campos en la
primavera
De colores, de colores son los pajarillos que vienen de
afuera
De colores, de colores es el arco iris que vemos lucir
Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos
colores me gustan a mi
Y por eso los grandes
amores de muchos colores me gustan a mi
(UC San Diego Libraries, 2012).

This song is meaningful for me because it is culturally and historically rich and a part of my immigrant and Catholic identities. My maternal *abuelita* (grandmother) worked in the lettuce, onion, jalapeno, and tomato fields in California in 1992. *Era bien dificil trabajar en la calor todo el dia. Todo el dia agachandome, caminando,*

sudando...Y nos sentabamos en la suelo cuando podiamos para sacudirle la tierra a las cebollitas. Pasaba un avion para fumigar los campos con quimicos, y la gente trabajaba lejos, pero nos llegaba el olor de todos modos. Eso es malo, y puede pegar cancer. (It was really difficult working in the heat all day. All day bent over, walking and sweating. Y we sat on the ground whenever we could to shake the dirt off of the little onions. A small plane would pass by to fumigate the fields with chemicals, and the people were working far away, but we could smell the chemicals anyway. That's bad, and you can get cancer from that.) Conditions like this are precisely why Cesar Chávez, the leader of the National Farmworkers Association, and other influential leaders like him, fought to improve working conditions for farmworkers like my *abuelita* (United Farmworkers, 2016).

Los campos/el campo (M)



Figure 28... I taught the class vocabulary about "De Colores"

English 580

Travelogue

This travelogue is written based on actual events that occurred in December of 2015 during a trip through the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Italy with my younger sister, Ruby. During winter quarter of 2015 in English 580, I wrote a travelogue about my experience. It was a special trip because Ruby and I have never really had a chance to travel together as adults since she left home to attend Western Washington University immediately after she graduated from high school. Since I started attending Eastern five years ago, we have literally been on opposite sides of the state. This trip helped us bond over our mutual love of exploring new cultures and languages, trying new food and making friends from all over the world. Throughout the journey, we discovered that we are more alike than we realized; we even got to the point where we would finish each other's sentences and began to laugh and say things in perfect unison. Traveling ultimately brought us closer and created a special connection between us because of our shared lived experiences.

The purpose of this story, told in the form of a travelogue, is to share the importance of family bonds and talk about how traveling opens your eyes to a whole world of possibilities. As we found many times on our trip, getting lost is the best way to find yourself again, and doing so while exploring a new corner of the world with your sister is the best way to do it.

This book is adaptable to teaching students of all ages the importance of journaling- to create a autobiography—to allow space—to give students a voice, to

inspire others to travel, to learn about geography, learn about other cultures, and also about valuing bonds with your loved ones. There is no better way to learn about the world than to go out and explore it. The letters about people in the story are about our adventures in Europe and the friends we made along the way. I obtained permission from my sister and friends to share our stories and our adventures as well as pictures about our time together. The letters in this travelogue are all written by me to my family.

The travelogue letters are organized in chapters by each city we visited. The first letter is from Chapter 1: London; the second letter is from Chapter 2: Paris; the third letter is from Chapter 3: Bar(th)elona; the fourth letter is from Chapter 4: Rome and Firenze. Each letter is intended not only to share our experience and funny anecdotes but also to check in with our family back home and to reassure them of our well-being. Although both of us are adults and have lived on our own away from home, we still tell our parents about our whereabouts.

Travelogue Letters

Chapter 1: London

Hola a todos! (Hello, everyone!)

We are in London having a great time! We've had an amazing first Couchsurfing experience with our hosts, Constantinos and Josef. Their flat is absolutely gorgeous and you can see Big Ben, the Shard and all of London from their giant floor-to-ceiling windows. Ruby and I have walked all over the city and saw the London Eye at Hyde Park, and we also went to Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ at King's Cross Station. Neither of us got our letter for Hogwarts when we turned 11, but we got to run across the platform anyway-magical! We are thrilled to have found Tesco- luckily- because the exchange rate for pounds is crazy. Our first day here, we accidently ordered eighty pounds worth of Indian food- oops!! That was the most delicious \$160 USD tikka masala!! There was a MINOR incident on the Tube when I didn't "mind the gap" & almost got caught in the doors. More on that later. Love you all! Our next stop is Paris. Love, Adriana

Chapter 2: Paris

Bonjour, famille!

(That's French for hello family!!) Our Couchsurfing hosts in Paris are lovely. Their names are Nico and Celia and they have a fluffy cat named William, which Ruby decided to name Fluffy William! We found out that they decided to invite Couchsurfers into their home after they decided to try Couchsurfing themselves in Mexico. They initially planned to stay with their hosts for one week, but they loved it so much that they decided to extend their vacation with them, and to this day, they are still great friends with their hosts. In addition to speaking English, they are also learning *Español!*

I forgot to mention how lovely the weather here in Europe has been! We were prepared for a cold winter—and everyone said it would be the worst time to travel here—but we've been pleasantly surprised. We got to see the Eiffel Tower, and the Champs-Élysées, and we went to the Louvre. If I don't come back to Washington, you can blame it on the *croissant aux amonnds* (almond croissants) here!! How have I lived 29 years of my life without having tried them before?

It's 3AM here now and Celia and Nico just went to bed. Ruby and I have 3 hours until our Uber arrives to take us to Charles De Gaulle airport. We are too excited to sleep because we've been discussing last night's events. Ruby and I met Nico and Celia for dinner near Sacré-Cœur and we had a feast of escargot, foie gras and some delicious French wine. Montmartre is the highest point in Paris- it was quite a climb on a full tummy but the view of the city was absolutely worth it. We are so sad to be leaving our friends, Celia and Nico, and we hope that our paths cross again someday and that we can stay in touch with them forever.

Chapter 3: Bar(th)elona

Hola, familia,

We are in the *Madre Patria*, the Motherland! My first hostel experience at the Hipstel has been nothing short of perfect. When we first walked in to the lobby to check in, they were playing Shakira! We grew up listening to music and now here we are, en *España* listening to her music. It is so beautiful being in a country where Spanish is the first language, and it makes me feel nostalgia about home and Mexico.

We are in a mixed-gender room with five bunk beds and our roommates are all from different states around Mexico who are backpacking together through Europe. They're teaching me fun idioms in Spanish! We have gone on two walking tours around Barcelona- the Gaudi tour and the Barrio Gotico tour. We have only taken the Tube a handful of times because we can walk everywhere. Luckily, our hostel is only a five-minute walk away from Passeig de Gracia, the most expensive avenue in all of Spain! Ruby and I have made friends from all over the world and we had Christmas dinner with them here at The Hipstel. There was even homemade sangria! Estoy muy feliz aqui in Barcelona! (I've very happy here in Barcelona!)

Chapter 4: Rome and Firenze

Buongiorno, familia!

Ruby and I travelled to Rome with our friend Jazmin, who we met at The Hipstel in Barcelona. Together with a group of other Mexican girls from the hostel in Barcelona who are also here, we did a whirlwind two-day walking tour of Rome. Ruby has already even ripped two pairs of boots so you could say we've been walking a lot!! We have seen the Colosseum, the *Fontana di Trevi*, and we went to the Vatican to see the Pope.

Buying souvenirs, we ran into our cousin Selene at a gift shop. It really is a small world, or the Sánchez family is just THAT big. We spent my 30th birthday and rang New Year's Eve in on the Spanish Steps! After New Year's, we took the train to Firenze (Florence) and spent two days and a night exploring. We have discovered why they call it EATaly. Forget souvenirs, I want to fill my suitcase with pasta al forno. *Ciao, familia* (Goodbye, family)!

Chapter 4:

Discussion and Reflection

Research Questions

Through a retrospective analysis of 42 artifacts and autoethnography, my goal was to explore the following questions. Although it will be difficult to remain objective due to the “messy” (Trahar, 2009) nature of autoethnography as a research method, I will try to answer my questions here.

1. What traits do immigrants’ children have that contribute to their academic success?

Immigrants’ children have many traits that they learn from their parents. We learn to be resilient because we don’t want to complain to our parents when they are already burdened by so much. Children learn to adapt quickly when they move to a new school—or to multiple schools in the case of children whose parents migrate around the country. Because migrant children see the struggles their parents face due to language and cultural barriers, they are more sensitive to the struggles of others and are more compassionate towards them. For example, my parents speak with an accent, and therefore I always make an effort to understand speakers of others languages when they speak with an accent.

2. What environments foster a strong sense of identity in bilingual and bicultural children?

The best environment for fostering a strong sense of identity in bilingual and bicultural children is one in which bicultural children are encouraged to express

themselves in both languages. In order for the child to have a health view of himself or herself, is important that parents love and value the L1 and the L2 as well as both their own culture and that of the TL. This way, children do not feel that they have to “forget” their L1 in order to learn the L2. Children should maintain their native tongue by speaking with their parents, engaging in the community and engaging in higher level thinking and reading in their L1.

3. What attitudes and behaviors did my parents demonstrate that laid a foundation for my academic success?

My parents taught me to become self-sufficient and to work hard. While they did what they could for us, we learned that our parents could only help us so much and that if we wanted more, we had to work for it on our own. As my father told me many times, he and my mother provided the basics for us—food on the table, clothing and a roof over our head—but if I wanted something more, I would have to go for it on my own. Although they were very supportive and encouraging, they had limited resources and they could only do so much to help me navigate high school and to enroll in college because of their low levels of education. My parents always told me, “*Nosotros vinimos aqui para que ustedes tuvieran mejores oportunidades que nosotros tuvimos. Estudien, y sean alguien importante.* (We came here so that you all could have better opportunities than we had. Study, and be someone important.)

4. As someone who struggled in high school, how did succeeding academically at the university level help me become a more confident individual?

The motto for EWU is to expand opportunities for personal transformation through excellence in learning. I agree with the statement that an excellent education leads to personal transformation. I am not the same person who started school five years ago at EWU. I was someone who expressed very little interest in attending college, and now I find myself completing a master's degree. Thanks to doing well in school, I am confident in my ability to do anything else—like move overseas and teach.

5. How did I get from Point A to Point B?

I could not have gotten to where I am by myself. I credit my success to my parents' hard work which inspired me to work hard too; my sisters' achievements which made me want to make something of myself; to my grandparents who have loved me and always believed in me no matter what; and to the professionals and educators I met along the way who believed in me and helped throughout my undergraduate and graduate career. Just like I was raised in San Isidro, Michoacán, in a community setting, I was also nurtured by a multitude of people.

Assumptions

In all ethnographic research, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), our international professional organization, requires us to disclose our assumptions, biases, and backgrounds. To that end, I want to explain that I made the following assumptions as I began this reflection project:

Assumption 1. Children of immigrants should work harder than others so that their parents' efforts are not in vain.

As children of immigrants, I believe that we do have to work harder than others so that our parents' work is not in vain. Our parents have worked twice as hard as non-immigrant parents so that we have the same opportunities as other children. I feel that I have no choice but to work twice as hard as other students too so that my parents can see the value of their hard work come to fruition.

Assumption 2. I learned to work hard by watching my parents work in hard in the agricultural industry and by working in the industry myself.

I believe that parents instill a desire for their children to work hard when they lead by example. Seeing the sacrifices they made encouraged me to always do what I can. Since I was a little girl, I remember my parents always worked really hard. When my mother was pregnant, she worked long and physically demanding hours in packing sheds—even when she was pregnant. On one occasion she worked up until three days before she gave birth. Work in the packing sheds is physically exhausting and requires that you stand all day to sort apples and pears and pack up to 200 boxes of them every day.

During this season, workers are paid per box, so they have to work as fast as they can all day. Even on particularly rough days when she lamented that she worked so hard she felt feverish, she was always cheerful. After coming home tired and with swollen, aching wrists, she still made dinner for the family and made sure my sisters and me did our homework. When my youngest sister was born, my mom took time off from working in the packing sheds. She didn't just stay home; she obtained her daycare license so she could stay home with my sister.

My dad believes that hard work is the key to getting what you want. He always tells me, “*El trabajo aleja el vicio, la fastidia, y la miseria.*” (Work keeps addictions, boredom and poverty away.) He firmly abides by what he says and it shows. Over the years, my dad has acquired marks on his shins from where the rungs of the ladders have rubbed on them. They are a visible reminder that working in the orchards is a difficult and physically demanding job that takes a strong workers’ ethic to do well in. Because orchardists can lose a lot of money if something goes wrong during harvest, workers have no room for error. They have to be quick and efficient as they work. Since there is a strict timeline to get work done, workers have to be dependable and must be at work regardless of the weather conditions—hot summers or cold winters.

Even on days when he isn’t working, my dad wakes up before 8A.M. and finds something around the house or the garden that needs to be tended to. He can’t relax, knowing there is something that needs to be done; he likes staying busy. My dad rarely takes sick days, and he has only taken two personal leaves of absence—both times were to attend funeral services in Mexico for my grandmother and grandfather. Since I know my dad—and neither—could miss work for just any reason, I always felt very appreciative—and a bit guilty as well—when they would attend parent-teacher conferences or school events during the day.

The first time I got a taste for what agricultural work was like, I was in middle school. My father took my sister and I to work with him for a few days in the orchard. We woke up early, around 4A.M., and my sister and I napped on the drive to a nearby town where we would be working. What started out as a new adventure for us quickly

turned into difficult and tiring work—and we were not good at it. My father expertly moved the ladder around tree after tree to pick cherries while he left the cherries on the bottom branches for my sister and me. My dad constantly had to circle back to find us to check our work, and he scolded us for cutting off leaves along with the cherry stems.

Tienen que hacer el trabajo bien, ninas. No nos van a pagar por esto. (You have to do a good job, girls. They aren't going to pay us for this.) As the day got hotter, sweat dripped down my face into my eyes, and the chemicals and pesticides from the trees irritated my eyes. Lunch was a quiet affair; we weren't giggling anymore. We all sat quietly with our thermoses and ate our *burritos de frijoles* (bean burritos)—the perfect portable food that didn't need to be heated up. The days I worked in the orchard humbled me and gave me a newfound respect for my father. I never went back to the orchards, but I did work during the cherry harvest as soon as I was old enough.

Between the ages of sixteen and twenty-seven, I worked cherries for five summers. The first two summers, I worked nightshifts and had to get rides to work from my mom's friends because I wasn't old enough to drive yet. Our day generally started at four in the afternoon and ended anywhere from two to three in the morning when the cherries were all packed; we never exactly what time we would be done for the day. Even though packing sheds are cold, I learned to dress in layers so that I could peel off my jacket and sweater as the hours went by. Most of the time, I worked so hard that I ended up working in a t-shirt or tank top, while other ladies who stood all day and sorted fruit were bundled up in gloves, sweaters and jackets to stay warm. For the first time, I understood what it was like to be on my feet for long periods at a time and to be so tired

when I got off work that my body entire body hurt and felt sore. When I went home after work, my family was sleeping, and most of the time, I was too tired to do anything so I just went to sleep too.

During those summer months, I didn't see my family much, and I didn't have any free time. I would wake up to an empty house—my dad started his day in the orchard at five in the morning to avoid the heat in the afternoon and everyone else started at the packing sheds by six or seven in the morning—and when I left to work, everyone was still working or just coming home. For my family and me, summer vacation has always meant long hours working cherries Monday through Sunday. Cherry season dictates family events outside of work too. Because people are tired and sleep-deprived throughout the whole season, *quinceañeras* (sweet fifteen) and *bodas* (weddings) are held in May before cherries or in early to mid-August after the cherry harvest is over. After experience cherry season—the most hectic harvest time of all—it is amazing to see my parents work so hard and still find the time and energy to go to family and school events during this time and throughout the year.

Assumption 3. Reflection is a valuable way to learn about oneself and one's heritage.

This thesis brought up many questions for me about subjects that I had never thought about. It also made me question ideas that I thought I knew the answer to. I thought I had appreciated my parents' struggle to come to the U.S. and adjust to a new way of life, but the more I learned, the deeper my appreciation has grown. I am truly blessed to look back and see that if it weren't for my parents, I would not be where I am

today. I have made so many connections about my life to the lives of influential leaders such as Gloria Anzaldúa who felt that she was constantly crossing borders.

Assumption 4. Education is a privilege that not everyone has in the world.

We are definitely privileged to have free education in the United States, which is something that others do not have. My own grandparents and parents have limited education. According to the “immigrant advantage,” (Kau & Tienda, 2009) both aspects have come true: First, I have surpassed my parents in education level. Secondly, I have completed my bachelor’s and will also complete my master’s degree, which not many of my friends—Mexican American friends—from high school have done. Among my Mexican American friends, there are some who have completed technical degrees to work in the automotive industry while others graduated from high school and entered the work force or got married and settled down. I do know of one Mexican American classmate that is now working as a pharmacist, but other than that, I think higher education, even among those friends who were born here, is not as common. I don’t believe that everyone necessarily needs a degree in order to be accomplished. There is more than one way to be successful, but I do think the goal is to always strive for better and never settle for less.

Assumption 5. The more aware of their ethnic and linguistic roots people become, the more likely they are to be academically successful.

The more aware of their ethnic and linguistic roots people become, the more likely they are to be academically successful. After the age of three, I grew up speaking both English and Spanish. My speech communities were divided into home, school,

community and friends. At home and within my community, I spoke primarily Spanish. At school and with my friends, I spoke primarily English.

There was a diglossia even within my home. I'm thankful that I had both languages modeled for me since an early age. Since birth in Mexico, my parents, grandparents, godparents and extended family members and friends spoke Spanish to me. Since my older sister, Alma, began attending kindergarten in the U.S., she spoke English to me. Speaking both languages at home has been an excellent way to foster balanced bilingualism, and in doing so, two things happened. One, I retained Spanish while learning English. And two, I was able to honor my father's wish that we never forget our Spanish. Because a pattern of speaking habits started forming at a young age, it has always felt more natural to use English with my siblings and Spanish with my parents.

Assumption 6. Telling family stories is important to future generations in order to retain rich historical background information.

Without stories from my family about my life, I wouldn't be able to reflect back to my childhood. Without knowing about my childhood and my family's move to the United States, my work would be incomplete and I couldn't fully appreciate how far I've come, and who I am today. Stories I have heard while growing up have filled in gaps about my childhood and they have helped connect me to a country that I have left behind.

Assumption 7. I experienced anomie reduction as I began to succeed academically at the university level.

I was motivated when I started to identify with other successful students. When I saw that I fit in and that I was being praised for my hard work, it was very affirming for

me, and it encouraged me to keep working. School was finally enjoyable and it made me want to pursue it further. Being on the dean's list every quarter of my two years of undergraduate studies gave me the confidence to apply for graduate school too. Within the safe environment of Eastern, I was able to confidently work towards completing the master's degree.

Reflection

One of the most important things that being a Mexican immigrant student has taught me is to reserve judgement about others as much as possible. We live in a society where sometimes, we are quick to make assumptions or generalizations about others—even within our own ethnicity or religion. However, we can't know what someone else is going through, so it is unfair to make assumptions about them without knowing what is really happening. We don't know others' intentions or their home situation. After being in a position where assumptions and misperceptions have influenced how others view me—as a Mexican immigrant—I have learned that it is always better to reserve judgement and be more empathetic of others.

One big misperception about Mexican immigrant parents that I wish more educators could understand is that Mexican immigrant parents work really hard to be involved in school. Parents do everything they can to help their children, but most of the work they do goes unnoticed. Teachers often aren't aware of the extraordinary “invisible” work that goes on behind the scenes to prepare children for school. If more educators were aware of this fact, along with the barriers and challenges I have discussed, they would see that parents are as involved as they can be.

Like every blue collar family, growing up, my parents were always busy with work. They often couldn't attend parent-teacher meetings or events at school unless they were held later in the evening. They were afraid to miss work, and they didn't want to take any chance of losing their income to be able to provide for their family. My mentor, Dr. Reeves, told me that the same thing happened in her family. Her mother worked nightshifts in a factory, and her father stayed at home to take care of an elderly relative. Her mother attended school functions in her uniform during a lunch break, and then often left right away to get back to work.

My mentor, Dr. Reeves, has often talked to me about the shame she felt about living in poverty, and the deep appreciation she has for her hardworking parents. She recalls:

I was born poor, rural, and female. We had no running water, no bathroom, no heat upstairs. We burned coal when we had money and corn cobs when we didn't. We went to a one-room school with my big sister and little brother.

(Reeves, 1997).

The shame is replaced with other feelings—appreciation, gratitude, empathy. Agency (Soliday, 1994), which gives us power over the choices we make, allows us to take ownership of who we are. Dr. Reeves is an inspiration and a role model for me, and when I read about her story and hear about her life, I think, “If she can do it, I can do it.”

Throughout my story, I reflected constantly, and, through my constant reflection, I discovered that we are the authors of our destiny. We have the self-determination to change our outlook on our story and to change who we are. What we were yesterday

isn't what we have to be tomorrow. This is powerful because others can learn from how we overcame our struggles and how we have allowed them to transform—rather than destroy—us. Soliday (1994) says that part of success comes from convincing yourself that despite the odds that were against you, you somehow did okay. It is good to always have our stories and to reflect back on them because those give you the power to say, “I know who I am, and although I struggled in the past, I am fine now.”

Accepting myself, the foundation that my life was built on, and acknowledging my parents' hard work, has helped me become who I am. Telling my story about a little girl in blue who came to the orchard country of Washington and somehow did okay and is now finishing a master's degree, is an important way to honor my parents, and validate our lived experiences. Now, I find myself worrying about other children with my background who might be struggling with finishing high school or enrolling in college. I hope that those who are struggling to find their identity in the midst of being part of two different cultures are able to do so without losing any parts of who they are. And most of all, I want future generations to see that it IS possible to succeed.

While some credit Mexican immigrants' success to the “immigrant advantage” (Kau & Tienda, 2009), “hopes and dreams” are not the only explanation for the phenomenon. If you look at the low levels of education that immigrant parents—and especially Mexican immigrants—have, it is reasonable to expect that their children will surpass them. It is part of the reason why parents sacrifice everything they have—so that their children will have more opportunities than they did. I believe this is a big part of what motivates students and fills them with hopes and dreams, because they want to

make their parents' sacrifices worthwhile. Foreign born-children may be outperforming native-born children because the latter group may be detached from their parents struggle and far-removed from the immigration ordeal that brought their parents and any foreign-born siblings here. Experiencing—or witnessing—the struggle firsthand can serve as a powerful motivator. I think that hard work, sacrifice, a tight-knit community, great role models in school and the community, and strong parents who inspire their children to hope and dream, are the keys to success.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Summary of the Findings

Some people consider autoethnography to be “messy” as a qualitative research method. As you write, you don’t know you have to make difficult decisions about what to disclose. You have to decide what to tell and what to omit. And in telling other peoples’ stories and sharing their voices, you have to be sensitive to only share what they allow you to share. One limitation to this study is that we only tell the parts that we can tell, and some readers may perceive this method to be restrictive. We can’t share every detail of our story, so we have to decide what is most important. By default, something has to be omitted. And what is most important to the autoethnographer may not be as important to readers.

Another limitation of this research method is the ethical complexity of the research method itself. Because you are talking about events that began over 20 years ago, you cannot tell the whole story. At some point you have to stop. There is some self-censorship, whether we are aware of it or not. Censorship itself is not necessarily a limitation, but it is an ethical issue. I chose to share that which I thought was very important to others, but there may have been some parts that I decided were too private or that would reflect badly on others so I had to leave them out. For example, I had a bad experience with a school counselor, but rather than share any identifying information, I focused on what it meant to me during such a pivotal time in my life and how it shaped who I am.

Before coming to the United States, everyone dreams about *El Norte*, the land of freedom and *oportunidades* (opportunities). It is the land of freedom and opportunities, and work—especially agricultural work—is plentiful here, but you must adapt to working long, difficult hours. Moving to another country challenges you in unexpected physical and mental ways. And you must be prepared to study hard and make education a priority in order to do well in school. Although immigrants must work harder than non-immigrants in order to enjoy the freedom and opportunities found in the United States, it will always be worth it.

Contrary to the belief that immigrants have no stability and are constantly moving around, many families, like mine, find—and prefer—geographic stability. My parents are just one out of many examples of immigrant families who have found both residential and job stability. Our family has remained in the same area since arriving to the United States 27 years ago, and my father, committed to his work and a loyal employee, has worked at David Nierman Pear Orchards since he was 17—a totally of 39 years. Not many people can say they have worked at the same job for almost forty years. Now that David Nierman and his wife, Doris, have retired, they have left their orchard in the care of their daughter and son-in-law. My father learned the procedures and day-to-day operations about the orchard from Mr. Nierman, and is now helping his daughter and son-in-law run the orchard and helps hire workers every season.

When I look back at how far I have come, I am reminded that it all started with my parents' desire to give their family a chance at a better life. They have done all of the hard work to get me here, which has allowed me to stand on their shoulders. I have stood

on their hard work, their struggles, and their suffering, and they have held me up through it all. Although my mother and father only completed a few years of elementary, I am completing my master's and hoping to get my Ph.D. someday. Looking at how many levels of education I have achieved, I can't help feeling as if we have skipped an entire generation. I am astounded and grateful that my parents have adapted to the changes so quickly.

Out of respect for my parents, I have tried to follow their wishes for me—grow up in the Catholic Church, never forget my Spanish, become educated, stay close to the family, and learn the family history—as I follow my own dreams. They have accepted that my first priority is education, which is different than my mother's dream to start a family and my father's aspiration to be able to support the family. Because they've never pressure me to live a life that they lived and have always encouraged me to do my best, I have had the luxury of finishing school—without any pressure to quit and start working to help the family, or to start a family of my own. This is one of the greatest examples of “invisible support” that my parents have displayed. While we have found a way to maintain many aspects of our culture—food, holidays, Catholic Church ceremonies, and family ties to the community—we also love living in the United States and are happy to call this great country home.

Perhaps Gloria Anzaldúa, a feminist compositionist, might agree with the popular sentiment, “*no soy ni de aqui ni de aya.*” And at times, when I feel torn by being part of two different cultures and speaking two different languages, I might agree with her too. But being two generations younger than her, I feel like I can say “*Somos de aqui y*

tambien somos de aya.” “We are from here and we are from there.” I feel as if I am easily able to cross linguistic and cultural borders. I am comfortable claiming my heritage—both heritages.

Implications for Teaching

We must learn as much as we can about cultural values, societal and community ties, and how learning outside of the classroom occurs in order to “improve the learning environment for students and create a more positive learning experience, resulting in higher achievement and success” (Zugel, 2012 p. 3). Teachers would benefit from finding ways to be more sensitive to working with students from diverse cultures. One of the most important things they must keep in mind is that parents provide “invisible” and behind-the-scenes support for their children. Because teachers aren’t aware of what parents do—helping their children get to school, making sure homework is completed, encouraging children to be respectful to their teachers—they are often under the impression that parents aren’t interested in their children’s education. By strengthening relationships among immigrant students, families, and educators, everyone can work to achieve the same goal—educating every child.

Recommendations for Future Research

Though my analysis of my artifacts and my writing identified an array of themes—anomy (Okabe, 2008), agency (Soliday, 1994), Mexican culture, community, tradition, family, motivation and self-confidence—future researchers might analyze other aspects of Mexican immigrants such as 1) the correlation between attrition of the L1 and

academic success; 2) the experience of Mexican immigrants when they first start attending school in the United States after the age of thirteen—which was a predictor for lower success rates and achievement (Baum & Flores, 2011); 3) young students' experience acquiring the TL when they first arrive to the U.S.; and 4) how to motivate young Mexican immigrants to enroll in four-year colleges and beyond. As Morales (2015) focused on the experiences of young childrens' learning with(in) orchards, I focused on my own experiences learning and attaining higher education., and autoethnographers should a look at the experiences of adult Mexican immigrants in the U.S. as they help their children navigate school.

References

- Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands: The New Mestiza=La Frontera*. 1st ed. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute. Print.
- Leiva, S. (2014). A double case study of Latino college presidents: what younger generations can learn from them" (2014). EWU Masters Thesis Collection. Paper 269.
- Baum, S., and Flores, S. (2011). Higher education and children in immigrant families. *Future of Children, 21(1)*, 171-193.
- Brock, C., Wallace, J., Herschbach, M., Johnson, C., Raikes, B., Warren, K., Nikoli, M. and Poulsen, H. (2006). 'Negotiating Displacement Spaces: Exploring Teachers' Stories about Learning and Diversity'. *Curriculum Enquiry 36(1)*, 35-62.
- Canagarajah, A. (2012). Teacher development in a global profession: an autoethnography. *TESOL Quarterly, 46(2)*, 258-279. doi:10.1002/tesq.18
- Chávez, M. (2012) Autoethnography, a Chicana's methodological research tool: the role of storytelling for those who have no choice but to do critical race theory. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 45(2)*, 334-348. DOI: 10.1080/10665684.2012.669196
- Corkery, C. (2005). Literacy narratives and confidence building in the writing classroom. *Journal of Basic Writing, 24(1)*, 48-67.
- Crane, T. (2012). Conceptualizing parent involvement: low-income Mexican immigrant perspectives. (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. UMI 3520125

- Ellis, R (1999). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Print.
- Freedman, R. (1997). *Eleanor Roosevelt: a life of discovery*. New York: HMH Books for Young Readers. Print.
- Garza, R. E., & Garza, J. (2010). Successful White female teachers of Mexican American students of low socioeconomic status. *Journal of Latinos & Education*. 9(3), 189-206.
- Lavine, A. (2011). Parents' and teachers' views about heritage languages at home and in school. (Master's Thesis), Eastern Washington University.
- Lee, S. (Sangho) (2012). "The communal diary, "... " (Naljeogi), transformative education, and writing through migrations: a Korean novice ESL teacher's diary and autoethnography. EWU Masters Thesis Collection. Paper 43.
- Manke, K. J. & Geoffrey L. Cohen (2011). More than inspiration: role models convey multiple and multifaceted messages. *Psychological Inquiry: An International Journal for the Advancement of Psychological Theory*, 22:4, 275-279. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2011.622254>
- Mills, J., Bonner, A. & Francis, K. (2006). Adopting a constructivist approach to grounded theory: implications for research design. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*. 12 (1), 8–13. Doi:10.1111/j.1440-172X.2006.00543.x
- Migration Policy Institute (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states>.
- Morales, I. (2015). Conocimiento y testimonio: an exploratory case study of Mexican American children of (im)migrants learning with(in) cherry orchards. (Doctoral Dissertation), 1-

194. Retrieved from
https://research.libraries.wsu.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/2376/5494/Morales_wsu_0251E_11371.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
- Naidu, T. (2014). Autoethnographic realisation of legitimacy of voice: A poetic trail of forming researcher identity. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 15(1). 1-19.
- Office of Financial Management, 2012. Retrieved from
<http://www.ofm.wa.gov/trends/population/fig307.asp> accessed 5/6/16
- Okabe, M. (2008). *ESL students report their experiences of anomie in journal writing: action, participant-observer research* (Unpublished thesis). Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA.
- Ortega, Lourdes. *Understanding second language acquisition*. London: Hodder Education, 2009. Print.
- Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/11/14/iv-reasons-for-not-naturalizing/>.
- Pipher, Mary. *The middle of everywhere: the world's refugees come to our town*. New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2002. Print.
- Preston, A. (2011). Using autoethnography to explore and critically reflect upon changing identity. *Adult Learner*, (0790-8040), 110-125.
- Reeves, L. (1997). Minimizing writing apprehension in the learner-centered classroom. *The National Council of Teachers of English*. October, 1997.

- Reeves, L. (2012). Deracination language learning, and auto-ethnography. *WAESOL World Quarterly*, 37(3), Summer 2012.
- Renning, L. (n.d.). Hermeneutics in Qualitative Research. *Educ 867 Web*. Retrieved from <http://www.sfu.ca/educ867/htm/hermenteutics.htm>.
- Rich, A. (1991). *An Atlas of the Difficult World*. Boston: Norton.
- Sokolik, M. (2014). Digital technology in language teaching. *Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language*, 4th ed. Heinle ELT.
- Soliday, M. (1994) Translating self and difference through literacy narratives. *College English*, 56(5), 511-526.
- Souto-Manning, M. (2006). A Latina Teacher's Journal: Reflections on Language, Culture, Literacy, and Discourse Practices. *Journal Of Latinos & Education*, 5(4), 293-304.
- TESOL <https://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish/journals/tesol-quarterly/tesol-quarterly-research-guidelines/qualitative-research-case-study-guidelines#sthash.XNO4tQYP.dpuf>.
- Trahar, S. (2009). Beyond the story itself: narrative inquire and autoethnography in intercultural research in higher education. *Qualitative Social Research socialforschung*. Volume 10(1) Art. 30.
- Trochim, W. (2006). Qualitative approaches. *Research Methods Knowledge Base*. Retrieved from: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qualapp.php>.
- UC San Diego Libraries, (2012). Song lyrics with translation. Retrieved from [https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/media/Scott/SONGLYRICSWITHTRANSLATIONS\(COMBINED\).pdf](https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/media/Scott/SONGLYRICSWITHTRANSLATIONS(COMBINED).pdf).

United Farmworkers, (2005). Veterans of historic Delano Grape Strike mark 40th anniversary with two-day reunion in Delano and La Paz. Retrieved from

http://www.ufw.org/_page.php?menu=research&inc=history/05.html.

US Citizenship and Immigration Services, (n.d). Special Agricultural Workers (SAW).

Retrieved from <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/glossary/special-agricultural-workers-saw>

United States Census Bureau (2015). Retrieved from

<http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p20-578.pdf>).

Vazquez, J., Rodriguez, C., and Somers, P. (2007). Immigrant DREAMs: English learners of the Texas 10% admissions Plan, and college academic success. *Journal of Latinos and Education, (10)2, 16-126*. DOI: 10.1080/15348431.2011.556521

Walker, J., Ice, C., Hoover-Dempsey, K and Sandler, H. (2011). Latino parents' motivations for involvement in their children's schooling: an exploratory study. *The Elementary School Journal, 111(3)*, Copyright The University of Chicago.

Weir, K. (2013). Feel like a fraud? *American Psychological Association*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2013/11/fraud.aspx>.

Zugel, K., (2012). Cultural challenges faced by Mexican immigrant students. University of Nevada: Reno.

Appendices

Appendix A

ARTICULOS

- The definite **article** always has to **match** the gender and number of its **noun**.
- Masculine or Feminine
- El= M, singular, los= M, plural
- La= F, singular, las= F, plural
- El arco iris, los polluelos, la gallina, los campos, el gallo, la primavera, los colores, los pajaritos, los grandes amores.
- Can you guess the general rule?

Appendix B

THE GENERAL RULE

- If a word ends in "o", it is usually masculine.
- If a word ends in "a", it is usually feminine.
- For all living things, the article would be the assigned gender
- Remember that the **article** has to match with the **gender and number**
- The male cat= el gato
- The female cat= _____
- The female dog= la perra
- The male dog= _____

Appendix C

	M/F	Singular Plural
El arco iris	M	singular
Los polluelos		
La gallina		
Los campos		
El gallo		
La primavera		
Los colores		
Los pajaritos		

Appendix D

- o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X55H81WzZD4>
- o Escucha la canción.
- o Escribe las palabras que hacen falta.
- o Ex) De _____, de _____

- o El arco iris, lucir, los polluelos, la gallina, los campos, el gallo, la primavera, colores, los pajaritos, los grandes amores.

Appendix E

Nombre:

De Colores by Joan Baez

Fecha: ___/___/___

el arco iris	los polluelos	la gallina
los campos	el gallo	la primavera
los colores	los pajaritos	los grandes amores

(Hint! Some words may be used more than once.)

De _____,
 De _____ se visten _____ en _____.
 De colores,
 De colores son _____ que vienen de afuera.
 De colores,
 De colores es _____ que vemos lucir
 Y por eso _____ de muchos colores
 Me gustan a mí. [Dos Veces]

Canta el _____,
 Canta el _____ con el quiri, quiri, quiri, quiri, qui,
 La _____,
 La _____ con el cara, cara, cara, cara, cara,
 Los _____,
 Los _____ con el pio, pio, pio, pio, pi.
 Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos colores
 Me gustan a mí. [Dos veces]

Eastern Washington University September-December 2015 Cheney, WA

Intern for Asia University America Program

- Conversation partner for students at different levels
- Facilitated group work with students in class
- Met with students outside of class to assist with homework

Eastern Washington University June-August 2015 Cheney, WA

Intern for English 112 Composition for Multilingual Students

- Conversation partner for students at different levels
- Helped students complete final projects for the class
- Worked with students from Saudi Arabia and Japan

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Spokane Regional ESL Conference, March 2016
 - *Claiming Chicana Identity for Academic Success*
 - Presenter: Adriana Sanchez
 - Mentor: Lavona Reeves, Ph.D., Professor of English; MATESL Program Director
- Tri-TESOL 2015, October 2015
 - *Auto-Ethnography: Expressing Mexican American Identities*
 - Presenters: Adriana Sanchez, Brenda Aguilar
 - Mentor: Lavona Reeves, Ph.D., Professor of English; MATESL Program Director

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- *Assistive Technology*
 - Helping administer CBM for reading and writing, 2012-2013

- *Debugging the Future: Quality of Life, Academic Success and Student Acceptability of Assistive Technology*
 - Presented in the EWU Student Symposium, May 2013
 - Presenters: Brooke Flodin, Adriana Sanchez, Anna Klingensmith, Curtis Bennett, Marissa Bronowski.
 - Mentor: Susan Ruby, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Psychology
 - Eastern Washington University

- *Perceptions of Interracial Dating in College Students*
 - Presented in the EWU Student Symposium, May 2013
 - Presenters: Adriana Sanchez, Kristina Omeli, Stefanie Stephens
 - Mentor: Theresa Martin, Ph.D. Professor, Psychology
 - Eastern Washington University

- *Friends with Benefits*
 - Presented in the EWU Student Symposium, May 2012
 - Presenters: Adriana Sanchez, Alicia Schimanski, Stephen McNamara
 - Mentor: Theresa Martin, Ph.D. Professor, Psychology
 - Eastern Washington University