

2013

How and why do Latino parents get involved in their children's education? A test of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model with middle school parents in a community school

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Why and How do Latino Parents get Involved in their Children's Education? A Test of Hoover-
Dempsey and Sandler's Model with Middle School Parents in a Community School

by

Anne Marie FitzGerald

Presented to the Graduate and Research Committee
of Lehigh University
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership

Lehigh University
May 2013

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05/20/2013

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

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Acknowledgements

First of all, it was my privilege to sit and talk with families about how they support their children's education. ¡Mil gracias por su tiempo, energía y generosidad!

This work could not have been done without the cooperation and support of the principal, assistant principal, counselor, band director, after school coordinator, and community school coordinator at the school where I did my research. I am grateful for their time, collaboration, and encouragement of the research. As well, I'd like to thank Jessica Bedoya for expert advice on translation, coding, and codebook revision.

Many thanks to my committee members for the advice, encouragement, and support you all have given me throughout the dissertation process. Dr. Manz helped me see the value of a more modest study. Drs. Stout and Johnson lent qualitative expertise and just-in-time responses to multiple questions. In particular, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. George White, for the gift of time and the generous financial support he has given me to work on this dissertation. I am most grateful for his patience, constant encouragement, belief in the importance of the questions, guidance in thinking through all phases of the study, and most of all, for his great good cheer.

Heartfelt thanks to my friends in Bethlehem; Jean, Jill, Adafo, Shalena, Sarah, and Alba, and to friends further afield, Lily and Jim, Nancy, and Charyl and Joe: you believed I could do it, even when I didn't, and you helped me along at all the right moments. Thanks to my nanny, Annie Mae, my mother, Madelyn, my sisters Rose, Regina, and Jennifer, and my brothers, Greg and David. Finally, my utmost gratitude and thanks to Bob, who made industrial strength coffee and cooked and listened and loved and encouraged and believed.

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, Bernard. How I wished he had lived to see the day when one of his children received a doctorate.

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Abstract

This study used qualitative interviews to explore and describe the perceptions of Latino and Puerto Rican parents in a community middle school about if, why, and how Latino families decide to engage in their children's schooling. All 15 Latino parents perceived that they held or shared responsibility with the school for their child's educational success (parent or partnership-focused). Parents reported involvement despite their perceptions of low levels of knowledge and skills, and/or time and energy. Parents responded to school, teacher, and student invitations for involvement; however, no parent described the school as a community school and few parents reported teacher invitations. Parents reported much more home-based involvement than school-based involvement. All parents reported talking to their children in ways that communicated values, goals, expectations, or aspirations, yet only one parent reported planning for post-secondary education. Implications for further research with Latino parents and school practice are presented.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

María Cadilla Middle School

“I’d like to go to college. I’m not sure what I’d like to study, maybe marine biology. I like to learn about sharks. Or maybe journalism. We’re working on an article about breast cancer for the school newspaper. My grades are better this year, not like last year or the year before. My cousin helped me smarten up and get better grades. Yeah, I’d like to go to college.” The self-confident young woman who stood in front of me was an 8th grader at María Cadilla Middle School (pseudonym), a recently designated community school located in a predominantly working class and Hispanic neighborhood on the south side of a small industrial town in the northeastern United States. I was there to observe after school classes and activities funded by the school’s community partners and part of the school’s overall effort to provide “wrap-around” services to students and their families.

In some ways, this young woman typifies America’s urban, public middle school students. She had failing grades. Someone in her family cared enough about her to help her see the importance of school and better grades. She is poor. She is African-American and Hispanic, reflecting the increasing multi-racial face of American public schools. Yet, in other ways, she is atypical. Perhaps as a result of her involvement in after school programs at María Cadilla Middle School (MCMS) and the advice she received from her cousin, her disengagement with school has been temporary, and she now has college plans.

María Cadilla Middle School shares many similarities with other urban public schools in the United States. The school serves approximately 630 6th, 7th and 8th grade students and their families. Students identify themselves as: Hispanic, 66.78%; White, 15.46%; African American, 12.17%; Other, 3.45% and Asian, 2.14%. Most students (88%) qualify for free and reduced lunch, and MCMS receives Title 1 federal funding. As well, the school provides breakfast for many students in the morning and snacks in the afternoon to all students participating in after school programs. Using special provisions such as Safe Harbor, Confidence Interval and Appeal, in 2012 MCMS met the state's Annual Yearly Progress goals in math (58.6%) and reading (49.5%). However, when broken out by ethnicity, results for Hispanic students lagged behind those of white and African-American students. As part of its efforts to improve these results for all students, María Cadilla Middle School recently became a community school. Distinguishing features of community schools include intentional and enduring partnerships with other organizations in the community, the appointment of a community school coordinator, robust after school and evening programs, and a variety of integrated family services (such as health and social services). The community school coordinator acts as a bridge between the school and the community, facilitates the development and nurturing of partnerships, and works to provide the mix of services most beneficial to a particular community. Often, community schools become hubs for family and community life.

The school's relatively recent designation as a community school meant that it officially partnered with other members and institutions in the South Side community including the local university and United Way organization. The university is the lead community partner and funds the community school coordinator's position. Members of

the university's education and community outreach faculty and staff provide assistance to MCMS by mentoring the principal, involving graduate students in family counseling, involving undergraduate students as Homework Club tutors and mentors, and working with the community school coordinator to plan how best to engage parents. At MCMS, as in other community schools, the community aims to pool and integrate its resources to improve education for all students, but particularly for poor, at-risk students.

Achievement Gaps

Nation-Wide. In urban public schools in America, and MCMS is no exception, two factors seem related to student achievement: socio-economic status and racial/ethnic backgrounds. Simply put: nation-wide, black, brown, and poor children do not achieve as well as their white, middle and upper class peers on standardized and state tests (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2009; Goldsmith, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2006; O'Connor, Hill, & Robinson, 2009; Valencia, 2010). Scholars term this disparity the achievement gap (Desimone, 1999; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Rothstein, 2009; Valencia, 2010; Warikoo & Carter, 2009). Although reports vary as to the size and stability of the gaps (Clotfelter et al, 2009), National Assessment of Educational Progress (Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005) results demonstrate dramatic differences by ethnicity in the percentages of students who achieve proficiency in reading in 4th grade (42% Asian, 41% white, 18 % Native American, 16% Latino, 13% African-American). Percentages change slightly, but relative differences persist in 8th grade (40% Asian, 39% white, 17 % Native American, 15% Latino, 12% African-American).

The Hispanic/White Achievement Gap. The most recently released NAEP report (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2011) indicates improved results overall for Hispanic

students; however white students have improved at similar or better rates. Thus, the Hispanic/white achievement gap persists and longitudinal data indicates that it has not changed significantly since 1992 (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2011). A growing body of research on Latino students explores the complexities of their school experiences (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Many scholars note general differences in achievement (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Jordan, 2010; Riggs & Medina, 2005), dropout rates (Fry, 2003a), and college-completion rates (Fry, 2003b) while others investigate when and how gaps develop and change over time (Bali & Alvarez, 2004).

Engaging Parents and Partners: The Community School Solution

Growing diversity in school populations and persistent achievement gaps stand chief among the factors fueling school reform efforts in the United States (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2009). Clearly, given such persistent gaps for students of color and poor students, public schools must make efforts to better serve all students. School reform efforts to date include a variety of initiatives. One such initiative, the community school movement, seeks to provide integrated services to all community members in order to improve learning and achievement for students (Blank, Heifets, Shah, & Nissani, 2004).

Community schools, in general, propose to serve poor, urban and rural, and minority children and families by partnering with community agencies, concentrating services under one roof, making the school a community hub, extending the hours of operation, and engaging parents (Clandfield, 2010; Coalition for Community Schools, 2004 and 2008; Dryfoos, 1994; Richardson, 2009). When community schools

implement these “wrap around” services with fidelity, proponents of the model contend that the health and well-being of families improve; students come to school better prepared to learn; children are engaged during after school time, often in activities that are linked to the school’s curriculum; students’ results on school assessments and state mandated standardized tests increase; the achievement gap narrows, and graduation rates improve (Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2003; Dryfoos, 1994; Richardson, 2009). Although community schools share common features, each one is different. Each community is unique, and the needs of the community differ depending upon its members (Richardson, 2009). The partnerships forged differ depending upon the resources available to respond to those needs. For example, the ways in which one community school seeks to engage parents depends upon a complex array of factors, including the interests and needs of the children in the school and the families in the community.

Engaging Parents and Families

Introduction. As a recently designated community school, personnel at María Cadilla Middle School recognize the importance of partnering with parents and are renewing efforts to reach out to them. A growing body of research affirms this determination of MCMS and other community schools, not only to serve families, but also to involve and engage parents. Expanding definitions of family engagement include three principles: 1) shared responsibility among family members, the school, and community agencies, 2) long term efforts spanning the development of the child into early adulthood, and 3) cross cutting multiple settings in which a child learns (Weiss & Lopez, 2009). Multiple studies suggest that increased parental or family engagement relates to improved student outcomes including: improved attendance (Sheldon, 2007),

better behavior (El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010), improved math achievement (Van Voorhis, 2007) improved results on standardized tests (Topor, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010), and higher rates of graduation (Axelroth, 2009). While increasing family engagement seems desirable, many schools struggle with how to engage parents more effectively in their children's education.

Research Syntheses Research syntheses and analyses to date on family engagement and student achievement suggest that increased family involvement is positively associated with improved outcomes for children of all ages (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2005, 2007) and race/ethnicities (Boethel, 2003; Jeynes, 2003). The significance of this association varies greatly (Baker & Soddien, 1997; Fan & Chen, 2001; Ferguson, Ramos, Rudo, & Wood, 2008) as scholars employ differing definitions of parental involvement (Ferguson, Ramos, Rudo and Wood, 2008), use a variety of measures to report student achievement (Henderson & Mapp, 2002), and examine a wide range of research designs from less stringent program evaluation studies (Mattingly, Prislun, McKenzie, Rodriguez, & Kayzar, 2002) to more stringent randomized controlled trial studies (Nye, Turner, and Schwartz, 2006).

Race, Class, and Capital The relationship between family engagement and student achievement also varies when race and socio-economic status variables are included in the design (Bali & Alvarez, 2004; Catsambis & Beveridge, 2001; Desimone, 1999; Fan & Chen, 2001; Gutman & McLoyd, 2008; Hong & Ho, 2005; Lareau, 2000, 2003; Manz, Fantuzzo & Power, 2004; Ream & Palardy, 2008; Warikoo & Carter, 2009). In turn, scholars theorize that race and socio-economic status profoundly affects the educational opportunities of children (Johnson, 2006) and influences the types and the

amount of capital (intellectual, social, and cultural) that families can draw on to become involved (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2011; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Ream & Palardy, 2008; Sheldon, 2002). However, wide variation exists in the ways researchers include and define these demographic variables in research studies, limiting the generalizability of results to diverse populations (Manz, Hughes, Barnabas, Bracaliello, & Ginsburg-Block, 2010).

Age and Developmental Stage Family engagement fluctuates and evolves over time, not only in response to the age and developmental stage of the child, but also to the amount of time, energy, skills, and knowledge of the parent or family member (Deiring, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006). Research centering on the early childhood and elementary years demonstrates a positive association between increased and more skillful parental engagement and improved outcomes for students, most notably in literacy (Lahaie, 2008; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Sheridan, Knoche, Kupzyk, Edwards, & Marvin, 2011) but also in math achievement (Greenman, Bodovski, & Reed, 2011). Research at the middle and high school levels indicates evolving forms and decreasing levels of parental engagement (El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Simons-Morton, & Crump, 2003). Forms of involvement that center around parents talking to students, such as communicating expectations and aspirations (Hill & Tyson, 2009) demonstrate much stronger associations with achievement than do help with homework which seemed to be negatively (Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008) or not associated with student achievement (Desimone, 1999). Scholars theorize various pathways or mediating variables by which increased parental engagement may be positively associated with

middle school student achievement, including social capital (Hill & Taylor, 2004), students' motivational resources (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994), and students' educational aspirations and students' locus of control (Hong & Ho, 2005).

Latino Family Involvement. A more robust literature base suggests that Latino parents may construct their roles and responsibilities differently than do white, middle-class families and school personnel, resulting in more home-based rather than school-centric forms of involvement (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Hill, 2009; Lopez, 2001; Mena, 2011; Olivos, 2004). Latino family values such as *educación*, *respeto*, and *familismo* (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; De Gaetano, 2007; Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006; Zarate, 2007) may run counter to the prevailing values of individualism, independence, and competition (Delpit, 1988; Mena, 2011) found in US public schools. However, intervention programs designed to familiarize Latino parents with the US educational system (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001) or to build home/school partnerships (Gamoran, Lopez, Turley, Turner, & Fish, 2010) testify to Latino parents' willingness to participate and learn.

Puerto Rican Family Involvement Given the relatively small size of the Puerto Rican population living in the mainland US (9% of all Latinos) fewer studies focus on this sub-group and most tend to be qualitative (Nieto, 1998). Several strands focus on the challenges experienced by Puerto Rican families and students, such as the increased likelihood of living in poverty and attending poorly resourced schools (Davila, 2010; Quiroz, 2001; Rolón-Dow, 2005) or focus on the characteristics of high-achieving students and the parenting practices of their families, such as supportive and encouraging family environments (Achhpal, Goldman, & Rohner, 2007; Antrop-González, Vélez, &

Garrett 2005, 2008; Compton-Lilly, 2007; Guilamo-Ramos, Dittus, Jaccard, Johansson, Bouris, & Acosta, 2007; Teichman & Conreras-Grau, 2006).

Parental Engagement: Differing Perspectives. Scholars theorize that school personnel and families in the community may have different understandings, based upon role, ethnicity, culture and SES, of what constitutes parental engagement (Arzubiaga, Ceja, & Artiles, 2000; Ferrera, 2009a; Tyler et al. 2008). Many teachers and administrators are white and come from middle-class backgrounds (Landsman & Lewis, 2006; Singleton & Linton, 2005). Their understanding of parental involvement may be based upon cultural values and their own experiences growing up (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Hill & Taylor, 2004). They may not recognize or value the strengths of minority families and the ways in which they support and nurture their children's education at home (Fuller & Garcia-Coll, 2010). They may be discouraged by low attendance at parent teacher conferences or find it difficult to communicate with parents consistently (Olivos, 2004). It may be easy, especially for individual teachers, to think about family engagement from a deficit perspective, to think that parents don't care about their children's education, or to conclude that it is a waste of time trying to involve parents (Arzubiaga, Ceja, & Artiles, 2000; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Delgado-Gaitan, 1996; Olivos, 2004). From the parents' perspective, some may feel reluctant to come to school due to their own school experiences. Others may see their lack of English language skills as an obstacle (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). Still others may find it difficult to attend school events due to work obligations (Zarate, 2007). Latino parents, in particular, may see their role as being supportive in the home and teaching their children how to be respectful and well-mannered (Arcia, Reyes-Blanes, & Vazquez-Montilla, 2000;

Gallinmore & Goldenberg, 2001; Reese, Balzano, Gallinmore & Goldenberg, 1995).

They may be reluctant to come to school and question (and thus disrespect) the authority of the teacher (Gamoran, Turley, Turner & Fish, 2010).

In sum, families and educators often define family engagement in different ways (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Auerbach, 2006; Ferrera, 2009a; Herrold and O'Donnell, 2008; Pérez-Carreón, Drake, & Barton, 2005). Administrators and teachers tend to define and value family engagement in ways that visibly serve the purposes of the school, such as attendance, participation in school events and volunteering (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006) while Latino families tended to define and value engagement in ways that support students at home, such as teaching respectful behavior, inculcating values and monitoring homework (Scribner, Young, and Pedroza, 1999).

Culturally Sensitive Parental Engagement. Engaging Latino parents in ways that make sense to them involves taking the time to build respectful relationships, ensuring clear communication, and building on the cultural values such as *personalismo*, *dignidad*, and *respeto*, that fosters trust with parents (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; De Gaetano, 2007). Recognizing and valuing the knowledge and skills of Latino parents (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Hill, Tyson, and Bromell, 2009) contributes to a strengths-based, rather than deficit perspective (Valencia, 2010) on families.

Latino Families at María Cadilla Middle School. Over the last 20 years the demographics at María Cadilla Middle School have shifted. The school's administration is white, as are the majority of the teachers and staff. Latino students now form the majority (67%) of the student population (Community school coordinator, personal

communication, November, 2010). Although two thirds of the students identify themselves as Hispanic, the school does not collect such data as country or region to which families trace their origin, length of time in the United States, immigration status, or language spoken in the home. Educators seeking a more nuanced understanding of families recognize differences among groups who identify themselves as Latino or Hispanic. It is estimated that more than 80% of Hispanic students at MCMS are Puerto-Rican (Community School Coordinator, personal communication, November 2010). Puerto-Rican students, as US citizens, do not face the challenges associated with immigration; however, they may face challenges such as learning a second language and culture, low SES, and high transience as their families move fluidly between the US mainland and the island of Puerto Rico in response to work opportunities.

Demographics and results at MCMS Middle School mirror those of many urban schools nationwide. The community school model represents one way for schools to organize and address the achievement gap. By definition, community schools seek robust community partnerships and aim to forge strong and sustainable relationships with parents and families (Dryfoos, 2002). Students with engaged families benefit both academically and socially. School personnel and the families they serve do not always share cultural characteristics or economic status. Community schools that learn how to engage all families, and particularly Latino families, in culturally sensitive and relevant ways will serve as successful examples for all schools who serve growing numbers of diverse students.

Statement of the Problem

Evidence continues to mount showing positive relationships between parent engagement and student outcomes (Baker & Soddan, 1997; Fan & Chen, 2001, Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2003, 2005, 2007); however, relatively few schools have parent engagement plans, few deans of educational administration and teacher education programs consider their graduates well skilled and prepared to engage successfully families and communities (Epstein & Sanders, 2006), and few educators demonstrate skills other than those necessary to involve parents in conventional and school-centric ways (Auerbach, 2006; Dotger & Bennett, 2010). Given that many teachers and administrators differ in culture, language, and SES from the students and families they serve, the potential for cultural discontinuity rises and the need for a more nuanced understanding of how to engage diverse parents remains relevant (Delpit, 2006). In particular, shifting demographics in the United States (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2011) and persistent achievement gaps for Hispanic students (Fry, 2003a), point to the urgency of developing a more culturally competent understanding of how to engage Latino parents (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). At the same time, research suggests that while various forms of parental engagement decline in middle school (Catsambis & Garland, 1997), early adolescents benefit from continued engagement on the part of their parents (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Spera, 2005; Van Voorhis, 2003).

Community schools, by definition, seek to involve parents as partners. Describing parents' motivations for deciding to engage in their children's schooling and the forms their involvement takes will give a voice to families, will provide valuable information to educators and will suggest entry points to teachers and administrators for enhancing engagement. Describing how one community middle school engages its

parents, particularly its Latino and Puerto Rican families, will benefit other schools aiming to forge partnerships with parents, become true hubs of communities, and benefit students educationally.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the perceptions of Latino and Puerto Rican parents in a community middle school about if, why, and how Latino families decide to engage in their children's schooling. In the process, parents had the opportunity to describe in their own words factors that they perceive to influence their involvement decisions, the various forms they perceive parental involvement takes, and the factors that they perceive impede or encourage parental involvement. Qualitative interview data highlights parents' perceptions and provided entry points for both educators and families to enhance parental involvement.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do Latino parents conceptualize parental engagement?
 - a) How do Latino parents construct their roles as parents?
 - b) How effective do Latino parents feel as parents? Do they believe that they can achieve positive outcomes for their children by becoming involved?
 - c) To what degree do Latino parents feel welcomed or invited to participate by the school? By teachers? By their children?

2. What forms does Latino parents' engagement take?
3. What factors facilitate or impede Latino parental/family engagement in the community school?

Theoretical Framework

Kathleen Hoover-Dempsey and Howard Sandler (1997, 2005) developed a five tiered theoretical model describing motivations and forms of parent involvement and its indirect influence on student outcomes. In the first level of the model, they posit that parents construct their roles based on their beliefs about what is important, necessary and permissible for them to do for their children. Parents decide to become involved based on their sense of efficacy or belief in their ability to achieve positive outcomes for their children. Parents decide to engage when they have a sense of being welcomed in to the school, when they are invited to become involved, and when they perceive they are able to do so taking into account demands on their time and energy (life context variables).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of Parental Engagement. The first level of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of parental engagement (1995, 1997, 2005) represent three factors theorized to influence the form of involvement parents choose; personal motivation (role construction and role efficacy), invitations (general and specific school invitations and specific child invitations), and parental life context (knowledge and skills, and time and energy). Forms of involvement include transmission of values and goals, home involvement, school communication and school involvement. Tests of the model indicate that specific school invitations most powerfully predicted school based involvement (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Reed, Jones, Walker, and Hoover-

Dempsey, 2000; Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007). A recent exploratory test of the model on Latino parents demonstrated that parents were more like to report home-based rather than school-based involvement and specific student invitations predicted this home-based involvement.

Using this model as a framework, the study will explore how Latino parents conceptualize their roles, how effective Latino parents think they will be in achieving positive outcomes by becoming involved and how welcomed or invited to become involved Latino parents feel, what they feel are the life context demands, and what forms their involvement takes.

Significance of the Study

The following five factors caused me to pursue this study. First, while many schools acknowledge the importance of involving parents and families, few have well-established visions, plans or programs to successfully engage them. By describing how parents perceive the family engagement process in one newly designated community school, this study provides useful information to practitioners. Second, by definition, community schools seek to engage parents as part of an integrated effort to increase outcomes for students and improve the lives of families. This study aims to inform the emerging literature on community schools. Third, many community schools serve large Hispanic populations. In coming years, current demographic trends predict that there will be even more Hispanic students and families in community schools. This study describes how Latino parents in one community school perceive that the school seeks to engage them and provides information to help other community schools be more effective in

involving Hispanic families. Fourth, many teachers and school personnel are white and middle to high SES (Howard, 2010). A national survey by the Pew Hispanic Center and the Kaiser Family Foundation found that a significant number (47%) of Latino families perceived that “many white teachers don’t know how to deal with Latino kids because they come from different cultures” and that “because of racial stereotypes teachers and principals have lower expectations of Latino students (43%) (Author, 2004). This study provides a more nuanced perspective on parental engagement and expands understanding of how to re-conceptualize parental engagement in more culturally relevant ways. Finally, leading scholars (Henderson, Chavkin, Delgado-Gaitan, and Rodriguez, 2008) in the field of family engagement call for further research into how best to engage diverse families, to expand existing theoretical models, and to develop culturally sensitive ones.

Definition of Terms

The following list of definitions will provide precision in terms and help the reader understand the study.

Parent/Family Many children live with or are cared for by adults or family members who are not their parents. These significant adults may include grandparents, guardian or foster parents, aunts or uncles, or an older brother or sister. Therefore the term parent will include all of the above and the terms parent and family will be used interchangeably.

Hispanic/Latino The pan-ethnic term Hispanic includes groups who “trace their ancestry to 20 Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.” (Tienda & Mitchell, 2006). Each subgroup may share many aspects of language and some aspects

of culture yet differ tremendously. Factors such as immigration status, economic status, country of birth, length of time living in the US, and English language proficiency contribute to a wide range of diversity among Hispanics as a group. Presuming a monolithic and static cultural identity masks the enormous within group diversity among Latinos in the United States (Arzubiaga, Artiles, King, & Harris-Muri, 2008; Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Fuller & Garcia-Coll, 2010).

Thus, the terms Hispanic and Latino will refer to people living in the United States who identify themselves as having origins in Spanish speaking countries of Latin America, the Caribbean or Spain. The terms Hispanic and Latino will be used interchangeably.

Educación The Spanish word “educación” can be easily misunderstood by Anglo educators to mean “education” in general. However, Latino families understand it to include both “social and ethical education, in addition to formal education. Educación is a holistic approach to learning and personal improvement.” (Zarate, 2007, p.9).

Community School Many models and multiple definitions exist for community schools. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will adopt the most recent (2009) definition supplied by the Coalition for Community Schools:

“A community school is a place and a set of partnerships between the school and community resources. The community school strategy integrates academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and civic engagement to improve student learning and to develop stronger families and healthier communities.

Community schools are centers of the community—open to everyone—all day, every day, evenings, and weekends. Families, local government, higher education institutions, businesses, community-based organizations, and local citizens are all involved” (Coalition for Community Schools, 2009).

Limitations

This qualitative study presents five limitations. First, the lack of generalizability of the case study, as there is no direct comparison to non-community school Latino parental engagement. Second, the case study design does not establish causality or explore correlations among factors. Third, by agreeing to be interviewed, the sample of parents can already describe themselves as involved. Fourth, parents’ self-reports cannot be corroborated by the perspectives of students, teachers or school personnel under the study’s current design. Fifth, the culture, ethnicity, first language and SES of the researcher differ from that of the majority of the participants.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Introduction

In this chapter, I review the most recent and relevant research, both qualitative and quantitative, on family engagement with a focus on Latino family engagement. This review of the literature includes discussions of: current definitions of family engagement, the *raison d'être* for engaging Latino parents – closing the achievement gap for Latino students, contemporary Latino scholars' thinking on implications of the achievement gap for schools serving Latino students, Latino cultural and family values related to education, and strengths-based versus deficit perspectives on Latino families. Since the majority of Latino families at MCMS are Puerto Rican, I review the modest literature base on Puerto Rican family engagement. Although this review is organized by students' developmental stages and how family engagement evolves and shifts as the child progresses through school, research on middle school students and families is discussed in greater depth. In addition, I outline in greater detail the theoretical framework that guided my research and how the Hoover-Dempsey model and related research offers schools practical ways to reach out to all families, and particularly Latino families.

Three principles guide current definitions of family engagement (Weiss & Lopez, 2009). First, an emphasis on shared responsibility means that schools, parents, and community organizations work in tandem. Second, family engagement spans “cradle to career,” that is from pre-kindergarten to early adulthood. Third, family engagement takes

place in a variety of settings, including home, school, after school programs, and community activities.

The importance of improving family engagement is underscored by research suggesting that increased parental involvement is associated with improved outcomes for all children (Henderson & Mapp, 2002) and particularly for diverse students (Boethel, 2003). Improved outcomes matter for all children; however, given the achievement gaps that exist for low socio-economic status (SES) and diverse students (Bali & Alvarez, 2004; Desimone, 1999; Gutiérrez, 2008), improved outcomes matter even more for these children. Demographics are shifting in the United States (Hughes, Rodriguez, Smith, Johnson, Stevenson, & Spicer, 2006). In the words of scholars Hill and Torres (2010) “Only Mexico has a larger Latino population than the United States” (p.108). Growing numbers of school-age Latino children would seem to be achieving at lesser rates than their more affluent and white peers (Fry, 2003a). Latino students are more likely to come from low-income families, to have parents with lower educational attainment, to have lower educational aspirations themselves, and to be academically less prepared for higher education than are their white peers (Swail, Cabrera, & Lee, 2004). Puerto Rican students in particular, achieve less and drop out in higher numbers than do other Latino subgroups (Collazo, Ryan & Bauman, 2010). Schools strive to build and maintain productive relationships with families and use a variety of strategies to involve parents in their children’s schooling (Chrispeels & Rivera, 2001; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; De Gaetano, 2007; Sheldon, Epstein, & Galindo, 2010; Zarate, 2007). School personnel often differ ethnically and culturally from the students they serve (Howard, 2010). Teachers may hold deficit views of families (Cooper, 2007; de Carvalho, 2001) or narrow

views of what constitutes parental engagement (Ferrera, 2009b). Many families, particularly poor and diverse parents, do not engage in their children's schooling in ways which teachers or administrators recognize or value (Jackson & Remillard, 2005; Scribner, Young, & Pedroza, 1999; Tinkler, 2002). Latino families, in particular, may support their children's schooling at home in ways that are not visible to teachers and administrators (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). Thus, the current study seeks to understand why Puerto Rican parents in one middle school with a predominantly Hispanic and low SES population decide to become involved in their children's schooling. Further, the research seeks to understand what forms their involvement takes.

Achievement Gaps

Achievement gaps refer to disparities, usually along racial and socio-economic lines, in school grades, standardized test scores, attendance rates, advanced course selection, high school completion, and college graduation rates ("Achievement Gap," 2011). When the Elementary and Secondary School Act (ESEA) was reauthorized in 2001, its very title signaled the dispiriting reality that increasing numbers of America's schoolchildren were, in fact, continuing to be "left behind." The Obama administration's statement of purpose for the coming reauthorization of the act includes "closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and nonminority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers ..." More prosaically, a recent search of Google Scholar using the words "achievement gap" for articles published since 2010 yielded just over 21,000 hits. A similar search in EBSCO yields over 500 articles published in peer review journals. The same search in *Review of Educational Research* returned 420 hits. Indeed,

it is rare to read any scholarly article that does not refer to achievement disparities in its opening arguments. Clearly, achievement gaps continue to concern practitioners and scholars, just as they continue to drive political rhetoric and educational policy.

A number of recent school reforms aim to improve access and quality of education for all children (Hiatt-Michael, 2008), among them improving the quality of teaching and teachers, raising academic standards, aligning school curricula with state and national standards, making schools and classes smaller, expanding pre-school programs and access, and perhaps most contentiously, using disaggregated standardized tests scores to drive improvement efforts. Jordan (2010) argues against such narrow measures of achievement and for amplified understandings of learning, particularly for students of color. Leading scholar Fenwick English (2004) likens these efforts to close achievement gaps to the educational (and elusive) search for the “Holy Grail.”

Contemporary Latina scholar Rochelle Gutiérrez (2008) uses the term “gap-gazing” to denote research that documents the achievement gap and stops short of shedding light on the conditions necessary to close it. Gap discourse, contend Gutiérrez and Dixon-Román (2011), allows scholars to discuss “students of color without naming them or having to discuss the institutions of racism, classism, or politics of language that are endemic in today’s society” (p.23). Other researchers (O’Conner, Hill, & Robinson, 2009) criticize achievement gap discourse for masking within-group variation in achievement and highlighting some gaps (Hispanic/white) while underplaying others (Asian/white). Leading Chicano scholar, Richard R. Valencia (2010), decries the deficit thinking that continues to prevail when discussing minority children and families and contends that this deficit thinking about “at-risk” students “absolves institutional structures and

inequitable schooling arrangements that exclude students from optimal learning” (p. 18). In a recent review of research on im/migrant families, many of the studies reviewed emphasized deficits, not family strengths (Arzubiaga, Noguerón, & Sullivan, 2009). The debate and reforms efforts continue to be necessary: a recent report by NAEP reveals that although some groups have improved results in the last decade, gaps persist, particularly between white and Hispanic students (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2011). Further, Verdugo (2010) contends that even reported improvements in achievement gaps may be misleading due to an “upward bias” in reporting caused by the lowest performing students’ dropout rates. In sum, pernicious achievement gaps point to the continuing need to examine public education and redress inequities for under-performing groups, including Latino students.

Hispanic/Latino Students. Nationally, U.S. Census reports indicate that one in every five school-age children is Hispanic (Grieco & Cassidy, 2001). By 2040 that number is predicted to be one in two. A 2010 report by The National Council of La Raza and Population Reference Bureau draws the attention of educational policy makers to statistics about Latino children across the nation. While over 60% of children under 18 have at least one foreign-born parent, 92% of children hold US citizenship. Approximately four out of every five Latino students are English Language Learners (Loera, Rueda, & Nakamoto, 2011).

The Latino/White Achievement Gap. Of Latino students who enter 9th grade, a little over half (55%) graduate from high school. Estimates of the dropout rate for Latino students from 16-19 years old range from 15-30 % (Fry, 2003a). Disturbingly, some evidence suggests that second and third generation Latino students fare even less well

with lower achievement and graduation rates (Rodriguez, 2002). Latino students are less likely to enroll in Advanced Placement classes and more likely to attend vocational classes (Hill & Torres, 2010). Some scholars (Schneider, Martinez, & Ownes, 2006) describe the experience of Hispanic students as one of “accumulated disadvantage,” citing poorly equipped schools; families with few resources, scarce social capital and little knowledge of the US public school system; and ill-prepared teachers (p. 179). Ochoa (2007) points to the “underrepresentation” of Latino/a teachers in the U.S. and a curriculum in which Latino/a voices are either absent or portrayed as colonized. Hill and Torres (2010) also note the paucity of Latino teachers and the likelihood of Latino students to experience reduced expectations and/or discrimination. Others (Gándara, & Contreras, 2009) charge that schools “perpetuate” (p.87) the disadvantages Latino students face, noting inadequate school facilities and instructional offerings, poorly equipped teachers and highly mobile school leaders, stereotyping, and safety concerns. Given the rising number of Latino students at the national, regional and local levels, the challenges they face, and the ubiquitous gaps in their school achievement, research that delineates the positive association between parental involvement and student achievement holds promise to partially redress these inequities.

Community School Model

Warren (2007) argues that community school partnerships can foster increased parental participation in school, transform school cultures by increasing accountability, help build a political agenda to address gross inequities in public schools, and improve the lives of students. Fostering relations with community based organizations (CBOs) can help educators build a strengths-based perspective of families (particularly low-income

and urban parents) , focus attention on the need to take the time to build relationships with parents, and change power dynamics by including parents in the school's decision-making (Warren, Hong, Rubin & Uy, 2009).

Select research results emerging on community school partnerships indicate that students benefit academically and socially. For example, students enrolled in community schools are more likely to attend school (Sheldon, 2007; Blank, Melaville, & Shaw, 2003). Students in National Network of Partnerships Schools (NNPS) whose parents received training in implementing math activities at home show improved end of year math outcomes (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). Students enrolled in the Communities in Schools (CIS) high schools are more likely to graduate on time and less likely to drop out (Hammond, Linton, Smink, & Drew, 2007; Porowski & Passa, 2011).

Parent Engagement and Student Achievement

Educators, scholars, policy makers, and parents themselves share a widespread belief that parental involvement in their children's schooling benefits all students (Comer & Haynes, 1991; Epstein, 2011; Henderson, 2002; Hill & Tyson, 2009). This belief impacts national political rhetoric (Obama, 2009), national educational policy (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001) national standards for school administrators (NAESP, 2007; CSSO, 2002), teacher preparation programs (Epstein, 2011; Ladson Billings, 1999; Little & Bartlett, 2010; Shartrand, Weiss, Kreider, & Lopez, 1997), and research agendas of national organizations such as the Harvard Family Research Project and the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins. Yet a clear picture of when, how, and to what extent parents become involved most effectively with their children's education

continues to emerge (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007). The literature on parent engagement and student achievement, as in other areas of educational research, reveals two factors which complicate efforts to draw firm conclusions about results: differing definitions of terms and varying methodologies (Baker & Soddan, 1997; Chavkin, 2001; Fan & Chen, 2001; Fan, Williams, & Wolters, 2012; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

First, in defining parental involvement, researchers have used variously: parenting styles (authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative) frameworks (Baumrind, 1971; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch & Darling, 1992); family ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1986); school ecology (Comer & Haynes, 1991); multi-dimensional cognitive/behavior models (Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, & Apostoleris, 1997; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994); characteristics of the parent-teacher relationship (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 1999); home-based and school-based distinctions (Gordon, 1979; Manz, Fantuzzo, & Power, 2004; Pomerantz et al, 2007); subtle versus overt aspects of parent involvement (Jeynes, 2010); and typologies of parent engagement (Chrispeels, 1996; Desimone, 1999; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Griffith, 1996).

Epstein's typology (Epstein, 1987; Epstein & Dauber, 1991), the most widely used, includes six broad categories describing ways parents can become involved with their child's schooling; developing parenting skills, communicating with the school, supporting the school, assisting the child's learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with community. Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, Epstein's model conceptualizes home and school as overlapping spheres of influence in children's school lives. Elaborations of Epstein's model include instruments such as the

Family Involvement Questionnaire for Elementary School Age and the Family Involvement Questionnaire for Early Childhood (FIQ-EC) used to measure forms of involvement for families of urban early childhood and elementary students (McWayne, Manz, & Ginsburg-Block, 2007; Manz, Fantuzzo, & Power, 2004). If operationalized definitions of parental involvement vary widely, so too do the ways researchers choose to describe, define, or measure student achievement. Scholars have used, individually or in combination; teacher ratings, student ratings, grades on report cards, proximal vs. distal outcomes; results on standardized tests, enrollment in advanced classes, attendance records, reduced behavior referrals, graduation rates, and college attendance (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey, Ice, & Whitaker, 2009; Jeynes, 2005; Lee & Bowen, 2006).

Second, wide variation exists in the type and quality of research conducted. Qualitative research methodologies lend themselves to theory building and to the exploration, description, and understanding through words of educational phenomena such as parental involvement and student achievement. Such studies abound in the literature (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Fantuzzo, McWayne & Perry, 2004; Ferrera, 2009a; Lopez, Scnbner, & Mahitivamchcha, 2001). Yet attempts to measure numerically the relationship between these variables call for quantitative methods, precise definitions of terms, and operationalization of variables. Fewer such studies exist in the literature (Baker & Soddan, 1997; Chavkin, 2001; Fan & Chen, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002, Jeynes, 2005). Pomerantz and her colleagues (2007) further distinguish between research that measures “naturally occurring” types of parent involvement (correlational studies of existing data) and studies in which the variable of parental involvement is manipulated

(experimental and quasi-experimental studies). Current political climate favors evidence-based policy (NCLB, 2001; Education Sciences Reform Act, 2002) and empirical research questions (National Research Council Research Guidelines, 2003; Institute of Educational Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse, US Department of Education, 2002). However, some educational researchers call for a mixed methods approach that combines the strengths of both types of research (Yoshikawa, Weisner, Kalil, & Way, 2008). Finally, regardless of the type of research methodology selected, concerns remain about the quality of research (Baker & Soddan, 1997; Mattingly, Prislun, McKenzie, Rodriguez, & Kayzar, 2002).

Syntheses, Reviews, and Meta-Analyses: Evolving Criteria for Results. A critical examination of nine research syntheses, including reviews and meta-analyses, on parental involvement and student achievement in the last fifteen years reveals scholars' developing theoretical models, increasing precision in definitions of terms, growing use of statistical analysis to demonstrate results, and intensifying interest in the quality of research (both qualitative and quantitative). Taken together, these overviews provide a picture of the evolution of the field and of the surrounding educational landscape.

Baker and Soddan (1997) critically reviewed parental involvement literature to date, assessing 145 empirical studies, 30 previous literature reviews, and 36 theoretical and opinion papers. They concluded that the theoretical and opinion papers aided overall understanding of the field, but did not provide evidence of the effects of parental involvement on student achievement. In assessing previous literature reviews, they noted that few reviews included a description of the research quality of the studies considered. In evaluating the empirical studies, they excluded ones that used descriptive and non-

inferential statistics and focused on a core of 108 pre-experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational and experimental studies. The authors determined that the majority of these studies used non-experimental designs with the attending implicit weaknesses: no comparison group, lack of random assignment in comparison group, lack of design controls, failure to consider alternative explanations for effects, failure to control threats to internal validity, and inability to infer directionality of effect.

In discussing the three studies employing true experimental designs (Fantuzzo, Davis & Ginsburg 1995; Tizzard, Shofield & Hewison, 1982; Rodick & Henggeler, 1980), Baker and Soddien (1997) concluded that parental involvement, precisely defined and in specific contexts, did have a beneficial impact on student achievement. The authors praised the design of these studies, while cautioning policy makers against basing broad policy and practice on research that used small, self-selected samples and had yet to be replicated. Baker and Soddien noted the importance of program evaluation research, an “intersection of theory, practice and research” (p. 17), while acknowledging the constraints and tensions associated with such research.

Fan and Chen (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of empirical studies measuring the strength of the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement. They selected twenty-five studies that reported findings as correlation coefficients from an initial field of two thousand, including journals, book chapters, conference presentations and reports for the previous ten-year period. Overall, they found that parental involvement has a small positive effect ($r = .25$) on student achievement, noting that parental aspirations for students’ educational achievement had a stronger effect ($r = .40$) than parental supervision of students at home ($r = .09$). The authors caution that the

relatively small sample size (25) affected the stability of coefficient calculations and that parental supervision may have a greater effect on student achievement than is indicated by the results. In general, although a meta-analysis permits greater statistical power to detect effects and includes moderators to explain variation, it relies more heavily upon published studies that report significant results, potentially inflating effect size. In particular, in this meta-analysis Fan and Chen did not specify the statistical tests they used in conducting linear modeling, nor did they report confidence intervals.

Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, & Kayzar (2002) conducted a review of program evaluation studies. The studies analyzed outcome measures for parental involvement and effects on student achievement. The authors searched the US Department of Education's database for evaluations of parent involvement program interventions published since 1960 and researched all references contained in the book chapters and articles they found. They rejected those studies that did not report sufficient outcome data or information about methods. Of the 41 studies chosen, 20 studies reported student achievement as an outcome measure and 15 of those showed improved student achievement. However, of those 15 studies, fully two-thirds did not use a control group, failing to account for the effects of maturation and learning over time. In the four studies using more stringent research design, two reported improved student achievement in the groups receiving the parent involvement intervention. Two studies did not find significant results on post-tests for students. The authors did not conclude that parent intervention program failed to influence student achievement; rather they reasoned that results to date did not provide conclusive evidence of the benefits of parent's involvement on students' results in school. Finally, the authors recommended that

evaluation studies be conducted using methods that explore causality and including more detailed demographic information on participants.

By contrast, Cotton and Reed Wikelund (2001) at the National Center for Family and Community Connections in the Northwest Regional Educational Lab (NREL) published a synthesis of research for educational practitioners. They reviewed forty-one studies (including other reviews and program evaluations) and concluded that parental involvement “overwhelmingly” and positively related to student achievement. Although the authors included an annotated list of supporting documents, they did not detail how studies were selected, nor did they categorize studies by type. Finally, they did not assess study quality.

A year later researchers Henderson and Mapp (2002) at the Southwest Regional Educational Lab (SEDL) conducted a much more thorough narrative literature synthesis on studies exploring family, community, and school connections. In part, they examined studies that explored the relationship between family involvement and improved outcomes for students. They selected 51 studies out of two hundred, all but two published between 1996 and 2002. In general, they too found an overall positive relationship between parental involvement and student achievement. Further, Henderson and Mapp contended that the positive relationship held true for students across grades levels and for families of all types, regardless of economic status, race or educational background. In particular, training programs for parents on how to help students at home resulted in small to moderate positive effects on student achievement, particularly in the younger years (Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Jordan, Snow, and Porsche,

2000; Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., and Center for Children and Families at Teachers College, Columbia University, 2001). Strengths of this literature review include the authors' use of Baker and Soden's (1997) typology of empirical studies and selection of both qualitative and quantitative studies with sound theoretical bases and methodologies. The authors noted that small sample sizes, conflicting or weak results, and the relative paucity of experimental or quasi-experimental studies all contributed to the limitations of the literature review. It should be noted however, including only published studies contributes to publishing bias, an overall weakness of the literature review.

Jeynes (2003, 2005, 2007) conducted a trio of meta-analyses of studies exploring the links between parental involvement and student achievement; however he narrowed the focus in each to minority, urban elementary, and urban secondary students respectively. In the second meta-analysis, Jeynes examined 41 quantitative studies out of an initial field of five thousand and included only those studies reporting statistically robust results and true control groups. Using a conservative measure of effect size (Hedge's g), he found an overall positive relationship between parent involvement and student achievement. Jeynes detailed how he rated study quality (random assignment, avoiding mono-method, mono-operation biases, and including a specific definition of parental involvement), included the total number of study participants (20,000), and specified statistical tests and confidence intervals.

Nye, Turner, and Schwartz (2006) located 19 randomized controlled trial (RCT) studies out of a field of over 800 citations that tested the "least biased estimate" of the effect of parent involvement intervention programs on various measures of elementary

student achievement. They made extensive, if unsuccessful, efforts to locate RCT studies among the grey literature and noted that two thirds of the studies selected for meta-analysis were published dissertations and over 80% of the lead authors were women. They reported an overall significant and positive effect ($d=.43$, fixed effects) of parental involvement programs on student achievement.

In the most recent overview, researchers Ferguson, Ramos, Rudo and Wood (2008) at SEDL again examined literature on parent involvement and student achievement and looked at studies conducted during the previous three-year period (2005 – 2008). Ferguson and his colleagues searched widely, using a wide array of electronic sources, and included studies recommended by staff. Demonstrating the evolving criteria in judging educational research quality, they used the National Research Council standards and the Institute for Educational Science (IES) guidelines to narrow their search from an initial field of over 1000 outputs to 31 studies that demonstrated sound methodology. They organized studies by six crosscutting themes: sense of welcome; misunderstanding among stakeholders; use of and issues related to resources; home context and student performance; program structures; and roles of those involved in family/school connections. Although conceding that only three studies met the IES guidelines for possible or strong evidence, they concluded that the results of current research were “heartening and informative” (p.25) and that parent involvement played a strong role in student achievement.

In sum, while many of the study findings have to be interpreted cautiously, these eight overviews of relatively recent research in the field demonstrate an overall positive link between parent involvement and student achievement. At the same time,

chronological examination of these syntheses, reviews and meta-analyses demonstrate a changing political and educational landscape and evolving understandings of educational research rigor and quality.

Impact of Race and Class. With few exceptions (Driessen, Smit, & Slegers, 2005) research supports an overall positive relationship between parental involvement and student achievement; however, this relationship often varies when race and socio-economic status are taken into account (Bali & Alvarez, 2004; Catsambis & Beveridge, 2001; Desimone, 1999; Fan & Chen, 2001; Gutman & McLoyd, 2008; Hong & Ho, 2005; Lareau, 2000, 2003; Manz, Fantuzzo & Power, 2004; Ream & Palardy, 2008; Warikoo & Carter, 2009). One of the most important and contested findings in the large-scale, foundational study *Equality of Educational Opportunity* commissioned by Congress as a result of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and directed by sociologist James Coleman (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Weinfield, & York, 1966) was that an individual student's family background or race and class significantly impacted student achievement and, it was inferred, mattered more than school level conditions. Since then, an extensive research base supports the negative association between poverty and student achievement (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, & Aber, 1997; Deiring, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Desimone, 1999; Catsambis & Garland, 1997; Lareau, 2000, 2003; Manz, Fantuzzo, & Power, 2004, Sirin, 2005). Living in poverty in turn affects the time, energy, and resources of parents to become involved with the school. The lower socio-economic status of African Americans and Hispanic Americans relative to European Americans (Iceland, & Wilkes, 2006) may add to the potential to conflate socio-economic status and race. This further confounds attempts of scholars to

analyze racial variations in the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement. Finally, scholars Borman and Dowling (2010) re-analyzed the Coleman Report using more sophisticated hierarchical linear modeling and more computer power than was available in 1965. They concluded that race and class continue to matter; however they also found considerable between-school variability (40%) in student achievement confirming the subsequent reaction to the initial report: school characteristics matter too.

Impact of Capital: Cultural, Social, and Intellectual. Related to the interconnected variables of race and class is the notion of various forms of sociological capital that impact the ways families interact with their children, with other families, and with the school. Economic capital refers to the money or goods accumulated by an individual or corporation: At the school level, social capital refers to the stocks of knowledge and information in social networks that parents can use to leverage benefits for their children. Noted scholar and sociologist, James Coleman (1988) first introduced the term social capital, defining it to include reciprocal obligations and expectations, channels through which information flows, and social norms in specific communities.

Family engagement scholars Bolivar & Chrispeels (2011) utilize the related concepts of social and intellectual capital to frame their evaluation study on a parent leadership and empowerment program. They defined intellectual capital as information, skills, and/or capabilities accumulated by parents to take action, either individually or collectively, to influence or advantage their children's schooling. They found that the 12-week program created the conditions (increased trust, understanding of the school system, and access to information) for Latino parents to build both forms of capital and to

take action on behalf of their children. In addition to individual actions, parents acted collectively to advocate for and secure such collective benefits as a classroom designated as a computer lab.

In an earlier study, Chrispeels and Rivero (2001) analyzed the responses of over 100 parents who participated in the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) program designed to teach Latino parents about the American education system. Using pre and post program questionnaires, observations, and in-depth interviews Chrispeels and her colleague found that parents reported shifts towards more authoritative parenting styles (Spera, 2005) and increased literacy activities with children, better understanding of homework monitoring, increased parent-initiated contact with the school, and higher educational aspirations for their children. Parents' conceptualization of their role, although informed by cultural values, was not "fixed" and the information provided by a cultural broker such as the PIQE program provoked shifts in their thinking and behavior.

Lee and Bowen (2006) used Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital (Bourdieu, cited in Lareau, 2001) to frame their study of 415 elementary school students' achievement (as reported by teachers) and their parents' involvement. They defined cultural capital as parents' experiences, attitudes, and predispositions towards school and to their connections with school related objects (resources such as books and computers) and institutions (schools, colleges, or libraries). They argue that the better the "fit" between parents' dispositions and values and the school's values and practices, the higher the family's cultural capital. Families with higher cultural capital tend to feel welcomed and at home in school and are therefore better able to garner scarce educational resources and advantages for students. Lee and her colleague found that the relationship between

parental involvement and students' achievement varied by race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, and parental educational attainment. In keeping with the hypothesized model, having European American, better educated, and non-poor parents positively predicted students' achievement.

In a related study, Sheldon (2002) examined the size of parent's social networks to determine its potential to predict parental involvement. He surveyed two elementary schools (one urban and one suburban) and received responses from 48% of the families surveyed (n= 195). The sample varied by gender and grade of the student, and by educational attainment of the parent. The sample also represented the school demographics reasonably well (67% Caucasian, 9.7% Asian American, 6.7% African Americans, 3.1% Latino, and 9.2% other). He found that the size of parents' social networks predicted home and school based involvement. Among his recommendations for school practitioners was to connect isolated parents with at least one other family in order to increase involvement at home and at school.

Ream and Palardy (2008) also use Bourdieu's theory of social capital with its emphasis on reproduced power and privilege to frame their re-examination of the baseline year of the NELS:88 data, arguing that the field needed a quantitative measurement of social capital and that many of the survey questions fit social capital constructs well. They concluded that social capital varied significantly by class but were not able to demonstrate conclusively the convertibility of such capital. Taken together, these studies demonstrate the importance of examining the ways in which forms of sociological capital vary by race and class, thus impacting channels and networks of

parental involvement, particularly for Latino parents and their students, many of whom report being isolated from the school..

Impact of Age and Developmental Stage. Throughout childhood, children develop and change rapidly; physically, psychologically, emotionally, cognitively, socially, and morally (Davis, 2011). Children are as varied as the families in to which they are born (Bradley, Corwyn, Burchinal, McAdoo, & Garcia Coll, 2001). Children's learning takes place in contexts ranging from the informal and intimate to the formal and institutionalized (Pérez Carreón, Drake, & Barton, 2005). Parents, too, change and develop as their children grow and transition from one developmental stage to the next (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2006). Deiring, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss (2006) suggest that parental involvement be viewed as a dynamic process, fluctuating within families over time based on a host of variables, including available time, overall life demands, and positive experiences with the school. .Some research indicates that parental involvement tends to decrease over time, perhaps in response to children's increased autonomy and skill levels (Deiring et al, 2006). In critically examining research on the effects of parental involvement on student achievement, studies will be grouped by children's ages and stages, with a particular focus on middle school students, their parents, and evolving forms of parental involvement.

Early Childhood and Elementary. A robust research base on the positive relationship between parental involvement and student achievement centers on the early years. Important developmental tasks for four to seven year olds include language and literacy development (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Early literacy development positively predicts middle childhood literacy development (Manz, Hughes, Barnabas, Bracaliello, &

Ginsburg-Block, 2010). Learning to read successfully impacts students' achievement throughout their school careers (Cooper, Crosnoe, Suizzo, & Pituch, 2010; Sheridan, Knoche, Kupzyk, Edwards, & Marvin, 2011). Parental involvement can play a key role in children's early literacy development (Cooper et al, 2010; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002).

For example, Sheridan and her colleagues (2011) randomly assigned parents to receive an intervention designed to encourage warm, responsive parenting techniques and to foster home/school partnerships. They found that children whose parents received the treatment made greater gains in early literacy skills than did the children whose parents did not receive the treatment. Sénéchal and her colleague LeFevre (2002) reported the results of a five-year longitudinal study of mostly white, middle to upper class, kindergarten and first grade children and their parents. They found that informal literacy experiences at home, such as exposure to storybooks, predicted children's receptive language; however, formal literacy experiences at home, such as pointing out phonological or print characteristics, predicted children's emerging literacy. This relationship held over time.

Hill and Craft (2003) used validated survey instruments to measure and confirm academic skills as a mediating variable between parental involvement in school and kindergarten student math achievement in socio-economically similar samples of African-American and Euro-American mothers. Dearing and his associates (2006) studied between family and in-family parental involvement and the association with children's literacy achievement between kindergarten and fifth grade. They found an overall positive correlation between increased parental involvement and literacy development. Poverty moderated this relationship; however, they found that students

from low-income families whose parents had lower educational attainment benefited most from increased parental involvement.

In a recent descriptive review, Manz and her colleagues examined 31 evaluation studies of all designs on early literacy interventions for caregivers and families published between 1994 and 2007. In assessing the generalizability of research to minority, linguistically varied, or low-income populations, they noted that demographic information such as race, native language, family constellation, employment status, or educational attainment and literacy ability of caregiver were not uniformly included as variables or reported in studies. They meta-analyzed a further subset of 14 experimental or quasi-experimental studies that reported effect sizes and found a general small, but statistically significant effect for family-based early literacy interventions but limited generalizability of interventions to ethnic minority, linguistically diverse, and poor populations, signaling the need for further research on such families. Taken together, these studies demonstrate positive relationships between measures of parental involvement and children's literacy development in the early years.

Other scholars have established positive links between parental educational attainment, the quality of involvement and student achievement (Englund, Luckner, Whaley, & Egeland, 2004). In a similar vein, Pomerantz and her colleagues (2007) found that parental involvement characterized by autonomy support, process oriented, positive affect, and positive beliefs in the students' potential were associated with improved student achievement, skill development, motivation, social and emotional well-being. Lee & Bowen's (2006) study of 415 3rd-5th graders and their parents demonstrated that parental involvement differed by race/ethnicity, SES, and parental educational

attainment. European-American parents reported more in-school involvement and less at-home involvement than did their Hispanic or African-American counterparts, while teachers reports higher academic achievement (on four measures) of European-American children. Finally, higher parental educational attainment positively predicted higher levels of parental involvement.

Other lines of research have examined the association between parental involvement and children's social development. McWayne and her colleagues (2004), in a study of 307 kindergarten children (mostly African-American and low SES) found that increased levels of parental involvement was associated with more social skilled and academically proficient students. Scholars El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal (2010) examined the relationships between parental involvement and children's social functioning. They analyzed longitudinal data from NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development and within child analysis revealed a significant and positive relationship between increased parental involvement and enhanced social skills in children as perceived by teachers.

In addition to the interventions, evaluation, and path analytic studies reviewed above, access to large national databases allow scholars to explore relationships among variables such as parent involvement, SES, and student achievement in math and reading. The size of these databases enhances generalizability of results, and valid and reliable instruments promote ease of use. Lahaie (2008) used an archival data research method to analyze the 1998 kindergarten cohort of the Early Childhood Longitudinal study (ECLS-K). She used a broad definition of parental involvement based on Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence to interview respondents (mostly mothers) on parental involvement

of both English and non-English speaking respondents. She found positive and significant links between parental involvement and children's proficiency in English and math. For example, increased proficiency in math was associated with having a parent who had already met with the teacher at least once.

Cooper and her colleagues (2006) examined the same data focusing on the mediating effects of parental involvement on poverty and student achievement. The data showed that poor parents had the least educational attainment and the lowest rates of parental involvement and that poor children had the lowest kindergarten attainment. Three measures of parental involvement (providing cognitively stimulating materials, involving children in organized activities, and involvement with the school) significantly mediated the links between poverty and both reading and math achievement. Moreover, that U.S. born Hispanic parents who involved their children in home learning activities had children with improved reading achievement.

Greenman, Bodovski, & Reed (2011) merged the ECLS-K, 1998 data with 2000 Census data to analyze relationships among parental educational practices, neighborhood disadvantage, and math achievement in 5th grade. Significant positive relationships emerged between increased parental practices (measured as organizing non-school time, participating in school events, and providing books in the home) and increased math achievement in 5th grade. Living in a disadvantage neighborhood was significantly and negatively associated with math achievement; however, increased parental practices mitigated this relationship.

Xu, Kushner Benson, Mudrey-Camino, & Steiner, (2010) examined fifth graders data from the same database to examine relationships among seven types of parental involvement and student reading achievement as mediated by self-regulated learning. They found that parental involvement measures accounted for 24% of the variance in standardized reading test scores and had both indirect and direct effects on reading achievement. Two of the measures (TV rules and homework help) negatively predicted reading achievement, one measure (parent-child communication) did not significantly predict reading results, and the remaining four (parental expectations, extra-curricular activities, parental involvement at school, and homework frequency) positively predicted reading achievement. The authors acknowledge the limits of such a method (the research questions are shaped by the data available) while pointing to enhanced generalizability of their study due to the large sample size (16,143). Taken together, this line of archival data research further demonstrates positive and significant associations between parental involvement and student achievement.

More recent research (Topor, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins 2010) has sought to explore the reasons *why* increased parental involvement positively predicts increased student achievement as measured by standardized test results, report card grades, and teacher reports. In a mediational analysis study Topor and his colleagues hypothesized and confirmed that cognitive competence as perceived by children and the quality of the parent/teacher relationship as perceived by teachers “*fully mediated*” the relationship between increased parental involvement and student achievement.

Although much attention centers on the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement, other scholars have looked at links between

partnership programs that target increased parental involvement and student attendance. For example, Epstein & Sheldon (2002) examined attendance data over three years from a sample of 12 elementary and 6 secondary schools belonging to the National Network of Partnership Schools. They found that targeted communication with families, providing a contact person for families, and workshops for families focused on attendance were positively associated with improved daily attendance and decreased rates of chronic absenteeism. Sheldon (2007) analyzed students' daily attendance patterns over two succeeding years in two groups of Ohio elementary schools: those with a school-wide program promoting partnerships with parents and those that did not. He concluded that schools with such programs experienced a small, but significant increase in attendance (.5%) from one year to the next.

In summary, a solid research base demonstrates positive associations between parental involvement and student achievement in the early years and the elementary school years. Particularly robust lines of research demonstrate links between various forms of parental involvement and students' literacy development; however research lines demonstrate positive associations between parental involvement and students' achievement in math, students' social skills, and students' attendance.

Early Adolescence and Middle School. Much research on parental involvement centers on the early years and elementary school years; however, parent's involvement with middle school students is a phenomenon that has been relatively "understudied" (El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010). In this section, I will examine in more detail the extant research base on family involvement at the middle school level. To frame this

research, I will discuss the changes that accompany early adolescence for both children and families and the ways these changes impact forms of family involvement in school.

Middle school is a time of enormous change for early adolescents and their parents (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Lohman & Matjasko, 2010; Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Middle school students experience rapid and uneven physical, affective, and cognitive change (Wigfield, Lutz, & Wagner, 2005). In particular, changes in the brain structure of early adolescents enable them to seek increased autonomy and independence from parents and/or significant adults in their lives, to begin to self-regulate behavior more effectively, and to evaluate risk and reward more realistically (Steinberg, 2005, 2007). At the same time, in early adolescence middle school students experience rapid social changes in peer groups that may place them at risk. This can provide opportunities for significant adults to intervene and influence adaptive behavior at home and at school (Gutman, Sameroff, & Eccles, 2002). During the transition to middle school, students and their parents are re-negotiating relationships. This impacts the ways that students want, need or invite their parents' participation in school. The middle school student may establish increased autonomy and self-regulation and may not welcome or invite the forms of involvement, especially with homework, from parents that functioned well in elementary school (Deslandes, & Cloutier, 2002). Indeed, middle school often marks a time of decreased parent involvement in school (Catsambis & Garland, 1997; Eccles & Harold, 1996).

At the same time they are experiencing great changes in themselves, middle school students are also making the transition between two structurally different school experiences (Barber & Olson, 2004; Schwartz, Steifel, Rubenstein, and Zabel, 2011).

Middle school, with its emphasis on subject specific teachers, its increased academic demands (Woolley, Kol, & Bowen, 2009), and its increased opportunities for independence and autonomy, functions in sharp contrast to elementary school, where students usually have one homeroom teacher, less strenuous academic requirements, and developmentally appropriate (and therefore more limited) opportunities for independence (Parker, 2009). Middle school teachers teach more students and spend less time with each student (Mac Iver & Epstein, 1993). This difference in structure between elementary and middle schools impacts the ways that parents become involved or are invited to be involved in school (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Hoover-Dempsey, Ice, & Whitaker, 2009). Middle schools are complex structures, and some parents may feel they don't even know who to contact for information or help (Hill & Tyson, 2009). At the same time that academic demands for students are increasing, some studies suggest that students' achievement and engagement declines (Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Simons-Morton, & Crump, 2003) and parents may feel they lack the skills or knowledge to help with schoolwork (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

The literature base suggests that parental involvement continues to be positively associated with student achievement at the middle school level, although the forms of involvement change (Catsambis & Beveridge, 2001; Desimone, 1999; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Spera, 2005; Van Voorhis, 2003). For example, Desimone examined data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) to explore the relationships among 12 types of parental involvement and the reading and mathematics scores of 8th graders. She found results varied significantly depending upon race/ethnicity, income, type of involvement, and

whether students or parents reported the involvement. Using Epstein's typology of parent involvement, she determined that talk with parents about school, PTO involvement, and rules about homework, GPA, and chores were all positively associated with achievement for white students. Discussion with parents about high school, PTO involvement, and discussion with parents about school were positively associated with achievement, especially in reading, for Hispanic students. When relationships were analyzed by income, Desimone concluded that parent involvement practices were more predictive of middle than low-income student achievement.

Catsambis and Garland (1997) examined the same data set and reached similar conclusions: some forms of parental involvement differed by race, ethnicity, and income. For example, more African American and Latino parents reported having higher aspirations for students' post-secondary education than did white and Asian American parents, yet by eighth grade these parents reported saving less to fund students' post-secondary education. As well, African American and Latino parents reported greater supervision of students' homework and daily activities in eighth grade than did white or Asian American parents. Additionally, both groups reported maintaining rules about schoolwork and homework. Four years later, Catsambis and Beveridge (2001) re-analyzed the NELS:88 data and combined it with census data by zip code to perform a study on the relationships among neighborhood, parental involvement practices, and eighth grade students' mathematics achievement. They found both direct and indirect negative associations between socio-economically depressed neighborhoods and students' mathematics achievement. These neighborhoods were associated with depressed math scores and lower levels of parental involvement associated with

achievement (such as high educational expectations and provision of learning opportunities beyond school). Keith, Keith, Troutman, Bickley, Trivette, & Singh (1993) examined the same data set and concluded that parental involvement did indeed predict student achievement through influencing their students to spend more time on homework.

However, the research on parental help with homework at the middle school level is not conclusive (Desimone, 1999; Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008; Hoover-Dempsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, DeJong, & Jones, 2001; Van Voorhis, 2003; Xu & Yuan, 2003). Consistent with findings on homework in elementary school (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Burow, 1995) parents and teachers of early adolescents share similar views on the importance and purpose of homework in middle school (Xu & Yuan, 2003) and completing homework is positively associated with adolescent academic achievement (Cooper, Robinson, & Patall, 2006). Nevertheless, evidence diverges on the association between parental help with homework and improved academic outcomes for middle school students. For example, Desimone's examination of the NELS:88 data did not find a significant association between parental involvement in homework and student achievement. By contrast, Van Voorhis' intervention study found a positive association between *interactive* homework help from parents and eighth grade students' overall homework completion, accuracy of homework completion, and science grades. Interactive homework, unlike non-interactive homework, extends students' learning and includes clear directions for how to involve family members. For example, a middle school student might ask each family member for his/her shoe size and calculate the average as part of a math homework assignment.

Two recent meta-analyses of research at the middle school level, however, support earlier findings on the negative association between parental help with homework and middle school student achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008). Hill and Tyson (2009) in their examination of 50 studies, failed to find a positive association, and speculated that parents may help with homework when students are already struggling academically. Patall and her colleagues (2008) analyzed 22 samples from 20 studies and drew similar conclusions. In addition, they suggested that a more developmentally appropriate form of parental involvement would be parental encouragement and support for early adolescents' autonomous homework completion.

Thus the research evidence on parental help with homework diverges, just as the scholarly evidence on the most effective forms of parental involvement continues to emerge. For example, Bronstein, Ginsburg, & Herrera, (2005) conducted a longitudinal study with 93 predominantly European American families and found parental involvement at home that supported students' autonomy positively predicted student achievement in 5th grade and increased intrinsic motivation in 7th grade. Hill and Tyson (2009) performed an exhaustive search of the extant literature and identified 50 studies published between 1985 and 2006 and analyzed 122 correlations to ascertain the forms of parental involvement most strongly associated with middle school student academic achievement. Pertinent research included longitudinal, cross-sectional, intervention, and large data set studies. Congruent with some of Desimone's findings, the authors concluded that school based involvement did predict student achievement; however the forms of involvement most strongly associated with achievement clustered around "academic socialization." Hill and her colleague defined such socialization as talking to

their children about the value of education, clearly communicating their educational expectations, nurturing early adolescents' educational aspirations, academic strategizing with students, and educational planning for the future. They argue that these forms of involvement align most closely with middle school students' burgeoning capacity for independence and semi-autonomous decision making.

Research diverges on the pathways or mediating variables by which parent involvement may influence student achievement at the middle school level (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Hong & Ho, 2005; Hill, Castellino, Lansford, Nowlin, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 2004). For example, Hill and Taylor (2004) contend that parental involvement increases social capital and social control. That is, parents who become involved at school, become more knowledgeable about their children's teachers, their child's daily activities, the school curriculum, and the school's system and structures. This increased knowledge or social capital allows them to develop the skills to advocate more effectively for their children. As well, they argue, involved parents accrue information from the school and other parents about social norms and mores, allowing them to exert increased social control over early adolescents. These clear messages buffer their children from riskier forms of behavior that could interfere with school achievement. Another line of research explores the role of motivation as mediating the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement. For example, Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) propose that parents influence their children's motivational resources for engaging in schooling, thus indirectly influencing student achievement. The child's resources include his/her perception of themselves as competent learners, the degree to which he/she perceives autonomy and choice in

learning, and the connection the student draws between effort and outcome. In a study of 302 middle school students (100 6th graders, 99 7th graders, and 103 8th graders) they found partial support for their proposed indirect model, in that two types of parental involvement positively predicted perceived competence and the ability to see the effort/outcome connection, which in turn positively predicted student achievement as measured by grades and teacher rating scales of performance. Similarly, Hong and Ho (2005), in examining the NELS:88 data, tested a model of mediating variables on the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement. They proposed and found support for student educational aspiration and student locus of control as mediating variables in the relationship. **Latino Family Involvement.** In recent years, researchers have begun to examine cultural differences in family involvement (Kuperminc et al, 2008). To answer the question, “What does it mean to be a good parent?” parents look to models in their own families, in their communities, and in the wider culture (Arcia, Reyes-Blanes, & Vázquez-Montilla, 2000). Some evidence suggests that Latino families may interpret their roles as parents differently than do white, middle-class parents, teachers, and administrators (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Hill, 2009; Lopez, 2001; Olivos, 2004), who may have deficit views about Latino students (Tenenbaum, & Ruck 2007) or about the way Latino families support children’s education (Arzubiaga, Ceja, & Artiles, 2000; Compton-Lilly, 2007; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991 & 1996; Fuller & Garcia-Coll, 2010; Lightfoot, 2004; Olivos, 2006; Valencia, 2010). Some may even assume (erroneously) that Latino parents do not care about their children’s education (Arias, & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; De Gaetano, 2007; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Lightfoot, 2004; Tinkler, 2002). Yet evidence suggests that Latino parents, even those with low

educational attainment and low SES, care deeply about their children's success in school (Ceballo, 2004; Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001). In fact, improved educational and upward mobility opportunities for their children figure prominently in many Latino immigrants' decision to come to the US (Hill & Torres, 2010) and many are optimistic about their children's improved opportunities for educational success (Ada & Zubizarreta, 2001). At home, Latino parents may provide the educational monitoring, support, and encouragement associated with academic engagement and achievement (Mena, 2011). In addition, when given the opportunity, Latino parents willingly participate in classes designed to familiarize them with the American educational system (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001) or to strengthen family and school partnerships (Gamoran, Lopez Turley, Turner, & Fish, 2010).

Mainstream Cultural Values. U.S. public schools often reflect Western, mainstream cultural values (Tyler, Uqdah, Dillihunt, Beatty-Hazelbaker, Conner, Gadson, Henchy, Hughes, Mulder, Owens, Roan-Belle, Smith, & Stevens, 2008). These values include individualism and competition (Delpit, 1988; Mena, 2011). Such values are not always congruent with the values of Latino families (De Gaetano, 2007). This “cultural discontinuity” places Latino students at the intersection of two sets of often-conflicting worldviews (Olmedo, 1997; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006; Tyler et al, 2008).

Latino Cultural Values. In contrast to Western cultural values, such as individualism, independence, and competition, Latino cultural values include collectivism and interdependence. (Tyler et al, 2008) *Familismo* relates to the collectivist and interdependent orientation of Latino culture, particularly as it applies to the family. Scholars Halgunseth, Ispa, and Rudy (2006) in their integrated review of the literature on

parental control in Latino families define *familismo* as including "...the desire to maintain strong family ties, the expectation that the family will be the primary source of instrumental and emotional support, the feeling of loyalty to the family, and the commitment to the family over individual needs and desires" (p. 1285). Related to the concept of *familismo* is an expanded definition of what constitutes family. In Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, & Ryalls, (2010) study of 104 parents of students in a dual language program, the Latino parents included "significant others" (p. 400) or members of the extended family, including godparents.

Leading Latina scholar, Delgado-Gaitan (2004) delineates the strengths of Latino family values, including their emphasis on *respeto/respect*, *respeto a otros/respect for others*, *ser buen educado/to be well-educated*, and *compadrazgo/close friendship* (p.3). In their study of 250 Mexican-American and Puerto-Rican parents of children with disabilities, Arcia, Reyes-Blanes, and Vazquez-Montilla (2000) found that the top-ranked values for their children included having "a sense of right and wrong," being "respectful," and being "responsible." Hill and Torres (2010) review of the research includes definitions of *simpatía*, *personalismo*, *dignidad*, *obligación*, *ganas*, *empeño*, *estudios*, and *vergüenza*. *Simpatía* and *personalismo* refer to the high value places on maintaining personal relationships (Guilamo-Ramos, Dittus, Jaccard, Johansson, Bouris, & Acosta, 2007 in Hill & Torres, 2010). *Dignidad* and *obligación* include the inherent dignity of all human beings regardless of their status and the obligation of those with a higher status to merit the respect rendered by those of a lower status (Padilla, Pedraza, & Rivera, 2005 in Pedraza & Rivera, 2005). *Ganas* mean having the desire to work hard and get ahead (Auerbach, 2006 in Hill & Torres, 2010). *Empeños* refers to the work and

effort on task (Auerbach, 2007 in Hill & Torres, 2010) and *estudios* mean dedicated study (Auerbach, 2006, 2007 in Hill & Torres, 2010). Finally, Latino children are taught not to shame themselves or to bring shame on the family: *vergüenza* (Olmedo, 2003 in Hill & Torres, 2010).

Educación. Related to the values of respect and responsibility to others and the family is the concept of *educación*. At first glance, the term *educación* may seem to be a cognate of the English word *education*; however, for Latino parents in Reese, Balzano, Gallinmore, & Goldenberg's study (1995) *educación* encompassed not only formal schooling, but also the moral dimensions of distinguishing between right and wrong, demonstrating good behavior, and showing respect for self and others. Reese and her colleagues interviewed a subset of 32 Spanish speaking Latino kindergarten families as part of a larger (122 families) longitudinal study examining their hopes for their children and their views on parental involvement. In 12 interviews over four years, interviewers found the theme of *educación* to broadly crosscut all discussions of the children's schooling. Ethnographer Delgado-Gaitan (2004) defines "educación" as "...how people comport themselves politely, how they are willing to act collectively with others, how they support and respect everyone, and how they are deferential to authority" (p.4).

In a qualitative study conducted by the Pew Hispanic Institute with students, parents, and school, Zarate (2007) notes that parents conceptualized involvement as both academic involvement and "life participation" or "*educación*". Life participation included teaching respect and good morals, but also monitoring the child's interactions and safety, and providing encouragement to the child. "...parents felt that it was their end of an

unspoken agreement with the school to holistically educate the child. Said one LA parent, “At home, [life education] is part two of the school” (p. 9).

Much research points to the role Latino parents expect to play in their children’s education (Espinosa, 1995; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Zarate, 2007), a role often at odds with the role expected or valued by schools. Embedded in this role conceptualization is a deep respect for teachers as professionals. Many Latino parents believe it to be disrespectful to teachers’ authority to come to school and question educational practice (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Hill, Tyson, Bromell, 2009). Related to this profound respect for teachers is the confidence many Latino parents place in their children to navigate school independently. Ceballo (2004) found that his Latino immigrant parents of high school and college students placed great trust in students’ ability to manage all aspects of their academic career. Parents gave encouragement and emotional support, as well as practical support. Thus many Latino parents not only place a great deal of trust in teachers’ professional abilities but also in older students’ competence to manage school independently.

Deficit vs. Strengths-Based Thinking. Lightfoot (2004), in her examination of texts on family involvement, notes a prevailing deficit view of Latino families. Indeed, much early research promulgated a deficit view of Latino families (De Gaetano, 2007). Arzubiaga, Ceja, and Artiles, (2000) argue that in maintaining cultural values Latino students and families fail to assimilate or to adopt mainstream educational values. Further, some would argue that the purpose of schools is to “assimilate” immigrants culturally (Hill, & Torres, 2010). This deficit view obscures the strengths such families afford their children (Ramirez, 2004). In their policy brief on parental involvement for

English Language Learners (ELL) Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008) identify a deficit perspective on ELL families as one of the school-based barriers to parental involvement. Valencia (2010) contends that deficit thinking represents a “failure to consider the resiliency and strengths of the poor” (p. 76).

More recent research has focused on “fresh” understandings of Latino child development as well as enumerating the “resilient strengths” Latino families afford children (Fuller & Garcia-Coll, 2010). Pérez Carreón, Drake, and Barton (2005) utilize Trueba’s definition of resilience as “... the capacity of immigrants to survive physically and psychologically in circumstances that require enormous physical strength and determination as well as the psychological flexibility necessary to adapt to a different lifestyle in the absence of their familiar environment” (p.479). Arzubiaga, Nogueroń, and Sullivan (2009) argue that narrow definitions of parent involvement ignore the ways Latino families negotiate daily life, often in challenging conditions. Olivos (2004) notes “The home of the bicultural child is a rich socio-cultural context of learning and cognition, even if it ‘differs’ from the dominant culture” (p.27). Delgado-Gaitan (2004) includes language, storytelling and a strong oral tradition among family strengths. She notes that Latino parents respect the school’s and teacher’s authority (p.7). Finally she writes, “I am convinced that everyone regardless of color, religion, socioeconomic standing, place of residence, ethnicity or educational attainment have strengths and powers” (p.64).

Puerto Rican Family Involvement. Mexican Americans form the largest group of Latinos living in the United States (approximately 60%) and research on Latinos has centered largely on their educational experiences. However, Puerto Ricans form the

second largest group (approximately 9%), and this relatively lower percentage means the research base on forms of parental involvement and student achievement is much more limited. Data on Puerto Rican populations is not often disaggregated and, despite their unique characteristics, often Puerto Rican participants are folded into general Latino populations in research studies. As well, extant research tends to be qualitative in nature, involving necessarily small populations (Nieto, 1998). In order to understand the ways that this sub-group may experience school differently from other Latino subgroups, it is helpful to consider the unique historical and sociological context of Puerto Rican families.

Historical Context. Spanish colonized Puerto Rico became a possession of the US in 1898 as a result of the Spanish American War. The Jones Act of 1917 made all Puerto Ricans citizens of the US, with some of the attendant rights and obligations; among them the military draft (Olmedo, 1997) but not representation in Congress or the right to electoral votes in presidential elections. Almost immediately, US educational policy affected Puerto Rican schools in two important ways. First, ongoing struggles over the language of instruction began, with school officials attempting to replace Spanish with English. Second, schools began to teach far more about US symbols, institutions, and history than they did about Puerto Rican culture. Latina scholar, Sonia Nieto, (2000) notes, “According to Juan José Osuna (1949), shortly after 1898, the average Puerto Rican child knew more about George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Betsy Ross than the average child in the United States” (p.7). Thus, for the past century Puerto Rican students living in Puerto Rico can be considered to have been educated in US schools, with US influenced curriculum, materials, and policy (Nieto, 2000). Noted Latino

scholar Pedro Noguera (2007) terms these attempts to erase language and culture “symbolic violence”. This sense of being U.S. citizens yet still colonized impacts both island and mainland Puerto Rican families and children (Flores, 2002) and is a theme that runs through educational research on Puerto Rican populations.

Circulatory Migration. Unlike other Latino subgroups, as citizens Puerto Ricans can migrate from the island of Puerto Rico to the mainland United States, and return migrate from the continental US to the island, with relative ease (Olmedo, 1997). Such migration patterns have been likened to a “revolving door,” “Puerto Rican commuting,” or “circulatory commuting” (Nieto, 2000), *vaivén* or “coming and going” (Nieto, 1998) and have resulted in a Caribbean Latino diaspora mainly concentrated in large urban centers in the northeastern United States (Flores, 2009). It is estimated that more than half of all Puerto Ricans now live in the continental United States (Collazo, Ryan, & Bauman (2010). High poverty levels on the island (approaching 45%) and the chance for improved opportunities and income on the mainland make migration attractive to island Puerto Ricans. As US citizens they do not experience the uncertainty and stress of establishing legal immigrant status; however, conditions for many Puerto Rican students and families living in the continental US are far from ideal.

Sociological Context Quiroz (2001) reports that among Latinas Puerto Rican women have the highest rates of domestic change, or being separated, divorced, or widowed. In a recent report from the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Belfield (2008) notes that Puerto Rican students are more likely to come from poor families (28%) compared to the national average (16%). Of the Puerto Rican population aged 25+, it is estimated that 28% dropped out of high school (compared to a national average of 20%),

31% graduated high school, and only 15% completed a college degree. Given the positive relationship between high school completion and improved economic and health status and the negative correlation between graduation and likelihood of incarceration, he argues that increasing access to early education and including family involvement interventions focused on literacy would improve cumulative education outcomes for Puerto Rican students.

Research Base on Puerto Rican Students and Families. Relative to the number of studies that purport to study the educational experiences of Mexican Americans or Latinos in general, the literature base on forms of Puerto Rican family involvement and student achievement is small (Nieto, 1998). One thread of qualitative research describes the obstacles, such as “subtractive schooling” or “divesting of important social and cultural resources” (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 3) that Puerto Rican students and their families face in school (Davila, 2010; Quiroz, 2001; Rolón-Dow, 2005). By contrast, another thread documents the characteristics and behaviors of successful and high-achieving students and their families (Antrop-González, Vélez, & Garrett 2005, 2008). Another thread concentrates on parenting styles and parenting practices in Puerto Rican families (Achhpal, Goldman, & Rohner, 2007; Compton-Lilly, 2007; Guilamo-Ramos, Dittus, Jaccard, Johansson, Bouris, & Acosta, 2007; Teichman & Conreras-Grau, 2006). Still another focuses on the strengths of Puerto Rican families and ways to promote the school’s strengths-based thinking about families (Hidalgo, 2000; Mercado & Moll, 2000; Olmedo, 1997).

In addition to a variety of socio-economic conditions that shape the lives of Puerto Rican students and families, negative perceptions of their language, culture,

family background, and level of school involvement (Davila, 2010; Quiroz, 2001; Rolón-Dow, 2005) shape their school experiences. In her qualitative study of Puerto Rican middle school girls, Rolón-Dow (2005) examined varying academic and social student achievement and teachers' attitudes through critical race theory (CRT) and LatCrit lenses. Her sample consisted of nine students from a predominantly low socio-economic school and neighborhood. At the same time, she interviewed fourteen teachers at the school, all from middle to upper middle class backgrounds. Most of the teachers did not live in the neighborhood in which they taught. She found that the teachers, almost without exception, characterized their students' parents as uncaring. The perceived lack of care extended from parents' lack of involvement in their children's education to lack of caring for their homes, communities, and neighborhoods.

Ethnographer Pamela Quiroz (2001) examined 47 autobiographies written by Puerto Rican and Mexican students as they made the transition to high school. Three years later 27 of the students wrote narratives in their junior year in high school. The study focused on how schooling impacted the students' academic decision-making, and Quiroz notes an overall negative recounting of school experiences by Latino students. In general, she found that elementary students expressed educational aspirations but blamed themselves for school failures, often negatively self-labeling. By junior year, however, the remaining students conveyed diminished expectations for school success and cited frequent teacher turnover, uncaring teachers, low teacher expectations, and preferential treatment for white students. In addition, Quiroz used Farrell's (1994) framework of autobiographical "selves" to examine how students saw themselves in family. Mexican American students uniformly referred to the family as a source of support; however less

than half of the Puerto Rican students made reference to family and, unlike the Mexican American students, a little under half of the Puerto Rican students reported living in a family where parents were out of work or looking for work.

More recently, ethnographer Erica Davila (2010) conducted life histories of 10 Puerto Rican high school students in the Chicago Public School system. The obstacles she enumerates for Latino students in general include more limited access to early childhood programs, culturally irrelevant assessment tools and curriculum, ill-prepared teachers, few Latino teachers, over-crowded facilities, and inadequate information to families about school options. Four of the chronicles illuminate salient factors in families' decisions about which high schools students would attend. In all cases students followed other family members into neighborhood schools, even when more academically challenging schools were available.

By contrast, other research focuses on the success stories or counter-narratives of Puerto Rican students and their families. In an in-depth qualitative study Antrop-González, Vélez, & Garrett (2005, 2008) examined factors fomenting school success for Puerto Rican high school students. They employed a semi-structured interview series and observations over 12 weeks of 10 successful Puerto Rican high school students (seven girls and three boys). Two of the four factors identified as contributing to their success related to parental involvement and community connection. They all attributed part of school success to the influence of their mothers on their schooling and to the social capital accrued through religiosity and other types of community participation.

Research on parental attitudes and beliefs, parenting styles, and parental practices within Puerto Rican families extend the family engagement literature base for this unique

subgroup (Achhpal, Goldman, & Rohner, 2007; Compton-Lilly, 2007; Guilamo-Ramos, Dittus, Jaccard, Johansson, Bouris, & Acosta, 2007; Teichman & Conreras-Grau, 2006). A pair of recent studies (Achhpal et al, 2007; Guillamo-Ramos, 2007) illustrates the role of parental values and beliefs about education, one at the early childhood level and the other at the adolescent level. In a study of 60 low income Head Start families (30 European American and 30 Puerto Rican) Achhpal, Goldman, & Rohner (2007) compared parents' beliefs and attitudes towards education. Although both groups concurred in their rating of pro-social skills and good behavior as the most important for children to acquire and demonstrate, they differed in their ranking of the importance of autonomy and family-oriented behaviors. The next most important category for European American parents was autonomy, which received the lowest rating among Puerto Rican parents. Mid ranked categories for Puerto Rican parents included family orientation and responsibility, both of which were low ranked for European American parents. Another qualitative study focused on the at-home parenting practices and styles congruent with cultural constructs such as *familismo*, *respeto*, and *personalismo* that support adolescent Latino students (Guilamo-Ramos, Dittus, Jaccard, Johansson, Bouris, & Acosta, 2007).

Guilamos-Ramos and his colleagues conducted focus groups in a south Bronx middle school with 63 mother/adolescent pairs, 19 of whom were Puerto Rican. Almost two thirds of the mothers had some secondary school education, while almost one third had completed some post-secondary education. They found that both mothers and teens stressed the important of supervision, monitoring, and control of adolescents' activities combined with warm, respectful, and supportive relationships. Explaining parental decisions was one means of building such relationships. In addition, the majority of

mothers reported differential treatment of male and female adolescents, related to cultural constructs of *machismo* and *marianismo*. *Machismo* denotes a cluster of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors associated with the masculine role, including freedom, decision-making power, responsibility, and aggression. By contrast, *marianismo* refers to traits associated with the feminine role as embodied by the Virgin Mary, such as devotion to the family and virtuous humility. Taken together, these studies illuminate the role of cultural values in parents' educational beliefs and behavior across developmental levels.

In a study of 55 low income, mainland Puerto Rican, adolescent mothers and their young children Teichman and Contreras-Grau, (2006) found a positive relationship between level of acculturation and a more verbal and encouraging teaching style. They measured the level of acculturation by language preference, mainstream cultural involvement and level of exposure to Euro-American culture and found that higher levels of acculturation predicted more verbal inquiry behavior and positive feedback. Taken together, these studies illustrate the educational values of Puerto Rican parents and the impact of acculturation on parenting behaviors.

Compton-Lilly (2007) used Bourdieu's (1986) social capital theory to examine various forms of reading capital and to document the literacy practices in two Puerto Rican families with kindergarten children. She conducted in-depth interviews and observations with a young Puerto Rican mother and her daughter and with a Puerto Rican grandmother and her grandson. Both adults were enrolled in GED classes and both children attended a neighborhood school. The mother in the first family was generally well liked by both the GED teacher and her daughter's teacher, with whom she had developed an ongoing and positive relationship. The grandmother in the second family

was admired by her GED teacher for her persistence and unknown to her grandson's teacher, despite the practical help and encouragement in reading she provided to her daughter and grandson. Compton-Lilly conducted a standardized reading test with both children at the end of the kindergarten year. She found that the boy was reading several levels above the girl, who was still using visual cues to recount stories. Interestingly, the little girl had been promoted to first grade and the little boy's teacher was trying to decide if he should be promoted. Compton-Lilly suggested that the positive relationship with the girl's mother colored the teacher's assessment of the girl's literacy skills. At the same time, the lack of relationship with the boy's teacher meant that the strengths of the boy's family and the ways in which his grandmother supported and encouraged his literacy were unknown to the school and colored the teacher's assessment of the boy's literacy skills.

Finally, one vein of research describes ways to promote strengths-based thinking about Puerto Rican families (Hidalgo, 2000; Mercado & Moll, 2000; Olmedo, 1997). Olmedo (1997) conducted a case study of one extended Puerto Rican family to explore the ways that curricular assignments could be designed to elicit families' funds of knowledge and skills (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) and to interrupt teachers' deficit beliefs about migrant families. Using in-depth interviews she investigated the role of women in recreating community in the context of circular migration. At the same time, she suggests ways that teachers and students themselves could conduct such an oral history study to authentically involve parents and families while reinforcing academic skills. Mercado and Moll (2000) discuss a pair of collaborative, ethnographic studies with mainly Puerto Rican teachers and adolescents. The first study documented the

experiences of Puerto Rican bilingual teachers, mostly first and second generation, who conducted guided home visits in order to tap funds of knowledge in their students' homes. Although many of the teachers had formerly lived in the neighborhood in which they worked, they reported being shocked by the conditions in which their students lived. However, in reaching out to engage students' families and conducting the visits they also reported feeling a greater sense of connection with their students. In the second study, Mercado and Moll formed a university/school partnership to teach underachieving Puerto Rican middle school students how to conduct ethnographic research on funds of knowledge in their homes and families. Students included first and second generation Puerto Ricans, some of whom identified as mixed race and many of whom were overage. Outcomes of the study included increased cultural capital for students as well as statistically significant improvement on standardized measures of reading.

As part of a larger longitudinal ethnographic study on differential parenting practices for school success across cultural groups, Hidalgo (2000) studied four poor to working class Puerto Rican families and kindergarten students identified by teachers as academically successful. She followed the families as their children progressed from kindergarten to second grade and found that mothers employed four strategies related to academic success: monitoring, communicating, motivating, and protecting. Monitoring strategies included asking students about school, checking book bags, doing homework, attending events at school, and teaching values. Communication strategies included maintenance of the Spanish language, formation of a Puerto Rican identity and close familial connections, as well as teaching cultural values. Motivating strategies ranged from encouragement to pointing out the advantages of an education to communicating

high expectations. Finally, protective strategies included supervising and/or restricting outdoor activities, choosing children's friends, and shielding children from racism.

Taken together, these four studies illustrate ways to interrupt deficit thinking about Puerto Rican families by focusing on the strengths of their funds of knowledge and skills and examining the often-invisible ways that families support their children's schooling.

Differing Understandings of Parental Engagement

Parents and school personnel often hold differing understandings of parental engagement (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Ferrara, 2009b). Hill and Torres (2010) note that three of the most influential models of parental engagement in the literature (Comer, 1995; Epstein & Sanders, 2002; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994) presuppose that Latino parents understand the expectations held by the school for their involvement and that parents and schools are equal partners and can communicate with each other. Herrold and O'Donnell (2008) note that US government telephone surveys still define parent involvement in ways that are better understood by white, middle class parents; attending parent-teacher conferences or a school event, serving on a school committee, volunteering, or fundraising. Pérez-Carreón, Drake, and Barton (2005) small but in-depth qualitative study found that school actors and parents didn't share a common understanding of parental engagement. All three parents interviewed reported feeling disrespected and not valued by the school, even when they attempted to engage. Scribner, Young, and Pedroza (1999) found that school personnel and Hispanic parents held differing views of what constitutes parental involvement: teachers and administrators defined involvement as school based activities, such as volunteering or participating in

school events, while parents defined involvement as home based activities, such as sending their students to school ready to learn, talking to children, inculcating cultural values, monitoring behavior and homework. Quioco and Daoud (2006) conducted a qualitative study in two underperforming elementary schools with significant English Language Learner populations (35% and 46%). They interviewed 70 parents, 78 teachers, and 20 support staff. Teachers' perceptions of parents' involvement clustered around four themes: 1.) unreliable parents who did not volunteer 2.) parents who did not help with homework, 3) uncaring parents who did not value education, and 4.) unskilled and non-professional parents who spoke Spanish and therefore could not help students academically. Themes that emerged from parents' interviews included increased communication between teachers and parents and partnering with the school to help students. Ferrera (2009) surveyed a broad range of stakeholders in one school district including teachers and staff, administrators, pre-service teachers, and parents on their perceptions of parent involvement. Using the National Parent Teacher Association Standards (2005-2006) to formulate survey questions, she found that although parents generally felt welcome in school, 46% felt that school personnel did not want input from them on how to improve the school. She found that while most principals sent home a school calendar, invited parents to Back to School night, provided standardized test information, and invited parents to participate, fewer than 20% of the principals provided parents with skills workshops or included them in school governance. Just over 10% offered professional development in parental engagement to school personnel. Similarly, teachers and staff noted the need for more training in parental engagement. Taken together, these studies illustrate the way that school personnel define parental

involvement and illuminate the need to expand such narrow and school-centric definitions.

Culturally Sensitive Parental Engagement

Leading Latina scholar, Delgado-Gaitan (1991, 1996, 2001) conducted a ten-year ethnographic study in the small school district of Carpinteria, California on ways that Latino parents could partner with schools to increase their children's educational success. She interviewed teachers, administrators, and parents, as well as observed school activities. Many of her findings on ways to build bridges between parents and school personnel informed Delgado-Gaitan's text (2004) on engaging Latino parents in ways that make sense to them. She notes the importance of communication, especially around issues of language. Translating school documents into Spanish, an increasingly more common practice, should not absolve schools from hiring bilingual office staff, listening to and valuing what parents have to say, and engaging in the kind of face-to-face, often informal, consistent, and time-consuming communication that builds on the Latino values of *personalismo*, *dignidad*, and *respeto*, and that fosters trust with Latino parents.

Another of the ways that schools can engage Latino parents is by focusing on their values and strengths. De Gaetano (2007) describes working with teachers and Latino parents in two schools in ways that focused positively on culture and language. Over the course of a three-year project, parents built social and cultural capital by participating in workshops on the importance of language and culture, observing in classrooms, and working with students at home and at school. Teachers improved their communication with families and their understanding of the importance of language and

culture for students and their families. As Grinberg, Goldfarb and Saavedra, (2005) note, “Teachers can shape learning experiences, make them meaningful, exciting, respectful, relevant, and inclusive, or can teach that who the students are and what they bring with them as cultural beings is of no value. Further troubling, they also can teach that in order to succeed in school students must abandon who they are, their heritages, their language, their behaviors, values, cultural norms, and ways of knowing” (p.232).

Schools need to see and value the ways that Latino families, even poor families, support their children at home. Many of the values (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004) and ways of knowing or “funds of knowledge” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) held by Latino families can be leveraged by teachers to contribute to students’ achievement and school success. Moll and his colleagues (1992) defined this knowledge as “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household and individual functioning and well-being” (p. 133). He found “thick” and “multi-stranded” (p.133) teaching relationships in the home, as parents transmitted their knowledge in various domains to their children. Indeed, as part of a larger qualitative study with multi-ethnic teens and parents, scholars Hill, Tyson, and Bromell (2009) found sharing life experiences to be an effective and developmentally appropriate strategy for Latino parents to use with their adolescents.

Finally, in pursuing culturally sensitive parental engagement schools should practice persistence and consistency while acknowledging that it is an inter-active process. “...parental involvement is not a fixed event but a dynamic and ever-changing practice that varies depending on the context in which it occurs, the resources parents and

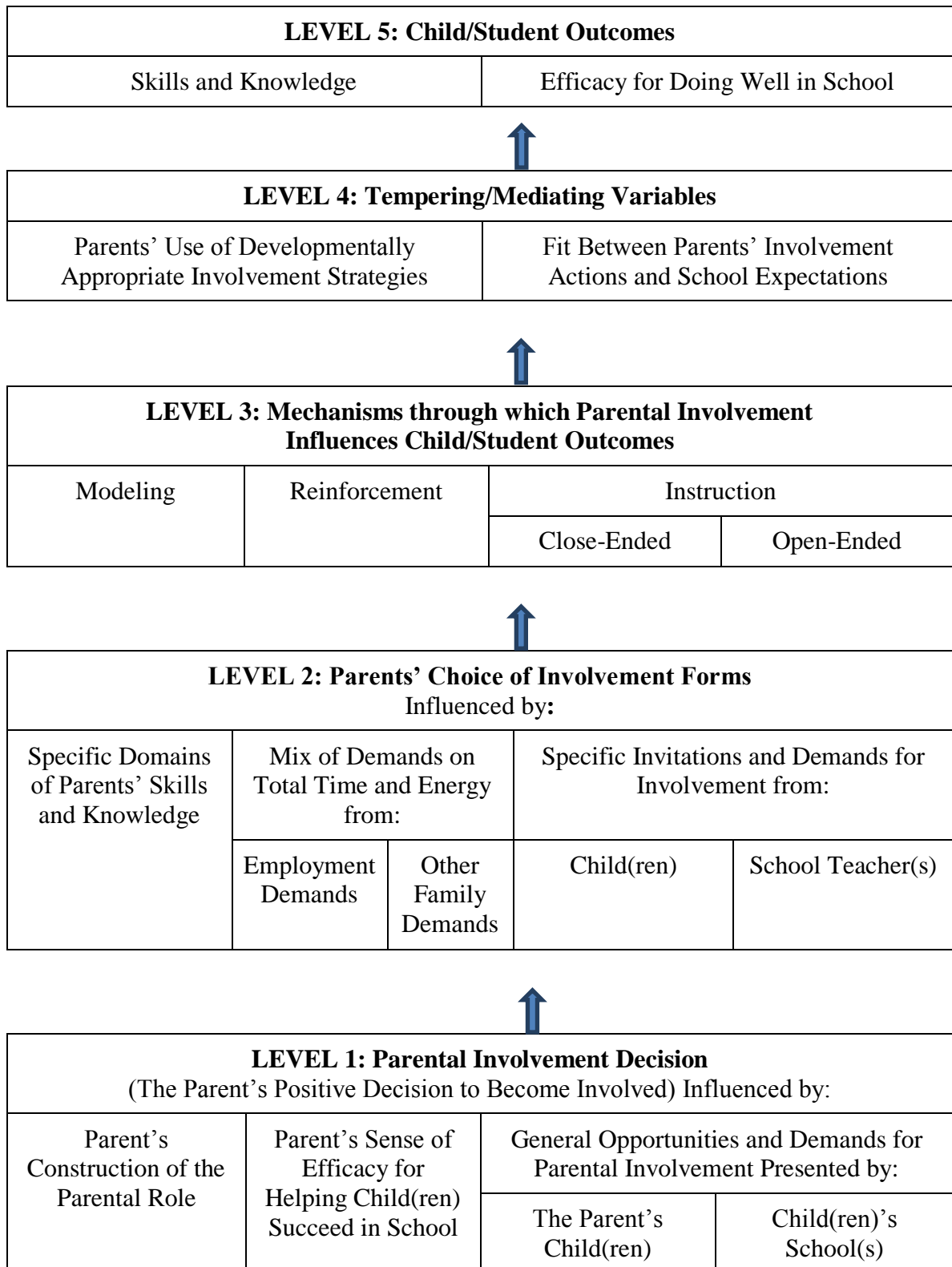
schools bring to their actions, and the students' particular needs" (Pérez-Carreón, Drake, & Barton, 2005, p. 467).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of Parental Engagement

Original Model. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) original five level, sequential model of the parent involvement process (Figure 1.) focused on why parents choose to get involved and how parents enable and enhance educational outcomes for their children. Although acknowledging the benefits of increased involvement to parents, students, and teachers, the model included variables most salient to the process from the parents' point of view. Perhaps more importantly, the researchers chose specific variables open to intervention and influence by school personnel and others and suggest points of entry for practitioners. Building on Eccles and Harold's (1993) theorizing on the variables of roles and self-efficacy, they argued that parents decide to become involved due to their personal parental role construction, their personal sense of efficacy to help their children succeed in school, and their response to the general and specific opportunities, demands, and invitations to participate from the child and the school. How parents decide to become involved depends upon their perceptions of the specific skills and knowledge they bring as well as life context variables such as work demands. Parents' influence is mediated by students' perceptions of the developmental appropriateness of the involvement, in addition to students' perceptions of the fit between school and home expectations. Finally, parents indirectly influence their children's educational success by modeling, encouragement, and instruction.

In the first level of the model Hoover-Dempsey and her colleague posited four

Figure 1. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (1995, 1997) original theoretical model of the parental involvement process



psychological factors that feed into parents' decisions to become involved: role construction, self-efficacy, general perceived opportunities and demands from students, and general perceived opportunities from teachers or the school. They suggested that parents construct their roles socially from observing and modeling the practices of their own parents, family members, and friends. However, in order to act upon this role construction, parents must feel their involvement would be effective. Building on Bandura's (1986) work on self-efficacy, they argued that parents' sense of their own potential effectiveness would come most powerfully from direct and vicarious experiences in successful parental involvement activities. Less influential sources would come from verbal persuasion on the part of significant others or the child and feeling emotionally concerned about the child's success in school. Role construction that included a sense of self-efficacy would mean that parents would be more likely to become involved in their children's schooling. Perceived general invitations from students, teachers, or the school to become involved also would increase the likelihood that parents would decide to engage. For example, a general invitation from the school could include a generally welcoming atmosphere and responsive school climate.

Once the decision was made to become involved, the second level of the model suggested that forms of involvement would be influenced by the specific skills and knowledge parents perceive they have to offer, the mix of work and other responsibilities they have, as well as by specific invitations by students and teachers to become involved. For example, parents who have confidence in their own math abilities would be more likely become involved in math homework help; parents would be more likely to engage in school related activities if work demands were accommodated, parents would be more

likely to attend school events if invited specifically by their children; and parents would be more likely to engage when teachers design interactive homework assignments.

The third level of the model explored *how* parents influence children's school success. Three hypothesized mechanisms included modeling, reinforcement, and instruction (both close-ended and open-ended). By becoming involved, parents would model behavior and attitudes conducive to school success. Their involvement would send the message to children of the value of school; it merits adult time and attention. When used in developmentally appropriate ways, their reinforcement would shape children's behavior in ways that contribute to school success. Finally, parents' instruction, both close-ended and open-ended, would promote the acquisition of content knowledge and higher level thinking skills.

Mediating variables in the fourth level of the model included the child's perceptions of 1.) the appropriateness of the strategies and activities selected by the parent and 2.) the fit between expectations of the school and activities selected by the parent. Hoover-Dempsey and her colleagues hypothesized that parents must take into account the age and abilities of their children in selecting an involvement strategy or activity. They noted that elementary age children possess enthusiasm and a belief in their parents as all-powerful. Their parents often possess the skills and abilities to help with school tasks. By contrast, individuation forms one of the central tasks of adolescence in Western society. The opinion of peers matters more than those of adults. At the same time, middle school tasks become more complex and may fall outside of the parents' abilities to help. Thus the selection between the parents' form of involvement and the developmental needs of the child is both more critical and more difficult to achieve at the

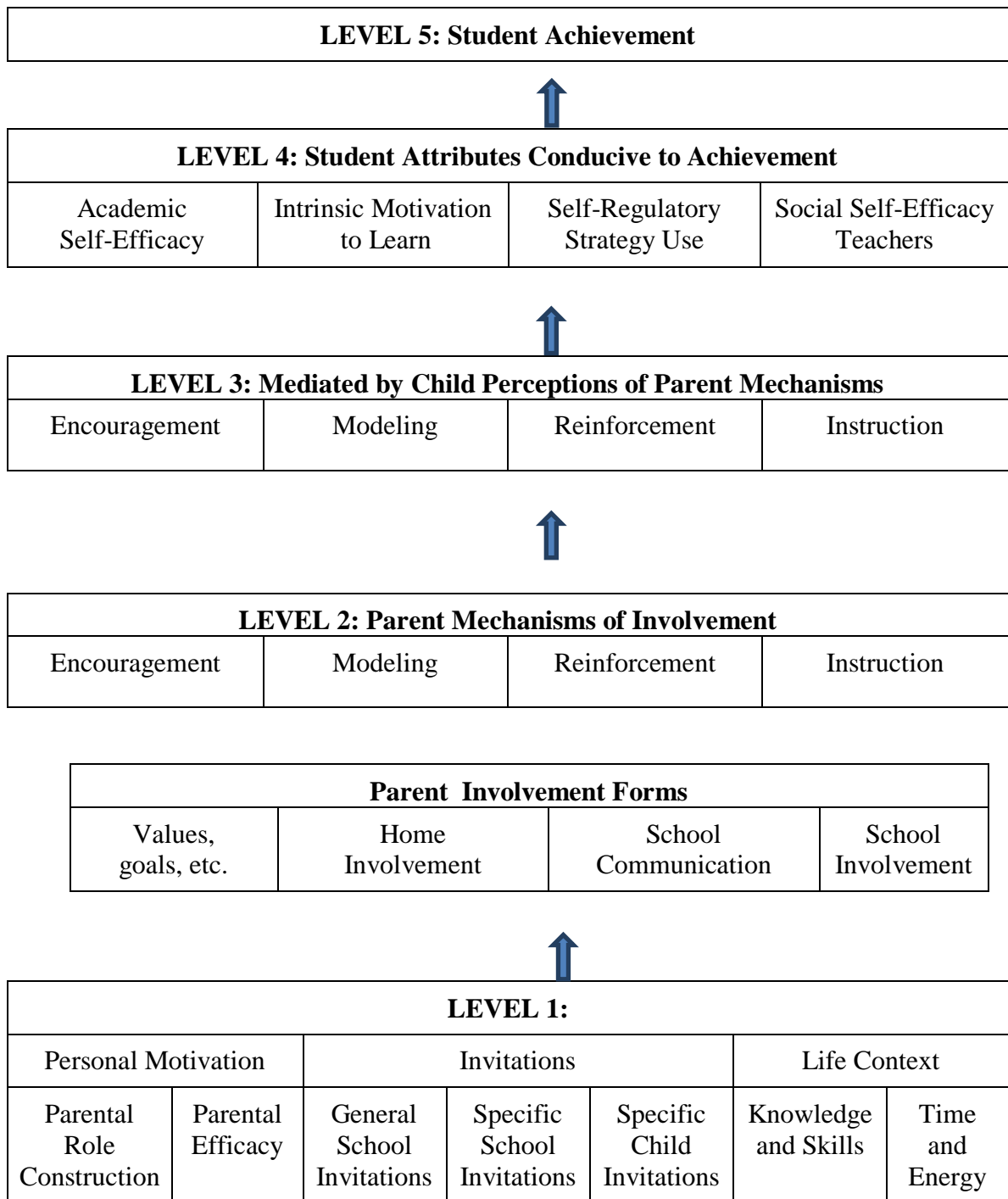
middle school level. Finally, there must be a fit between school and parental expectations. Children who must expend energy trying to reconcile differing expectations run the risk of diminished capacity for engagement or withdrawal.

Finally, in the fifth level of the model Hoover-Dempsey and her colleagues theorized that parents' engagement would relate indirectly to children's achievement by increasing the students' knowledge and skills as well as their sense of self-efficacy for school success, rather than by directly influencing students' results.

Revised Model. Ongoing efforts to operationalize constructs, build valid and reliable scales, and test the original model resulted in three significant modifications (Figure 2.) First, drawing from constructs in the first two levels of the original model, the first level in the revised model now features three overarching psychological constructs that form the foundation of parents' decisions to become involved: parental motivation (includes role construction and self-efficacy), perceived invitations (includes general and specific school invitations and specific child invitations), and life context (includes knowledge and skills, and time and energy). A second difference is that the revised model hypothesizes links among levels and can thus function as both a theoretical model and an analytical framework (Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2005). Third, reconfiguring the first two levels led to the elimination of a dependent measure in the first level, allowing authors to link the psychological constructs underlying involvement decisions to involvement behavior.

Finally, in subsequent work on the model, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) theorized that two components combine to help parents construct their roles: parents'

Figure 2. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (2005) revised model of the parental involvement process



activity beliefs (passive to active) and their valence (general disposition) towards parental involvement (Figure 3). Valence or general disposition towards parental involvement is largely determined by the nature (positive or negative) of parents' own experiences in school. In other words, depending upon parents' prior experiences as students their motivation to become involved in their child's schooling is strengthened or weakened. This in turn affects their beliefs about where the responsibility lies for their ensuring positive educational outcomes for their children. Do they believe that their child's educational success is largely the school's responsibility? Largely the parents' responsibility? Or a shared responsibility? Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler argue that these beliefs shape parents' behavior. The following table illustrates the interaction of these two constructs in measuring the focus (disengaged, school-focused, parent-focused, or partnership-focused) of parents' role construction.

Figure 3.

Parental Role Construction

		Activity Beliefs	
		Passive	Active
Valence	Away	Disengaged Role Construction	Parent-Focused Role Construction
	Towards	School-Focused Role Construction	Partnership-Focused Role Construction

Tests of the Model. As part of a larger research study on teachers' attitudes and behaviors regarding parental involvement, Reed, Jones, Walker, and Hoover-Dempsey (2000) surveyed over 700 parents of Pre-K to 5th grade students in two pre-dominantly

African American, low socio-economic and low-performing schools in an urban school district in the mid-south. 250 parents responded to the survey for a return rate of 36%. Testing the first level of the original model, Reed and his colleagues found that, as expected, parental role construction, parent's sense of efficacy for helping the child in school, and parent's perceptions of teacher invitations for involvement positively predicted involvement as reported by parents. However, they found that a parent-focused or partnership focused role construction, and perceived teacher invitations most powerfully predicted involvement.

Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, and Sandler (2007) surveyed parents of elementary and middle school aged students in a public, metropolitan, mid-southern US school district. They deemed their two samples representative of the socio-economically and ethnically diverse population. Of the 853 parents who responded (African American 22%, Asian American 4.8%, Hispanic American, 15.5%, white 44%, and other 6%) most were female, with at least a high school education, and reporting a yearly income between \$20,000 and \$40,000. Consistent with expectations, even after controlling for parents' income and level of educational attainment, motivational constructs (role construction, self-efficacy, invitations for involvement, and perceived life context) positively predicted both school and home-based forms of parental involvement. As expected, reported involvement decreased in parents of middle school aged children and parents' motivations differed by age of the child. Specific invitations from children, role construction, self-efficacy, and life context variables predicted home based involvement for parents of younger students. With the exception of role construction, the same variables predicted home based involvement for parents of older students. For parents of

both younger and older children, school based involvement was most powerfully predicted by specific invitations from the teachers and students.

Anderson and Minke (2007) surveyed parents from three elementary schools in a large, urban, southwestern school district (49% African American, 39% Latino, 8% Caucasian, 4% Asian, and < 1% Native American). The majority (77%) of students qualified for free or reduced lunch. Over 80% of parents responding in English returned surveys. The majority of respondents were African-American (67.5%) mothers (79.3%) with some college education (69.1%) and full-time employment (58.6%). In testing the first two levels of the original model, Anderson and her colleague found support for parental involvement as a multi-dimensional concept, with parents reporting differing amounts of involvement and more forms of home-based involvement than school-based involvement. Contrary to expectations, role construction and self-efficacy did not strongly predict parents' decisions to become involved. Specific teacher invitations most strongly predicted parents' involvement behaviors. Somewhat surprisingly, parents' self-reported resources did not predict involvement, leading researchers to surmise that, when invited to do so, parents find the time, energy, and means to do so.

That same year, Green and Hoover-Dempsey tested the model on an "understudied" population, parents who homeschooled their children. Using targeted sampling techniques, Green and the model's co-author surveyed 250 parents of elementary aged children. They analyzed 136 responses (54.4%) hypothesized to be representative of parents who homeschool. Respondents were mostly female (96.4%), Caucasian (95%), college graduates (58%), and from middle-income households (\$50,000 annual average). Not surprisingly, parents reported a more parent-focused role

construction, which positively related to self-perceived skills and abilities, as well as life context variables of time and energy.

In a recent (2011) exploratory test of the first one and a half levels of the revised model, Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler for the first time focused on a subset (N=147) of Latino parents of elementary and middle school students as part of a larger study in a southeastern urban school district with a fast growing Hispanic population. The sample was comprised of mostly first generation, Mexican-American immigrant mothers, half of whom reported some high school education, over three-quarters of whom reported an annual income between \$10,000 and \$20,000, and whose preferred language of communication was Spanish. Surveys were sent home in both languages, and the overall response rate for the larger study was 37%.

Analysis of correlations among variables showed two important findings. First, a partnership focused role construction was positively and strongly related to general school invitations ($r = .67, p < .01$). Role construction was measured as a categorical variable and tested parents' perceptions of the responsibility of the school, the parent, or shared (partnership) responsibility in the child's education. Second, parent's self-efficacy and perceived skills and knowledge for involvement were also positively and strongly related ($r = .65, p < .01$). Consistent with prior tests of the model (Anderson & Minke, 2007), other results showed parents more likely to be involved at home than at school. As well, a partnership focused role construction and specific student invitations predicted home based forms of involvement. By contrast, specific invitations from the teacher predicted school based involvement. Parents' perceptions of the demands on their time also predicted school based involvement; however, to a much weaker degree.

Need for the Present Study. The need for the present study can be found in the authors' suggestions for future research. This includes further tests of the model with Latino populations, using the model to structure interview questions and to more fully understand the model's constructs from the point of view of Latino parents themselves. Such research would shed light on how Latino parents experience school. It would also provide them with the opportunity to use their own words to describe their role as parents, free of the constraints imposed by the wording of survey items and of Likert scale type forced-choice responses. Finally, such research would allow parents to define what they feel they would need in order to participate more fully or effectively in their child's schooling.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter restates the overall purpose of the study and the research questions and summarizes the theoretical model used. It details the research methodology, the role of the qualitative researcher, population and sample, interview measures and procedures, human subjects' research procedures, method of interview data analysis, examination of school artifacts, and informal observations to be used in this study. Finally, it describes the anticipated contribution to the field of this study

Purpose

This is a small-scale qualitative study that used a case study approach to further test the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (2005) of parental engagement with a small sample of Latino parents. It focused on exploring and describing the perceptions of Latino parents in a community middle school relating to if, why, and how families decide to engage in their children's schooling. Parents described in their own words factors which they perceived to influence parental involvement decisions, the various forms they perceived parental involvement takes, and the factors that they perceived impede or encourage parental involvement.

Research Questions

I interviewed Latino parents to answer the following research questions:

1. What motivates parents to become involved?
 - a. Role construction? (activity beliefs and valence)
 - b. Role efficacy?

- c. School, teacher, and child invitations?
2. What form does Latino family involvement take (communication of values and goals, home activities, parent/teacher/school communications, or school activities)?
3. What facilitates or impedes Latino family involvement?

Theoretical Model

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) theorize that parents make the decision to become involved due to three factors. First, parents are motivated to become involved with their children's schooling because they believe that it is part of the job of a good parent (role construction), and they believe that they will be effective if they do become involved (role efficacy). Second, they become involved in response to general and specific invitations to do so on the part of the school, the teachers, or their children. Third, parents become involved when they perceive that they have the necessary knowledge and skills, and the time and energy to do so (life context variables). Further, their forms of involvement will vary depending upon whether they construct their role as home based, school based, or partnership based.

Research Methodology

Case Study Design. Strengths of qualitative methodology lie in its ability to capture an "emic" or insider viewpoint (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) in a naturalistic setting and local context (McMillan, 2004). This study further tested the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler theoretical model of parental engagement and explored the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998) of parental involvement at the middle school level. The

study aimed “to find out as much as possible about the characteristics, actions, and ideas, and other attributes” (Wallen & Frankel, 1991, pp. 290-291), and to “study intensively the background, current status, and environmental interactions” (Isaac & Michael, 1997, p. 52) of Latino family engagement in a single, community school setting. As such, a case study design was appropriate. Elements of this case study included semi-structured interviews with parents, examination of school artifacts such as survey data from the school improvement plan, disaggregated data on the school’s Latino student achievement from the school’s results on the 2012 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) reading and math tests, the school’s Latino student attendance and behaviour referral data, as well as informal observations of two of the school’s PTO meetings.

Qualitative researcher as instrument Banks (1998) wrote, “I now believe that the biographical journeys of researchers greatly influence their values, their research questions, and the knowledge they construct” (p. 4). My interest in studying Latino/Puerto Rican families stems from experiences over nine years in the Colombian city of Manizales, living among Latinos, and working in an American type school that served predominantly Colombian students. My affection, admiration and respect for the Colombian people with whom I lived and worked only grew as I worked towards fluency in Spanish and a deeper understanding of *paisa* culture. I count those years as among the most personally and professionally rewarding of my career as an educator. Yet, as Villenas (1996) points out, ethnographers must “question our own identities and privileged positions, and ... the ways in which our writings perpetuate ‘othering’ (p. 713). I construct my racial and cultural identity from varied sources and lived experience. I was born in a small town in Canada’s eastern-most province, the first child

of Anglo-European-Canadian working class parents. I am a white and privileged, university educated, native English speaker and Western born woman, who will be easily viewed as a member of the “mainstream” majority, and potentially an “external-outsider”. As I went about interviewing the participants of this study, I kept my own identity at the forefront of my mind in efforts to ask questions in ways that respected parents’ accumulated wisdom and knowledge and remained open to the meaning they made of their experiences.

Semi-structured interviews. In this section, I will describe the development of the interview questions, measures of reliability and validity, pilot interviews, interview procedures, and interview saturation.

Interview Question Development Process. In order to develop the interview questions I first examined the following scales developed and refined to test components of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) model: Parental Role Construction, Parental Efficacy, General School Invitations, Specific School Invitations, Specific Child Invitations, Knowledge and Skills, Time and Energy, Parent Choice of Involvement Activities. Full descriptions of scale development and testing (Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler, & Hoover Dempsey, 2005) demonstrate that all scales had been tested and retested with varying samples of elementary and middle school parents and yielded alpha reliability ratings of between .80 and .88. The authors reported that a panel of five experts had determined the satisfactory content and face validity of the scales. I also examined English and Spanish versions of the Parent Involvement Project Questionnaire developed from the scales and used most recently to test the model with a sample of 147

elementary and middle school Latino parents in a metropolitan school district (Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2011).

Working directly from the scales and the surveys I crafted a draft set of interview questions. I conferred with another qualitative researcher in order to refine the interview questions to be less direct and more likely to elicit detailed information on the model's constructs from participants (Appendix A). In order to ensure accuracy of meaning and fidelity of translation into Spanish, I worked with a bilingual professional to translate and back-translate the revised English interview questions. She made several suggestions for slight wording changes to ensure accurate meaning which I then incorporated into the Spanish translation.

Pilot of Interview Questions. I piloted the interview with two Spanish-speaking participants. First, I conducted the interview in Spanish with a bilingual colleague. After the interview was finished, we sat down with copies of the interview questions in English and Spanish and determined that the questions in Spanish were congruent with the questions in English. I asked for her feedback on the quality and understandability of the questions, as well as on my ability to communicate the interview questions in Spanish and to encourage detailed responses from participants. We held a short conversation on the interview questions, which resulted in several small word changes. She highlighted my use of using part of her response to a previous question in framing the next question as an effective way to show participants that I was listening carefully to responses and attempting to elicit more detail.

I then piloted the interview in Spanish with a Puerto Rican Spanish-speaking member of the university's custodial staff and a mother of three children. She gave me

feedback on several words which had a specific meaning in Puerto Rican Spanish, specifically the words for homework, “asignaciones” and bus, “gua-guas.” I made a note to change the word for homework in several interview questions and to listen for the word for bus in interviews with parents in Spanish.

Population and Sample

I chose purposively to study María Cadilla Middle School (MCMS), in large part due to its recent designation as a community school and to its demographics. The study took place in a middle school in a small northeastern city. The south side of the city continues to be home to a large Hispanic/Latino, predominantly Puerto Rican population and 70% of MCMS students are Hispanic/Latino, predominantly Puerto Rican. The school serves a high needs population and approximately 88 percent of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch. I selected parent participants by purposive sampling, or their ability to provide a depth of data (Patton, 1990) not available using quantitative methods. Criteria for selection included self-reported Latino identity, having a student at the middle school, and parent’s willingness to be interviewed. Parents’ level of English was not used to identify participants, as parents were given the option to be interviewed in either Spanish or English.

To locate parent interview participants, I spoke with the school’s principal, assistant principal, bilingual counselor, director of the school band, after school coordinator, and the community school coordinator. In addition, I talked to the district’s Minority Affairs coordinator and the director of the Language Assessment Center. I also spoke to Latino parents who worked at the university. I attended several Parent Teacher

Organization meetings, a school concert, and a parent information evening at the school to explain my research and to ask for participants.

Ten participants were recruited from recommendations of school personnel, three participants were recruited at a Parent Teacher Organization meeting, one participant worked at the school, and one participant was recruited via snowball sampling, that is, was referred to me on the suggestion of another parent. I conducted 12 interviews and spoke to 15 participants in all, as three of the interviews took place with couples.

Interview Procedures. Semi-structured interviews and member checks were held with 15 parents. I called each prospective participant (Phone Call Script in English, Appendix B; Phone Call Script in Spanish, Appendix C) to discuss the interview format, content and logistics, such as convenient date, time, and place, length of the interview, language of the interview, and transportation and child care needs of participant. I gave parents the option of holding the interview at the school, in a local coffee shop, or in their own home. Most (10) chose to meet me at the school, although I met with four participants in their homes and with one at his place of business.

At the time of the interview I explained the informed consent form verbally and asked permission to record the interview. I gave parents the opportunity to read the form and to ask any questions before signing it in either English or Spanish (Appendices D, E). I recorded interviews using an unobtrusive digital recorder. I used a series of open and close-ended questions presented in an informal conversational style to encourage participants to feel free to respond openly while ensuring that all topics relevant to the theoretical framework were discussed. The length of the interviews varied from thirty minutes to an hour and twenty minutes, depending upon the number of examples given or

how often the interviewees digressed from the questions asked. Each participant received a gift card as a thank you at the end of the interview.

Saturation. To determine a range of participants to interview, I reviewed Merriam's (1998) counsel for the novice qualitative researcher "What is needed is an adequate number of participants, sites, or activities to answer the question posed at the beginning of the study..." p. 80. Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam (2003) recommend a variety of factors be taken into account to determine sample size in a qualitative. These include whether the population is more heterogeneous than diverse, the number of criteria for selection, the complexity of data collection (single interview rather than multiple interview), and researcher resources of time and funds. In consultation with other qualitative researchers and my advisor, I planned to conduct between twelve and fifteen interviews. In making the judgment call to stop interviewing after the twelfth interview, I reviewed three definitions of saturation in qualitative data collection (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mason, 2010). The concept of redundancy or stopping when no new information comes out of interview data was a theme that ran through all three definitions. I used this notion of redundancy to determine that interview questions in the later interviews were not yielding new information and that more data collection would not shed further light on Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's theoretical model.

Data Management, Data Analysis Plans, and Data Reporting

Data Management for Interview Data. I collected signed consent forms, scanned them, and kept them as digital files on my password protected laptop computer. I collected interview data using a digital tape recorder. I transferred interview recordings promptly onto my personal, password-protected laptop and then wiped the recording

from the tape recorder. I kept a digital list of interview participants and assigned each one a number and a pseudonym. I renamed audio files using pseudonyms. I transcribed the first audio file and engaged a professional transcription service to transcribe the remaining 10 interviews. Due to researcher error, one interview was not recorded successfully and the interview was re-constructed shortly after it was held by making detailed notes. I kept all transcriptions in the language in which they were recorded. As most parents requested that the interview be conducted in Spanish, only five of fifteen participants were interviewed in English. I read each transcription as I listened to interview audio recordings to ensure reasonable accuracy. Several of the interviews were held in noisy environments and despite the poor quality of the audio recordings the transcriptions captured interview conversations with surprising fidelity. I kept all files on my personal and password protected laptop. Once all the interviews were completed, I phoned or emailed participants to give them the opportunity to read the transcripts and suggest revisions (member checking).

Data Analysis of Interview Data. I analyzed interviews using a directed content analysis (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). I used the following *a priori*, structural codes determined by the variables used in the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) model: role construction (activity beliefs and valence); role efficacy; invitations to involvement from the school, teachers, and children; life context variable of time and energy, knowledge and skills; and forms of involvement (home-based, parent-teacher communication, school-based) to deductively analyze interview data (Saldana, 2013). As the interviews progressed, I compared newly collected interview data with previously collected interview data, and a series of in vivo and inductive codes emerged from using

this constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For example, the phrases “estar pendiente,” (to be aware of all aspects of child’s well-being), “echar para adelante” (to get ahead), and “somos unidos” (a united family) emerged as in vivo codes and themes that ran through the interview data responses. As I did ongoing comparison, the number of codes expanded in response to new themes that emerged.

Codebook development. Using the iterative process describe above, I first created a codebook that named and described each structural code derived from the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) model (Appendix F). In addition, I created codes that described demographic variables of participants, for example immigrant status, or in the case of Puerto Rican participants, circulatory migration (moving from the island to the mainland or vice versa). I transcribed and coded the first interview and began to add examples of each code to the codebook. I shared this codebook with one other bilingual coder, and she coded the first interview independently. We met to compare codes and she suggested several more codes, such as “child’s level of progress” to indicate when a parent talked about how well a child was doing in school. As a result of these suggestions, I made revisions to the codebook. As well, as described above, I added several in vivo codes that had emerged. I also collapsed several codes into one. For example, originally there were four codes used to describe various aspects of helping with homework (explaining tough assignments, encouraging child when he/she didn’t feel like doing homework and homework suggestions). I collapsed these codes into one code, homework help. We then used the revised codebook to each independently code a second and a third interview. The use of another coder allowed me to increase reliability while helping me to consider, adopt, or discard alternative explanations for the data. Up

to this point, I had coded interviews by hand. Using computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) I then uploaded all interview transcriptions into NVivo. I transferred the first three coded interviews and used the codes we had created and agreed upon to set up the digital equivalent of a codebook (Appendix G). Using the qualitative software package helped me to standardize all other coding decisions.

Inter-coder reliability. Establishing and maintaining inter-coder consistency was an ongoing process. Using the first iteration of the codebook, I coded the initial interview. The bilingual coder independently coded the same interview. We met to discuss the findings and found a high degree of inter-coder reliability. We had coded 9 out of 10 codes in the same manner. We discussed each inconsistency and reached mutual agreement on changing codes. The discussion resulted in eliminating several codes, combining codes, and generating several new in vivo codes. Using the revised codebook, we independently coded the second interview. In this longer interview, we had coded 6 out of 10 codes in the same manner. Once again, we discussed each inconsistency and reached mutual agreement in changing codes. The drop in inter-coder consistency may have been due to the nature of the interview. The interview took place fairly early on in the process, and I was far less skilled than I was later in the process in guiding participants back from digressions to the questions at hand. We then independently coded a third interview. With the third interview, we had coded 9 out of 10 codes consistently, and I coded the remaining data using the CAQDAS software described above.

Minimizing threats to validity and reliability. To minimize threats to validity and reliability I tape recorded all the interviews, standardized coding decisions using

computer assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS), ensured inter-coder consistency, conducted member checks of data (Maxwell, 2005), and described clearly my identity and researcher status (Merriam, 1998).

Reporting findings. I reported my findings thematically, especially as each theme related to or diverged from the theoretical framework and interview data. I used direct and translated quotes from participants to illuminate recurring or particularly striking themes; however, I used pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants.

Examination of School Artifacts and Data

I examined and describe the mission, vision, and school improvement plan, especially as they relate to family/parental engagement in general and Hispanic/Latino/Puerto Rican family/parental engagement in particular.

I examined and describe Latino/Hispanic student attendance, discipline referrals, and PSSA achievement data in comparison to other student groups in the school in order to provide background and a more detailed picture of Latino/Hispanic families' school experience.

Informal Observations

In working with school personnel over the last two and a half years, I have had opportunities to visit the school, meet the receptionists in both the Central Office and the Attendance and Guidance Office, visit the Family Center to conduct adult ESL classes, interact with a variety of volunteer university student receptionists in the Family Center, meet with a number of school personnel (the principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, Family Center coordinator, after school coordinator), and conduct focus groups in both languages with parents as part of a needs assessment for planning parent

programs at the school. For the purposes of the current study, I conducted two informal observations of the school's PTO meetings.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Sample Characteristics

Twelve interviews (three with couples) were conducted with a total of fifteen parents. Demographic characteristics of the sample participants are provided in Table 2.

Gender and marital status. As the table demonstrates, five fathers and 10 mothers participated in the study. While all of the participants self-identified as Hispanic, eight of the 15 reported that they were Puerto Rican, which is somewhat lower than the school's estimate that 80% of the school's Hispanic students are Puerto Rican. Fourteen of the parents who participated were married or living in a common law relationship. Only one parent was a single mother who had recently separated from her children's father. This high percentage (80%) of married parents in the sample is higher than national averages for Puerto Rican or Hispanic families (63%), (Motel & Patten, 2012a). Marital status has important implications for parental involvement, given that research suggests increased levels of parental engagement are associated with two parent households (Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000; Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, & Apostoleris, 1997) and may account for parents' perceptions in the sample of sufficient time and energy to be involved.

Migration and Language. Of the eight Puerto Rican parents, two were born in the mainland US. Only two had experienced some form of circulatory migration. One had returned to the island as an infant and recently migrated to the mainland as a mother of four. Another returned to the island as a kindergartner and had to learn Spanish before

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Latino Parents (N = 15)

Demographic Characteristics	N	% of Total
Parent's gender		
Male	5	33.3
Female	10	66.7
Parent's marital status		
Married	12	80.0
Common-law	2	13.3
Separated	1	6.7
Parent's country of origin		
Puerto Rico	8	53.3
Ecuador	2	13.3
Honduras	1	6.7
Mexico	3	20.0
Unknown Hispanic	1	6.7
Immigrant status		
US born circular migrant	2	13.3
Puerto Rican born	6	40.0
Immigrant	7	46.7
Parents' highest educational attainment		
Elementary school	2	13.3
Junior high school	1	6.7
Senior high school	7	46.7
Some college	5	33.3
Parent's employment status		
Full time	9	60.0
Part time	2	13.3
Housewife	3	20.0
Retired	1	6.7
Free and reduced lunch status		
Qualify for free lunch	8	53.3
Qualify for reduced lunch	5	33.3
Do not qualify for free or reduced lunch	2	13.3
Parent's language(s)		
Spanish only	10	66.7
Bilingual	5	33.3

returning to the mainland as a young man. Fully two-thirds of the parents requested to be interviewed in Spanish, as they did not feel confident in their English language skills. Of the remaining five parents who were interviewed in English, all indicated that they were bilingual.

Education, Employment and Income level. Three of the fifteen parents had earned an Associate's degree, two had completed one year of study beyond high school, seven had completed high school, and three had grade school education. This high proportion (80%) of participants with at least a high school education is significant given the positive association between caregiver's high school education and home-based parental involvement (Kohl, Lengua, & McMahon, 2000). Nine of the fifteen parents were employed full time, although at the time of the study, one father was at home on disability insurance from a work-related injury. Of the remaining five parents, two were employed part time, three mothers self-identified as housewives, and one father was retired. Approximately 88% of the school's students qualify for free or reduced lunch (Personal communication, School Principal, 2013). Consistent with the overall school population, six of the 12 families in the sample qualified for free lunch, and a further four families qualified for reduced lunch.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this qualitative study.

1. What motivates parents to become involved?
 - a. Role construction? (activity beliefs and valence)
 - b. Role efficacy?

- c. School, teacher, and child invitations?
2. What form does Latino family involvement take (communication of values and goals, home activities, parent/teacher/school communications, or school activities)?
3. What facilitates or impedes Latino family involvement?

Findings

Parents Motives

Parents were asked a series of questions about their activity beliefs (passive to active) and the nature of their own school experiences (valence) to illuminate how they constructed their roles (disengaged, parent-focused, school-focused or partnership-focused).

Role Construction – Activity Beliefs and Valence. Parents were asked a series of questions designed to understand the importance they place on the following activities related to their engagement in the children’s education: volunteering, communicating with the child’s teacher regularly, helping the child with homework, supporting decisions made by the teacher, “staying on top of things” at school, explaining tough assignments to the child, helping the child study for tests, reading with the child, talking with other parents from the child’s school, making the school better, attending special events such as the school’s Open House, attending PTO meetings, talking to the child about the school day, encouraging the child when he or she doesn’t feel like doing homework, and being aware of how the child is doing with homework.

Volunteering. Eleven out of fifteen parents rated volunteering at school to be highly important (five on a scale of one to five). Four of the fifteen parents rated volunteering as somewhat important but reported that working long hours or family commitments prevented them from doing so. Of the eleven parents who rated volunteering as highly important, only four (three of them English speaking) followed this up with an example of having volunteered in his/her child's middle school in the last year, three in activities in response to invitations from the director of the band and one as a sports coach in after school activities. One mother said,

I think there are different capacities one can volunteer at. Something as simple as being the lead person to make phone calls maybe, you know and start a chain, to being someone who – in the past I've done, you know running to pick up supplies for maybe a jazz festival. I know I have something coming up now at the end of this month where I'm gonna be picking up all the hot dogs that, you know Hatfield donated [for a band activity].

All four of the parents who reported volunteering in middle school worked full time. When asked later in the interview if they had the time and energy to volunteer, they described volunteering on the weekend (two), outside of work hours (one), or on days off (one). For this and other parental involvement activities they used the phrase “making the time”.

Five of the eleven parents reported having received invitations to volunteer in their child's elementary school and recounted examples of chaperoning field trips or assisting in classrooms. One Spanish-speaking mother described being invited to volunteer in her daughter's kindergarten classroom and her success in communicating, although both she and the teacher were monolingual. She commented:

Yo a veces me hago voluntaria en él Kinder. Él maestro no habla este español, cada vez que él pregunta algo “Como se dice esto?” entonces yo le digo “Ahí, lo que es... y siempre he ido como allá como cuatro veces ya. Y me dices cuando tú gustas ser voluntaria tu vienes, y me lo dice en inglés. Y yo lo entiendo en inglés y yo “OK.”

Sometimes I volunteer in Kindergarten. The teacher doesn't speak Spanish, every time he asks something “How do you say this?” then I tell him, “Here, what it is is...” and I've gone there four times already. And he tells me whenever you would like to volunteer, come, and he tells me in English. And I understand it in English and I (say) “OK.”

This mother didn't volunteer in her son's middle school but planned to study English so that she would feel more confident in her abilities to do so. In a similar vein, another Spanish-speaking mother commented that she had volunteered in elementary school but that she perceived her lack of English in middle school as a barrier. “Yo creo que sí es importante.” (I think that yes, it [volunteering] is important.) When asked if she had volunteered in middle school she replied, “No, en otros niveles si, pero aquí en la escuela media no.” (No, in other levels yes, but here in the middle school no.) When asked why, her husband replied for the couple, “lo mismo que ella dijo [antes] el idioma.” (The same as she said [before] the language.”) Another Spanish-speaking mother indicated that she had volunteered in her son's elementary school saying, “...me conocían mucho” (...they knew me well). One father, who had volunteered extensively in his children's school in Honduras, gave two reasons for not volunteering in his children's middle school. First, he perceived the school to be very safe for his children, but that the level of security also sent an unwelcoming message to parents. Second, he was unwilling to volunteer due to unruly and unsupervised behavior he observed at dismissal when picking his children up from school every day.

At a different point in the interview, parents were asked if they had received invitations from the school or from their child's middle school teacher(s) to volunteer. With the exception of requests and invitations from the director of the band, none of the parents in the sample had received invitations or requests from their child's middle school teacher(s) to volunteer. Given the number of parents who had previously volunteered in elementary school, despite perceived the barrier of lack of English skills, this may represent an opportunity to the school to increase invitations to parents to be involved in ways that are age appropriate and relevant to middle school.

Individual parents reported barriers to volunteering included time (4 parents), lack of English language skills (3 parents), an absence of middle school invitations to do so, an unwelcoming atmosphere (two) and in one case, a sense of being known in the elementary school that was not present in the middle school.

Communicating with the child's teacher(s) regularly. Fourteen out of fifteen Latino parents in the study gave a highly important rating to communicating with the child's teacher regularly. In response to the prompt one Spanish-speaking mother said,

Bastante importante porque uno tiene que estar en comunicación con el maestro para ver en qué puede uno ayudar a los hijos. ¿En qué nos necesitan? Si es algo que tenemos que trabajar con el maestro o con el niño juntos. Para mi es bien importante.	Quite important because you have to be in communication with the teacher to see how you can help the children. What do they need from us? If it's something we have to work with the teacher or the child together. For me it's very important.
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Only one of the fifteen parents indicated that the long hours he and his wife spent at their business prevented them from being more involved, including having the time to

communicate much with teachers. It should be noted that this is the only parent who requested to be interviewed at his place of work.

When asked to give an example of parent-teacher communication, six parents referred to attending parent/teacher conferences. In other examples parents described speaking to their child's teacher or to the school counselor about the student's behavior as well as about their child's academic progress of skills. One Spanish-speaking father gave several examples of communicating with his son's teachers: one teacher gave him a website so that his son could practice mathematics and another teacher gave him advance notice of a test and asked him to practice with his son. In turn he described asking the child's teacher to keep him informed of his son's behavior. Three new immigrant parents reported communicating with bilingual staff members with concerns about their child's English language skills and/or advocating for appropriate placement in English classes. One Spanish-speaking mother interpreted fewer instances of parent-teacher communication as a good sign as it meant that her son was well behaved. She said,

....gracias a Dios mis hijos no son conflictivos, no tenemos problemas que nos estén llamando constantemente de la escuela y no hemos pasado gracias a Dios por esa situación.

.... thanks be to God my children are not conflictive, we have no problems in that they are constantly calling from the school and thanks be to God we have not gone through that situation.

The five English-speaking parents were more likely to report having regular ongoing contact with the child's teacher or teachers or to describe the importance of developing a two-way relationship with the child's teacher. One mother said,

I come here, you know I like the teachers to know that it's mom and dad in the house. I like them to know that, you know this is what I look like, introduce myself and my name is... And we write down emails, you

know this is all the teachers' emails, this is my email, if you ever need anything or need to inform me of something. And this way they know how to get a hold of me aside from the phone. So I think it's very important.

Nine out of ten Spanish-speaking parents also reported communicating with their children's teachers, but were more likely to report responding to teachers' requests or invitations or to report communication with one of the school's bilingual counselors. Two parents mentioned checking the student's communication book for notes from the teacher. One mother speaking for herself and her husband commented, "Aquí yo vengo, venimos cada vez que nos dicen, los, los dos venimos y chequeamos las notas." (I come here [the middle school], we come here every time that they say, both of us come and check the grades.) However, one Spanish-speaking mother reported a more two-way communication with her son's teacher,

Primero le daba un poquito de dificultad al entrar, pero yo y mi esposo siempre estábamos ahí tratando y tratando; aunque él hacía las asignaciones solito, pero le preguntaban al maestro cómo eran las asignaciones, cómo está haciendo en el salón, todas esas cosas para que nosotros pudiéramos estarle ayudando un poco más.

At first, it [middle school] was a little difficult for him [the couple's son], but my husband and I were always there trying and trying; even though he did his homework by himself, but we asked the teacher how the homework was, how he are doing in the classroom, all those things so that we might be helping him a bit more.

In sum, all parents, even those recently arrived to the United States or ones for whom lack of English language skills might constitute a barrier, described parent-teacher communication as important and reported some form of parent-teacher communication even if it was teacher initiated or more behaviorally than academically related.

Helping with Homework. All 15 Latino parents in the sample rated the importance of helping their children with homework highly. They described an after

school or early evening routine that included some form of homework monitoring or homework help. Parents asking their children about homework, ensuring that their children understood the assignment, helped their children with homework, locating someone in the family who could help with homework, reviewing the communication book, or checking to see if homework had been completed. The extent of parents' help with homework seemed to be related to whether or not the child was struggling with it. For example, one father with two students in the middle school commented that he usually just checked his daughter's homework to see that it was done. On the other hand, his son was struggling and the father responded by seeking homework help from the child's teacher. About half the parents said that their children completed homework independently and only occasionally or rarely asked for help with assignments.

Supporting Teacher Decisions. Parents were a little more cautious in rating the importance of supporting decisions made by the teacher. Nine out of fifteen parents rated it as somewhat or highly important. One Spanish-speaking mother gave two examples of supporting her son's middle school teachers' decisions. She said,

...él tiene diferentes áreas donde los niños hacen diferentes tipos de cosas. ... yo apoyo en eso, porque los niños como [mi hijo] no pueden estar haciendo una misma cosa siempre. El necesita diferentes cosas para distraer la mente, me encanto eso.	... he [the teacher] has different areas where children do different types of things. ... I support that, because children like [my son] can't always be doing the same thing. He needs different things to distract the mind, I loved that.
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She also gave an example of supporting the teacher's decision to give her son a detention for a behavior infraction. Another English-speaking mother commented, "So I think it is important to support the teacher and I think it's important to set your boundaries and let

the teacher know. “ A more typical response was that it depended upon the situation.

One English-speaking mother said,

On a scale of one to five. A four. I think that sometimes if a teacher only knows certain things maybe about a child and without having a view of the other side of it – you know what I mean? Then maybe their judgment or their call may not be the most informed one. So you know I think it’s important to support your teacher, however I also think it’s important for them to be, you know well informed about your child before they make certain decisions.

Another father commented on disagreeing with a decision taken by a teacher in the middle school about his older son who was now struggling in high school. Another mother described an example of not supporting a decision taken by school personnel in her son’s elementary school in Puerto Rico. She commented that this had given her courage and more confidence to question teacher decisions; however, that she had not encountered this difficulty in her son’s current school.

Staying on Top of Things. Uniformly, parents highly rated the importance of “staying on top of things” at school. In response to the prompt and throughout the interviews parents described a variety of strategies for keeping themselves up to date on how things were going with their children’s schooling. Parents described initiating school day talk; monitoring homework, class assignments and grades; and remaining vigilant about the child’s social relationships and after-school activities.

The phrase “estar pendiente” was used by seven Spanish-speaking participants. Roughly analogous to the English idiom “staying on top of things,” the literal translation of “estar pendiente” is “to be aware.” More colloquially, its broader meaning is not only to be aware of what is going on with a child in school, but also to be attentive to the

child's physical, social emotional needs, or even spiritual needs, and to be vigilant for anything that threatens the child's safety, for example an undesirable peer or an unsafe neighborhood (Ceballo, Kennedy, Bregman, & Epstein-Ngo, 2012).

All but one of the families in the study live in the school neighborhood, which is home to a variety of small businesses, social service agencies, and public and working class housing. The school itself is located one block from the main street of the business area and is adjacent to the local university. Parts of the neighborhood are considered unsafe by area residents. At least a third of the parents in the study (even working parents) referred to strategies such as accompanying their children to school in the morning, picking them up after school, monitoring their after-school activities, knowing who their friends were, and timing their walk home after school. Recent research suggests that such strategies as strict monitoring and acute awareness form part of Latino families' parenting arsenal, particularly in urban neighborhoods (Ceballo, Kennedy, Bregman, and Epstein-Ngo, 2012; Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006). This finding suggests an opportunity for the school to engage parents around a topic of considerable interest to them

In interviews conducted in Spanish, seven parents used the phrase "estar pendiente" to describe "staying on top of things", not only in school, but in general across many areas of the child's life, including knowing who their children's friends were, knowing where their children were after school and in whose company, and keeping their children safe in the neighborhood. For example, one Spanish-speaking mother said, "Hay que estar pendiente de él, que donde está, a qué hora llega, esto y lo otro, con la escuela así." (You have to be aware of him, where he is, what time he arrives, this and

that, with the school, like that.) Another English-speaking mother said, “But I think that’s real important, especially just to give them a sense of you know we’re on it, we’re on you, we’re keeping an eye on you and we care about what you did all day today.”

Three Latino parents were critical of other parents in general and expressed their perceptions that other parents weren’t “pendiente” of their children. One mother commented,

...hay muchas personas que no, no están pendientes a las cosas de sus hijos ...,y no les toman él tiempo, no le dedican él tiempo, ...eso es mi opinión...	...there are many people who are not aware of things with their children ...and do not take the time, do not dedicate the time, ...that's my opinion....
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Another Spanish-speaking mother commented, “...uno tiene que estar pendiente de ellos en cualquier aspecto de bullying, algo que no le guste de la escuela, cualquier cosa.”

(One has to be aware of what’s going on with them in whatever aspect of bullying, something that they don’t like at school, anything.)

In sum, all fifteen Latino parents in the sample rated “staying on top of things” at school as highly important and interpreted this in a variety of ways, including keeping their children safe and knowing where and with whom their children were.

Explaining Tough Assignments. Four participants highly rated the importance of explaining tough assignments to their children; however, they also included the caveat that much depended upon the temperament, current school progress, or independence of the particular child and their own abilities to help. Throughout the interviews almost all parents either described their children as independent in completing homework or noted students’ growing independence in middle school with pride. One mother said, “No, él hace las asignaciones de lo más bien. Y yo le digo “yo estoy orgullosa de ti, papi,”...me

dice “Ay, mami, tu siempre detrás de mí.” (No, he does his homework so well. And I say to him, “I’m very proud of you, little guy,” ...and he says, “Ay, mommy, you are always behind me.”)

Spanish-speaking parents were more likely to encourage the child to ask the teacher or to refer the child to someone else at home for help, while several of the English-speaking parents mentioned contacting or working with the child’s teacher directly to discuss a child’s struggles. For example one Spanish-speaking mother said, “nosotros le decimos: “Bebé, hazlo tú solita. Y, lo que tú no entiendas lo preguntas.” (We say to her, “Baby, do it by yourself. And whatever you don’t understand, you ask”). Another father expressed his gratitude for an English-speaking partner to whom he could refer his son for help. He said, “A mí se me hace un poquito difícil. Suerte que yo tengo la novia mía,...ella es americana, y ella habla español y habla el inglés.” (For me, it’s a little difficult. Fortunately, I have my girlfriend,...she is American, and she speaks Spanish and English.) By contrast, one English-speaking mother said,

“His math, he was in honors math and very advanced math. He was having a really hard time keeping up with the work and at first we thought he was lazy. And then we realized he really was having a hard time understanding this math. So we actually changed him to like more like honors, but lower honors class.

Studying for Tests. Similarly, all parents described helping the child study for tests as “highly important;” however, their actual practice varied with the child’s level of independence and current progress in school. Parents were generally willing to help if invited to do so by their children. One mother referred to helping her child by asking study questions. One father recalled helping his son by quizzing him on math concepts.

Another Spanish speaking father with a sixth grade education described helping his son and learning in the process.

El siempre por ejemplo cuando él tiene examen de... vocabulario el siempre practica conmigo aunque yo no sé pronunciarlas muy bien pero siempre me agarra a mí de ayudante y eso ayuda bastante porque aprendo yo y él aprende también.	He always, for example, when he has a vocabulary test ... always practices with me although I don't know how to pronounce them (the words) very well, he always grabs me to help him and that really helps because I learn and he learns too.
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One mother interpreted test preparation by referring to a recent list of recommendations from the school for preparing students to do their best work on the state standardized tests. She recounted how she made sure that her son went to bed early the night before and had a hearty breakfast on test days.

Later in the interview, parents were asked about their levels of knowledge and skills, as well as the time and energy they perceived they had to become involved in their children's schooling. None of the four parents above reported feeling like they were well prepared academically to help their children in school, particularly at the middle school level. Despite perceived barriers of lack of education or lack of English skills or working long hours, when invited to do so by the school or by their children, parents showed resourcefulness in participating to the best of their abilities and beyond.

Reading with Your Child. When asked to rate the importance of reading with the child, all parents interpreted the question to mean the global importance of reading and rated it highly. When asked to provide examples, five parents recalled helping the child in reading in the elementary grades, sometimes in quite skilled and specific ways. A Spanish first language mother with a grade school education reported:

Entonces, yo le digo: “Te faltó ahí, ¿Qué dice? ¿Qué significa?”. Sí porque, no es nada más agarrar un libro y revisarlo y no entender nada. Si no que, le preguntamos de qué trata la historia en el libro.

So I say: "You missed something there? What does it mean? ". Yes, because it's not enough to grab a book and go and not understand anything. Rather, we asked him what the story was about in the book.

Several parents described talking to their children about the books they were reading in middle school. One mother described how she and her son were both reading the same book so that they could talk about it together.

“We read some books that we both enjoyed. The latest one was *Abe*, with Abe Lincoln. We both wanted to read it and then see how the – because we watched the movie together as well. We wanted to see how much – because we like to do that, we like to see how much similarity there is from the book to the TV movie.”

Another Spanish speaking father who worked long hours in the family business spoke about his determination to encourage his son to read by setting an example.

Para que yo no estar viendo televisión y “tú ve a leer”. Entonces, abro un libro a ver si deja el jueguito y así él también abre el libro. Le gusta la lectura.

So I would not be watching television and (saying) "you go read". So, I open a book to see if he stops playing his little (video) game and so he also opens the book. He enjoys reading.

So although parents in the sample were not reading with children as they might have done during the child's elementary school career, in some cases they were monitoring or encouraging the child's middle-school reading or highlighting the importance of reading in developmentally appropriate ways.

Talking with Other Parents. Relatively few parents described talking to other parents from the child's school. When asked if he knew other families at the school one father replied that he had moved to the US recently and that he hadn't met any Latino families in his neighborhood from the school. Another recently arrived mother said that

she knew of only one other family who had a child attending the middle school. One mother interpreted families to mean her fiancé's cousin who also had a child at the school. Another father reported meeting and greeting other parents from his child's school in his place of business, but described the interactions as social and congenial, rather than opportunities to talk about school-related topics. Another mother mentioned that she enjoyed multiple opportunities to talk to other Latino parents during volunteer events; however, she described using those occasions to talk about developmental issues or to exchange general parenting advice, rather than to discuss specific school issues. One family reported centering their sense of Latino community in the church rather than the school. The couple reported.

Nosotros conocemos a muchos padres y estamos involucrados en muchas actividades dentro de la Iglesia...no hay esa comunidad, como le dije al principio, aquí en la escuela no la hay

We know many parents and we're involved in many activities within the church...there's not that community, as I said at the beginning, here in the school there isn't [that community].

In a similar vein, another Spanish-speaking mother reported taking English classes at the church while her children took music lessons. Only one Spanish-speaking mother reported having a communication network among families that included talking about matters related to the school. She said,

Hay algunos que conocemos porque, mis hijos tocan en la banda y hemos platicado, nos hemos visto en reuniones, nos hemos visto fuera de la escuela y hemos conversado cómo va el nivel académico, como están los niños, qué nos parece la escuela.

There are some [parents] who we know , my children play in the band and we've talked, we've seen each other in meetings, we've seen each other out of school and talked how the academic level is, how the children are, how the school seems to us.

If most Latino parents in the sample did not report being well connected to other families at the school, at least seven parents referred directly or indirectly to being a united family. This sense of the family being a source of support to their children is born out in the literature (Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006) on the Latino value of “familismo.” One father commented,

Creo que es la unión de familia. Somos un poco más unidos y nos estamos preguntando cómo nos sentimos, que nos pasa.	I think it is the union of family. We are a little more united and we ask each other how we feel, what’s happening to us.
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In summary, although seven parents reported perceptions of being a strong and united family unit, all but one of the families in the sample reported not having or using a social network to exchange information about school related issues. At least three parents referred to a network and activities at the church. Given the importance suggested in the literature of social capital as a way for parents to share information and leverage opportunities for their children, this gap may present an opportunity for the school to investigate school/church partnerships or to further their efforts to create a sense of connectedness to the school for Latino parents.

Working to Make the School Better or School-Based Involvement. Four parents highly rated the importance of working to make the school better, but did not follow this up with a concrete example of how to do so. The exception was a father who provided quite a detailed example in his country of origin of how he and other parents had worked to expand the facilities and provide a lunch program in his children’s school. When

asked if he was similarly involved in his children's middle school, he conceded that he was not. He had not found a way or a program where he could contribute. He said,

No he, no he tenido. Yo quisiera como le digo, hallar un programa donde yo, yo – porque yo [tengo] tiempo yo puedo ejercerlo, yo puedo ayudar. Me gustaría ayudar, porque soy bien voluntarioso. Soy dinámico, tengo ideas, se me hace fácil.

I have not, I haven't. I would like, as I said, to find a program where I, I - because I [have] time I can do it, I can help. I would like to help, because I'm very volunteer minded. I'm dynamic, I have ideas, it's easy for me.

Although none of the parents in the sample suggested concrete ways in which they could work to make the school a better place, at least eight parents reported having volunteered in their children's elementary or middle school years, indicating willingness for school-based involvement as part of what a good parent should do.

In summary, although Latino parents in the sample reported a variety of beliefs about how actively a good parent should be involved in his/her child's schooling, the examples above paint a picture of a more actively rather than passively constructed role.

Valence: Parents' Own Experiences in School

One measure of parents' own experiences in school could be successful completion of high school (Manz, Fantuzzo, & Power, 2004) and twelve of the fifteen parents in the study had earned at least a high school diploma. Hoover-Demsey and Sandler designed a companion instrument (Role Valence towards Schools) to measure parents' general disposition towards school based upon the nature (positive or negative) of their own school experiences. An open-ended question ("Tell me about your own school experiences.") and a series of prompts were designed to elicit parents' feelings and

perceptions of their own schooling. Throughout the interviews, parents volunteered information about their own school experiences and reported using these experiences (even when they were less than positive) as fuel for conversations with their children about the importance of school. Three parents recalled negative or difficult experiences in school. One mother who had completed high school spoke about her childhood experiences in school in Puerto Rico.

Es que no me gustaba la escuela, por eso yo empujo a mis hijos, porque yo sé que a mí no me gustaba. Y como mis papás eran criados en tiempos de antes, mi papá siempre decía “¿hiciste la asignación?” pero más nada. Era lo único que le preguntaba a uno... Pues era diferente, era más difícil para nosotros, para mí fue bien difícil. Pero gracias a Dios pasé cuarto año, tuve una medalla en cosmetología, porque fue lo que más me gustaba, tuve una medalla de eso.

Y después de ahí quería estudiar pero no pude, me tuve que ir a trabajar. O sea que es bien difícil, por eso yo le digo a ellos “estudien para que ustedes no tengan lo que yo tuve que pasar, que tuve que trabajar en una fábrica.”

I just did not like school, so I push my kids, because I know that I didn't like it. And as my parents were raised in different times, my dad always said, "Did you do the assignment?" But nothing else. That was all he asked one... Well, it was different, it was more difficult for us, for me it was very difficult. But thank God I passed fourth year, I had a medal in cosmetology, it was what I liked, so I got a medal.

And then from there I wanted to study but I couldn't, I had to go to work. So it's very difficult, that's why I tell them "study so that you don't experience what happened to me, that I had to work in a factory."

One father had been born in the United States but his parents had divorced when he was eleven and he had returned to the island of Puerto Rico with his mother. He described what a difficult experience it was for him to complete high school in Puerto Rico. However, he used his own struggles to learn Spanish to encourage his daughter in her studies in English. He said,

...no sabía leerlo ni escribirlo [él español]. Cuando nos mudamos pa' Puerto Rico, ahí fue una lucha para mí.

...I didn't know how to read it or write it [Spanish]. When we moved to Puerto Rico, there it was a struggle for me.

...Entonces, yo viendo también que la nena le está pasando lo mismo, pero, al revés. Cuando nosotros nos mudamos aquí en junio, el verano pasado, yo le expliqué a ella: “Yo sé por lo que tú vas a pasar, porque yo pasé por eso. Lo único, al revés. Pero, no te preocupes que como yo sé inglés, yo te puedo, te puedo ayudar en eso.

So ... I was seeing that the same thing was happening to my little girl, but in reverse. When we moved here in June, last summer, I explained to her: "I know what you're going through, because I've been there. The only thing, in reverse. But, don't worry because as I know English, I can, I can help with that.

Another father reported enjoying school, but due to the extreme poverty in which his family lived, he had to leave school after the sixth grade to work. He said:

Entonces por eso es que yo pienso en la importancia de que mis hijos estudien porque yo no tuve la oportunidad de seguir estudiando y yo me esfuerzo para que ellos estudien y lo aprovechen. Aprovechen lo que yo no aproveche y yo estoy al 100 por ciento para buscar lo mejor que ellos acerca de su estudio.

So that's why I think of the importance of my children's studies because I did not have the opportunity to continue studying and I strive so that they can study and take advantage of the opportunity. Take advantage of what I did not take advantage of and I'm 100 percent to find the best for them related to their studies.

By contrast, five parents' experiences in school were quite positive. One mother said: “I loved school. I wish I could go back.” She elaborated on her experiences describing a high school pregnancy and the struggle it was for her and the baby's father to complete their high school educations. “He finished his schooling and I finished mine. Our parents helped a lot.” She went on to describe her pride in her son's progress and to outline the expectations she holds for all her children. Another mother reported, “I liked school. I took a year off after high school and kinda regret I never went back.” In a similar vein, another Spanish-speaking mother with a ninth grade education reported, “La experiencia mía fue buena hasta novena grado. Me hubiera gustado estudiar mas.” (My

own experience was good up to ninth grade. I would have liked to have studied more.) Another Spanish-speaking mother spoke about her own school experiences just as positively, indicating that she liked school and felt like her teachers cared about her and her educational success. Perhaps due to these positive experiences, she had concrete plans to better her English in the United States, in preparation for applying to community college.

In summary, Latino parents in the sample reported a mix of positive and negative experiences in their own schooling. Even when their own experiences were not positive, they used these experiences when advising their children about the value of school.

Role Construction Revisited: Four Categories

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) posit four categories of role construction: one that is disengaged, one that places responsibility for the child's success squarely in the hands of the school or is school-focused, one that places responsibility for the child's success solely in the hands of the parent or is parent-focused, and finally one that assumes a shared responsibility for the child's success or is partnership-focused.

Disengaged role construction. As might be expected by their willingness to be interviewed, none of the Latino parents in the sample reported behavior that could be described as "disengaged". Several of the Spanish-speaking parents were critical of the effectiveness of Latino families in general to help children succeed. While not demonstrating disengaged qualities themselves, these parents were quick to describe the sort of disengagement that corresponded to the top left hand quadrant of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of parental role construction. Individual parents variously described Latino parents in general as "disinterested," lacking in time, not aware of how

their children were doing, or not well-educated enough to help their children. For example, when asked about Latino parents in general, one mother replied:

A veces como que se nos [los padres de familia Latinos] hace más interesante la televisión, una fiesta, las compras y no hacemos asignaciones con los niños.

At times it's like we [Latino parents] are more interested in television, a party, shopping, and we don't do homework with the children.

Pero, yo digo que si uno quiere tener un niño con éxito, hay que estar detrás de él y hacer sacrificios para que ellos salgan adelante.

But I say that if one wants to have a successful child, one has to be behind him and make sacrifices for them to get ahead.

Another father answered, “Yo creo que no, no creo están tan pendientes de los muchachos, como revisar libretas y, y preguntarle tan siquiera.” (No, I don't believe that they are very aware of the children, how to review their notebooks, or even question them.) Another Spanish-speaking mother commented, “...hay muchos [padres latinos] que creen que la escuela tiene que hacer todo y no es así.” (There are many Latino parents who believe that the school has to do everything.) Another described Latino parents as, “...personas que tienen habilidades, pero no las quieren proyectar, no las quieren utilizar, sabe, no sé si es vagancia...” (...people who have abilities, but they don't want to project them, don't want to use them, you know, I don't know if it is laziness...)

To summarize, even though the fifteen parents in the sample did not demonstrate the qualities of disengaged parents, some of them perceived other Latino parents as disengaged from or unwilling to participate in their children's educational success. As others (Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2011) have noted, it is difficult to study disengaged parents.

School-focused role construction. The research literature (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001; Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2011)

suggests that Latino parents in particular may see themselves in support roles and view it as the school and teacher's responsibility to ensure their child's academic success.

Certainly, throughout the interviews, parents reported supporting their children by caring for their physical, social and emotional needs; however, previous examples also include parents working with their children on homework or talking to their children about the importance of school.

Indeed, some of the parents in the study referred to other Latino families or even their own family of origin's school-focused role construction. One father spoke of Latino parents in general by saying,

...mi manera de pensar, que el padre responsabiliza al maestro de la enseñanza del niño. ...¿Me entiende? Se libera él de un, de, de, de una carga, dice: "No, pues, por eso usted tiene ese maestro que te enseña".

...to my way of thinking ... the parent makes the teacher responsible for teaching the child. Do you understand me? The parent is released, of, of, of a burden, saying: "No, then, that's why you have that teacher who teaches you."

Another mother commented on families she had known,

He visto personas que, que como manden a los hijos a la escuela porque es un deber, o sea tú no puedes pensar en mandar un hijo a la escuela porque es un deber, porque es una necesidad. Pues, es él futuro de tu hijo.

I've seen people who, who like send their children to school because it is a duty, that's to say you can't send a child to school because it is a duty, but because it is a necessity. Well, it's the future of your child.

Despite these comments about other parents, none of the fifteen Latino parents in the sample reported seeing it as solely the school's responsibility to ensure their children's educational success. Interview responses rating the importance of various activities and parent's examples of typical behavior paint a different picture of the focus of participants' role construction.

Parent-focused vs. partnership role construction. None of the parents in the sample perceived or provided an example of behavior that indicated that it was solely their responsibility to ensure their children's educational success. By their interview responses and examples of typical behavior, even Spanish-speaking parents and/or parents who had less than positive school experiences themselves showed evidence of a more partnership-focused role construction than might be expected. For example, one mother described how she and the teacher worked together. She said,

...yo le dije a una de las maestras, de mi hijo que va en el séptimo grado, que si hay algo importante que me lo haga saber en su guía de estudio y que le ponga la nota, además que yo le tenga que firmar, para que yo esté enterada si él tiene un trabajo extra o si incluso se está portando mal, que ella me mande una nota para yo saber.

Ella me dio su correo electrónico, donde podemos chequear y por cualquier duda también. Por eso es importante estar en comunicación con los maestros, para ver el desarrollo.

... I told one of the teachers, of my son who is in the seventh grade, that if there is something important that she let me know in his study guide and that she put the grade, as well if I have to sign it, so that I can be informed if he has extra work or even if he is misbehaving, that she send me a note so that I know.

She gave me her email, where we can check and for any concern as well. That's why it is important to be in communication with the teachers, to see his development.

Another mother commented on the sense of responsibility she shares with her child's teachers when it comes helping her child with schoolwork. She commented,

– [my son] always comes knowing what he has to do. The teacher did his part in telling him what he needed to do. So if he comes home with not knowing what it is, at least he lets me know that the teacher explained it like this. This is the example they used. So at least I know already okay, explain to me the example and you should know. He explains it to me and then ding, ding, ding – a light bulb. Now I get it.

In summary, as might be expected by parents' activity beliefs (more active than passive), their valence towards school (more positive than negative school experiences

themselves), and their reported behavior, most parents constructed a partnership-focused role for themselves.

Role Efficacy Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) argue that role efficacy combines with role construction to determine parents' motivation to become involved. In response to questions and prompts asking for their perceptions about how effective Latino parents were in general in helping children to succeed in school, all but three parents in the sample were quick to respond in the negative. At this and other points in the interview these parents were uniformly self-deprecating in assessing their own knowledge and skills. One mother said, "There is very little that I can help him with, but I have no problems contacting his teacher, [or] my other son, you know." Another mother commented, "Si, el me pide mucha ayuda en cuestión de matemáticas, pero a esta parte yo soy media flojita." (Yes, he asks me for a lot of help in math, but in that area I'm pretty weak.) Another father commented, "Muchos latinos que hemos venido, no entendemos mucho el idioma y somos pocos los que podemos ayudarle académicamente a los hijos." (Many Latinos who have come, we don't understand much of the language, and there are few of us who can help our children academically.) All of the Spanish-speaking parents in the sample mentioned their lack of English skills.

Yet the types of involvement they themselves reported showed that parents forged ahead and displayed a high degree of resourcefulness in overcoming self-reported obstacles, such as lack of content knowledge, lack of time, or low levels of English. Parents reported using tools such as Google search, looking in the dictionary, going to the library, finding someone in the extended family with the knowledge and skills to help, or

referring the child to his/her spouse or significant other in the family. One father commented:

Por ejemplo a mi yo que tengo muy bajo el nivel académico y a veces se me dificultan muchas cosas y si por mi fuera yo no le puedo ayudar en nada pero la oportunidad la tiene su mamá que ella sabe un poquito más que yo y lo que no puedo le digo yo no sé su mama si lo sabe.	For example myself, I have a very low academic level and sometimes that makes many things difficult for me and if it were up to me I couldn't help with anything but his mom has the opportunity to help as she knows a little more than I do and so I tell him I don't know but your mom does.
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In summary, parents expressed doubts about their own skills and abilities.

However, parents' general low levels of self-efficacy may have lessened but did not prevent parents' involvement.

Invitations. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) argue that parents' motivation to become involved is strengthened by invitations from the school, their child's teachers, and from the child. General school invitations include a welcoming atmosphere. Specific school invitations can take the form of information about events, reminders of meetings, or invitations to attend school events. Teacher invitations can range from general information about class events, to invitations to volunteer, to requests to help with homework. Child invitations can be indirect, such as the child expressing frustration with homework, or direct, such as the child inviting the parent to attend a specific class or school event.

General school invitations. General school invitations include parents' perceptions of the atmosphere of the building and the sense of welcome they feel from school members such as teachers and staff. Eight of the 15 participants agreed to meet with me at the school's Family Center which may have indicated their degree of comfort

in coming to school, and one mother mentioned in passing that she had attended a Saturday clinic in the Center. Another mother admired the facility and indicated that it was her first visit to the Family Center. Two parents in the sample commented informally before the interview began upon the general atmosphere of the school, praising the relatively new building and the various spaces that were available to their children, such as the auditorium for concerts. In a notable exception, one father commented on his own perception of school buildings as having “puertas cerradas” or locked doors, leading to his son’s perceptions of the school as being like a prison. By contrast, when asked directly about the atmosphere of welcome at the school in general and the need to be buzzed into the building in particular four parents indicated that they felt it enhanced the security of their children. One mother said, “Los niños están más seguros.” (The children are safer.) Another commented, “Me gusta la seguridad para los niños, me siento tranquila.” (I like the security for the children, I feel calm.)

When asked, all Spanish-speaking parents appreciated that some of the school staff; in particular the counselors, the attendance office receptionist, and the after-school coordinator were bilingual. In addition, they commended the school’s efforts to send information home in both languages. However, one father noted that although he appreciated the information that came home in both languages, some information only came in English. He said,

El director nos manda dos cartas, español e inglés. ...No tenemos ningún problema de comunicación: en español.

The principal sends us two letters, Spanish and English. ...We have no communication problem: in Spanish.

Pero no tenemos información académica o de que niño va a comer en la escuela.

But we have no academic information or [information] about what child will eat at school.

Como ellos están en una escuela en la que se habla inglés, aunque [mi hijo] domina mucho el inglés, habla muy bien el inglés. Él lo domina pero, yo no domino muy bien el inglés. Entonces si me traen información en inglés, entonces no puedo ayudarle como suelo ayudarlo. El idioma es importantísimo y si no conocemos bien el idioma inglés, se nos hace difícil.

As they are in a school where English is spoken, even [my son] knows a lot of English, he speaks very good English. He masters it but, I do not master English very well. So if they bring me information in English, then I cannot help him as I usually do. Language is really important and if we do not know English well, we find it difficult.

Specific school invitations. In contrast to general school invitations, specific school invitations include requests to attend meetings or volunteer and invitations to attend special events, parent workshops, or information sessions. All parent participants in the study reported receiving information from the school in a variety of forms. As one mother put it, “Aquí, todo padre está informado.” (“Here, every parent is informed.”) Six parents reported checking their child’s backpack for written information as part of the daily routine; however, other parents reported an impressive array of means of communication, ranging from text messages to bilingual phone calls to email exchanges with teachers or counselors. Several parents reported checking the school’s website for information and four parents mentioned using the school’s Parent Portal to check on their children’s progress. In response to specific school invitations, parents in the sample most often responded by attending events such as Parent Conferences or Open Houses. Two English-speaking parents in the sample regularly attended Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings. As both mothers were also active band volunteers, this may have been due to the principal’s recent decision to hold meetings back-to-back with the better-attended band meetings.

Teacher invitations. Five out of fifteen parents in the sample reported being invited or expected to participate by their children's teachers, and those who did reported that this had occurred mostly when their children were in elementary school. Only one parent described being asked by a middle school teacher to help with an art project. Two parents expressed relief that they didn't hear from their children's teachers, taking this as an indication that things were going well. Once mother said,

No porque tal vez porque no tenemos el problema con él a lo mejor si estuviera en un nivel más bajo tal vez sería diferente y nosotros nunca hemos tenido ese problema porque desde que entró aquí el siempre ha sacado la más alta calificación.

No because maybe because we haven't had a problem with him maybe if he were at a low level maybe it would be different and we have never had that problem because since he started here he has always got the highest grade.

Conversely one parent expressed her desire to have more two-way communication. When asked about teacher invitations or requests, she replied, "But that's, I think, more because I also communicate. It doesn't always come – sadly, it doesn't always come from the teacher. I think a lot of times the reason I know what my son is doing or not doing is because I pay attention. Sometimes I feel the teacher should pick up that phone and make a quick call or email."

Child invitations. By contrast, all fifteen parents reported taking cues from their children or responding to children's indirect or direct invitations or requests to become involved. Over half the parents reported responding with help for a child whose behavior indicated a struggle with school or schoolwork. Parents who received a direct request for homework help became involved directly, mustered help for the child from within the extended family, or accessed resources from the Internet or the library. One father reported going to the local library to take computer classes. He said,

Creo que, [Él Internet] ha sido mi salvavidas con mis hijos y que pena que yo no tuve esa oportunidad, tener la información como ellos la tienen. Estamos en la época de la informática y a veces ellos mismo se trancan y no quieren buscar la información. Por eso, siempre digo: “busaca la información en internet, te va a ayudar”.

I think [the Internet] has been my lifeline with my children and what a shame that I didn't have that opportunity, to have information like they have it. We're in the information era and sometimes they themselves get stuck and don't want to look for information. So I always say, "look for information on the Internet, it will help you."

Another mother commented on helping her daughter with homework, “Google is my best friend.” One couple reported being petitioned by their son to advocate for more help from the teacher in explaining concepts at the next Parent Teacher conference. The mother commented:

Él [nuestro hijo] nos dijo que quería más ayuda en ese aspecto... si tenía razón, nosotros tenemos que hablar un poco más con el maestro para buscar la forma de cómo poderle ayudar en ese aspecto...

He [our son] told us that he wanted more help in that regard ... he was right, we have to talk a little more with the teacher to find a way to help him in that aspect. ..

When invited to do so by their children, most parents were proud to attend special events; however, at least three parents reported not being able to attend due to work or other family-related responsibilities. In two of those cases another member of the family was recruited to attend.

Nature of Latino Parent Involvement

Life context variables. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) argue that life context variables impact whether or not parents will become involved and what forms their involvement takes. Parents' perceptions of their knowledge and skills, Latino parents' perceptions of their English language skills, and parents' perceptions of their time and

energy all factor in to their decisions to become involved. Using a series of prompts, parents were asked to comment the level of knowledge and skills of Latino families in general and their own level of knowledge and skills in particular.

Knowledge and Skills. In response to these prompts throughout the interviews, all but one parent rated their knowledge and skills as lacking, yet they still displayed a surprising degree of persistence in helping out to the extent possible. One father commented that although he really enjoyed mathematics and considered himself skilled in the subject, he didn't think (correctly) that the system used in Honduras to teach algorithms was consistent with the methods used at his son's school. However, he described explaining math problems to his son and transmitting his enthusiasm for the subject. Another mother commented that she often didn't understand the homework, but would check to make sure that it was done and refer her son to her husband. Another mother said,

His homework. He would ask me and a few days ago it was about algebra, so here I go and I get my little college thing, because I went for management/marketing just looking for examples. And I'm like, "Oh my God, let me remember this. I don't remember this!" He's like, "But mom, this is the problem. It's nothing compared to what you had." So it's hard. Sometimes you don't know what to answer them, but you try. I'm pretty good at math so he'll ask me about different questions. Or science he'll come out with, "Oh, did you know that if we put salt and water together in the fridge we'll get some slushy made." And I'm like, "Okay, let's try it."

Another mother mentioned referring math homework help to the child's stepfather or older sister as she didn't feel confident in her own ability to help. Another strategy that several parents used was to encourage their children to be more independent in completing homework and urging students to try it him or herself first before asking for help from the parent.

In sum, although parents lacked confidence in their knowledge and skills they employed an array of strategies to help their children with schoolwork.

English Language Skills. When asked about Latino parents' level of knowledge and skills, most parents immediately mentioned language skills. As previously mentioned, Spanish speaking parents were particularly harsh in their self-assessments as related to English skills. Despite this very real obstacle, parents demonstrated creativity in working around it. One Spanish-speaking mother described how she helped her son.

Siempre que no entendemos algo les digo vamos a la computadora y buscamos la información. Yo lo busco en español para poder entender, por eso le digo que es bueno porque yo aprendo también.	Whenever we don't understand something I tell them let's go to the computer and look for the information. I'll search for it in Spanish to be able to understand it, that's why I tell him that it's good because I learn too.
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Another Spanish-speaking mother mentioned consulting the dictionary to help her child. Several parents mentioned referring the child to a bilingual spouse or significant other, or older sibling. For example, one mother commented that her son usually did his homework independently. She said, "El las [tareas] hace solito, a veces si no entiende de algo yo lo mando con su papá porque su papá entiende más inglés que yo." (He does them [homework assignments] by himself, sometimes if he doesn't understand something I send him to his father because his father understands more English than I do.)

Time and Energy. Simply by agreeing to be interviewed, parents demonstrated that when it came to their children's schooling, they would find the time and the energy to participate. All of the working parents made arrangements to be interviewed by scheduling around work responsibilities. One working couple walked to the school at seven o'clock in the evening with all three children, including a kindergartner, in tow.

Another couple invited me to their home at 7:30 in the evening. One mother arranged to meet me on her only day off. One father agreed to be interviewed at his place of business after the noon hour rush while his wife tended the counter. One of the mothers who worked in the home met me in the morning while her kindergartner was at school.

Parents responded to a series of prompts probing their perceptions of the time and energy they had to involve themselves in various ways in their children's schooling. Despite multiple responsibilities such as working full time, parenting other children, caring for a sick parent, or running a small business alone, all parents indicated that they had the necessary time and energy to involve themselves in their children's educational success. A common phrase that parents used was "making the time." As one mother commented, "I mean I think when it's about one's child I think that, you know you find energy – kind of just find it somewhere."

Parents used a variety of strategies to work around obstacles of time. Two working mothers mentioned making phone calls to the school during their breaks or lunch hours. Another mother mentioned letting the school staff know that she was available on Mondays. Another mother highlighted the importance of knowing about special events in advance so that she was able to schedule time off in order to attend. Even the father who worked long hours at the family business made time to help his son with math homework when necessary. The most commonly used strategy among parents was "tag teaming". Fourteen of the fifteen parents in the sample mentioned that if one parent was unavailable, the other parent or significant other or an extended family member could make the time to help with homework, communicate with the teacher or school, or attend a special event.

Forms of Involvement

The second research question guiding this study was:

2. What forms does Latino parents' engagement take?

When asked to describe the three most important things they do to support their children's educational success, all 15 parents reported some forms of home-based behaviors. Only five parents reported school-based behaviors. I used Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (2005) four categories of forms of parental involvement to sort parents' responses: 1). Values, goals, expectations, and aspirations, 2). Involvement activities at home, 3). Parent/teacher/school communication, and 4). Involvement activities at school.

Values, goals, expectations, and aspirations More than half of the parents' responses fell into the category of communicating values, goals, expectations, and aspirations. One father commented on the importance of respect as a value that he could transmit to his children. He also mentioned the importance of him and his children having "sueños" or dreams. Another father spoke at length about the importance of transmitting spiritual values. He commented, "I got to say God. Thus, basically it. That's the one that unites and bonds the family. Without him – without him there is no – there's no unity, there's no love." Five parents described their families as united. Two mothers commented specifically about communicating clear expectations to their children. One mother said,

Pero que él haga lo que tiene que hacer en la escuela, que nosotros vamos a... siempre y cuando que él haga las cosas bien, papi y mami van a estar ahí...

But he has to do what he has to do in school, we're going to ... as long as he does things right, mom and dad will be there ...

Several mothers described themselves as strict. One mother commented, “I’m very strict. I tell them, “Look, you guys don’t have jobs. You guys don’t even do chores. I expect A’s.” I let them have their kid moment, but I’m very strict. I want them to excel. I really do.” Three parents described setting clear expectations and using consequences for poor behavior or rewards for good grades. Two participants spoke about their own lack of education and using this as a spur to encourage their children’s school success. Many parents reported talking to their children and communicating educational aspirations. One mother noted her own educational goals and aspirations in migrating to the United States.

Involvement activities at home. When asked what were the most important things they did to support their children’s educational success, all parents in the sample cited some form of parent-child communication. Various, parents mentioned asking about the school day, being a friend to their children, giving advice or orientation to their children, listening to their children, admitting vulnerability to their children, modeling, speaking Spanish in the home, or in the case of one English-speaking mother – maintaining cultural traditions in the home.

Related to communication was the notion of emotional support. Parents mentioned supporting, encouraging, and motivating their children. One mother spoke about the importance of reminding her son to have fun while learning. Parents mentioned encouraging independence in their children and giving them understanding and love. Several parents reiterated the importance of having a united family. One father said, “Creo que es, la unión de familia.” (I think it is family unity.) Another father said, “What we do best is, we’re more like very family oriented, very much want to bond with our

children, just like our parents did to us.”

As well as caring for children’s emotional well-being, parents also referred to a variety of activities related to children’s physical well-being and safety. Three parents mentioned caring for their children, cooking for them, driving a child to practice, or buying the child a musical instrument. For example, one mother whose daughter was in the school band reported,

... we bought her a trumpet for her birthday and I think that came from her showing that she has a want to learn it. She really was one that always practiced it and I would always hear her and I think a way of noticing that or showing her that we’ve noticed was to, you know get her a second-hand instrument and say listen, we got you this. We hear you practicing; we know you love it. You know show me that you get better and maybe we can look into getting a brand new one or something like that.

Finally, four parents mentioned forms of involvement related to their children’s safety, such as being aware, knowing who their friends were, knowing where their children were, and protecting their children. One mother commented,

Another thing is get their friends involved. I like to hear their friends. ...that’s how I find out a little bit more and I can talk to him about any other type of problems or anything I can help him with. I notice that if they have any problems, that can affect their grades.

Another working mother said,

Estar en contacto siempre. No quiere decir que, el que yo los deje en este momento, ellos puedan decir: “ah no, yo me voy de parranda con mis amigos, mi mamá no se va a enterar. Y les digo: “yo me entero de lo que ustedes hacen, yo sé dónde tú estás.

Be in contact always. That doesn’t mean to say, that if I leave them at this time, they can say, "Ah no, I'm going to goof off with my friends, my mom is not going to find out. And I tell them, "I'll find out what you're doing, I know where you are.

Parent-teacher-school communication. Only two parents indicated that some form of communication with the school or teachers was among the most important ways they

were involved. One mentioned the importance of being informed and the other specifically stated parent-teacher communication.

Estar en comunicación con los maestros. ...Entonces, le digo que si estamos atentos en sus notas, y si hay algo que está bajo o que está pasando en la escuela vamos a ver directamente con los maestros para saber que está pasando.	To be in communication with the teachers. ...So I say that if we are attentive to their grades, and if something is low or is happening at school we will go directly to the teachers to know what is happening.
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School-based involvement. Of the five parents who reported school-based behaviors two were rating their actual behavior and three were speaking of planned behavior. One mother, speaking for herself and her husband, both active volunteers at the school commented, "...I think what's important to us to volunteer." Another mother who had previously volunteered in kindergarten expressed the importance of learning English so that she could involve herself more in her son's middle school. In ranking the importance of various forms of involvement, she said, "...yo cuando yo aprendo un poquito más inglés, involucrarme más en la escuela..." ("...when I learn a little more English, to involve myself more in the school..."). Another mother ranked getting involved in school programs as highly important.

Involucrarse en las actividades de la escuela, saber los programas y las ayudas que la escuela está ofreciendo para beneficio de ellos e incluso para beneficio de nosotros mismos porque también hay programas para los padres.	Get involved in school activities, know about the programs and help that the school is offering for their (the students) benefit and even for our own benefit because there are also programs for parents.
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In summary, although parents in the sample described a variety of ways in which they involved themselves in their children's schooling, when asked to rank the most

important forms of involvement, all reported at least one form of home-based involvement and only five reported a form of school based involvement. These qualitative findings are consistent with a previous quantitative test of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) model with Latino parents.

The third research question guiding this qualitative study was:

3. What are the factors that facilitate or impede Latino parental involvement?

Factors that Facilitate or Impede Involvement In response to specific questions about life context variables (time, energy, knowledge, and skills) and throughout the interviews parents acknowledged facilitating factors and obstacles to various types of involvement in their children's educational success.

Facilitating Factors. Interview data indicated that facilitating factors for Latino parents' school-based involvement included: perceptions of a generally welcoming atmosphere at the school, some bilingual staff, frequent (and often bilingual) communication from the school, and specific teacher and child invitations. For example, one mother commented,

...siempre hablo lo suficiente con la consejera. ...Ella es mejicana, habla español bien. Entonces, existe la comunicación de estar sabiendo que hay.	... I always talk enough with the counselor. She is Mexican, she speaks Spanish well. So, communication is there of knowing what's going on.
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Facilitating factors for parent-school communication included the variety of ways in which the school communicated with parents (texts, voicemail, messages, Parent Portal, school website, and written communication) as well as the efforts the school made to send written information in two languages. For example, one couple commented on the

school's written and verbal communication, "Nos llaman también por teléfono en ambos idiomas." (They call by telephone as well in both languages.) Facilitating factors for home-based involvement included access to the Internet, reliance on an extended family to help, and the warmth and support characteristic of many Latino families described in the literature. For example, one father said,

I mean I think it's the love and the affection that we give them. But as for – like for education, we're not – I don't think that as for Latinos, we're not the very brightness or the smartest people in the world – but I think we are the most – one thing we show a lot of bonding with our families.

Barriers to Participation. Barriers to school-based participation and parent-school participation included perceived low levels of knowledge and skills, lack of English language skills in the case of Spanish-speaking skills, lack of time and energy, lack of transportation, and absence of invitations. Barriers to home-based participation included low levels of knowledge and skills, low levels of English skills, and lack of time. For example, one Spanish-speaking mother said,

Casi siempre, si es algo que yo puedo hacer, de ponerlo a leer, pues sí. Pero si es algo que necesita una ayuda más allá, es mi esposo o a veces el niño mayor, pero casi siempre es mi esposo. Pero yo en la lectura y cuando le vengo con un papel que me tiene que escribir "mami." Pero sí, dedicó ese tiempo a él.	Almost always, if it (homework help) is something I can do, to put him to read, well yes. But if it is something that needs further help, it's my husband or sometimes our older child, but almost always my husband. But me when it comes to reading...yes, I devote that time to him.
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Another mother commented,

Como yo brego con nada de eso [llamadas, notas escritas, correo electrónico], ni me gusta llamar. Siempre si hay una preocupación o algo, yo le mando una cartita; o si [mi hijo] faltó por esta razón o cualquier cosa, una	As I struggle with any of that [calls, notes, email], I don't even like to call. Always if there is a concern or something, I send a little note or if [my son] missed anything for this reason or any other, a little note. His teacher
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cartita. La maestra de él no lee mucho español, pero busca a alguien que la lea. doesn't read much Spanish, but looks for someone who can read it.

Despite these reported obstacles, parents utilized a variety of strategies to navigate around barriers with varying degrees of success in order to support their children's educational success.

In summary, factors that facilitate school involvement included general school invitations (a welcoming atmosphere and bilingual staff), specific school invitations (information about events and activities in both languages), and specific teacher and child invitations. Parents commended the school on the variety of channels of communication used and attempts to provide information in Spanish. All parents perceived lack of time, knowledge and skills as barriers to participation. In addition, all Spanish-speaking parents specifically referenced lack of English skills as a barrier.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter, I will summarize the significant findings of this study and discuss how they relate to previous tests of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model as well as making connections to the broader literature base. Recommendations for further research will be followed by recommendations for practice, including a summary of the ways the school could move forward in its journey as a community school.

Significant Findings

There were five significant findings in this qualitative study. First, all parents in the sample perceived that part of the job of a good parent was to be involved in their children's schooling. They perceived that they held or shared responsibility with the school for their child's educational success (parent or partnership-focused). Second, parents reported involvement despite their perceptions of low levels of knowledge and skills, and/or time and energy. Third, with few exceptions, parents responded to school, teacher, and student invitations for involvement; however, no parent described the school as a community school and few parents reported being asked or invited by a teacher to be involved at the middle school level. Fourth, parents reported much more home-based involvement than they did school-based involvement. Fifth, all parents reported talking to their children in ways that communicated values, goals, expectations, or aspirations, yet only one parent reported planning for post-secondary education.

Parent or Partnership-focused Role Construction

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) theorize that activity beliefs (e.g. volunteering, communicating with the child's teacher regularly, helping the child with homework, etc.) and parents' own school experiences combine to help parents construct their roles (disengaged, school-focused, parent-focused or partnership focused). Thus parents who have had positive school experiences and believe they should be involved actively will more likely hold or share responsibility with the school for their children's educational success.

Previous tests of the model (Reed, Jones, Walker, and Hoover-Dempsey, 2000) including tests with Latino parents (Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2011) confirm this hypothesis. Consistent with these results, the findings of this qualitative study demonstrate that the fifteen Latino parents in the sample espoused more active than passive beliefs and the examples of involvement they gave demonstrated that they held themselves responsible or shared responsibility with the school for their children's educational success. However, not all parents in the sample reported positive school experiences when it came to their own schooling. Three of the parents reported experiencing difficulties in school; nevertheless, they seemed to use these difficult experiences to encourage their children's educational success in conversations at home.

The model hypothesizes that higher levels of role efficacy also influence parents' decisions to become involved. Interview responses in this study indicated that parents often did not feel confident in their own abilities or effectiveness to help their children succeed. In particular, all Spanish-speaking parents in the sample indicated concern

about their low levels of English. Despite this, parents' actual involvement behaviors showed a degree of resourcefulness in helping, or locating help or support for their children in both home-based and school-based activities. These reported low levels of role-efficacy may have lessened, but certainly did not prevent parents' involvement. This finding is consistent with the quantitative results of a test of the model conducted by Anderson and Minke (2007) showing that role efficacy had a limited influence on parents' involvement decisions. Despite low levels of self-efficacy and some reports of negative school experiences, Latino parents in this study reported a variety of forms of involvement, although more home-based than school-based.

This finding is significant in several ways. First, the literature suggests that school personnel may assume that parents are uninvolved or "don't care" because home-based involvement is not visible to them (Arzubiaga, Ceja, & Artiles, 2000; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Delgado-Gaitan, 1996; Olivos, 2004). The multiple forms of home-based involvement reported by participants indicate that parents value education and care deeply about their children's success in school.

Implications for research and practice. Further research with the school's teaching staff could paint a demographic picture of the school's educators and provide insight into their beliefs about Latino parental involvement. It is estimated that over 80% of educators are white, middle class, and monolingual (Landsman & Lewis, 2006; Singleton & Linton, 2005) and certainly differ racially and socio-economically from many of the students they teach, particularly in urban areas (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2011). Educators may hold deficit views of Latino families (Cooper, 2007; de Carvalho, 2001; Valencia, 2010). Yet many of the Latino parents in this study showed a surprising degree of resourcefulness in

overcoming self-reported low levels of self-efficacy (belief in their own abilities and effectiveness in helping) to involve themselves in their children's schooling. These findings demonstrate the strengths and resourcefulness, rather than the deficits of Latino families who participated. Such findings provide a counter-narrative (Solórzano, & Yosso, 2002) to beliefs that focus on what Latino families' lack, rather than what they bring to the table in fostering their children's educational success and provide access points to the school for purposeful planning to involve parents. Sharing the study findings with community members (parents, teachers, and school personnel) could validate Latino parents' current practice, and educate community members or remind them of the myriad of ways that Latino parents may be supporting their children at home. The findings of the present study could provide middle school teachers with a more multi-dimensional concept of parental involvement and much needed encouragement with regards to parents' motivation and potential as partners with middle school students.

Overcoming Barriers to Involvement

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) model theorizes that parents' forms and levels of involvement are impacted by how they perceive the life context variables of knowledge and skills, time and energy. The findings of this qualitative study indicated that these middle school Latino parents "made the time" and leveraged their skills to be involved in their children's educational success, albeit in ways that were much more home-based than school based.

Time and energy. All participants in the study reported considerable demands on their time and energy. Two thirds of the parents worked either full time or part time

outside the home. One father who had his own business mentioned opened up early in the morning and closing late in the evening. One mother who self-identified as a housewife was caring for an aging parent in the couple's home. The father who was retired was struggling with health problems of his own while helping his wife to care for her mother. Another mother was caring for several younger siblings at home. Despite these demands, all parents found the time and energy to become involved. Certainly, these demands on their time and energy may have influenced the forms of involvement parents chose (much more home-based than school-based); however, it did not prevent them from becoming involved.

Knowledge and skills. Over two thirds of the participants in this study graduated from high school, several completed one year of study beyond high school, and two parents held an associate's degree. Yet, uniformly parents deprecated their knowledge and skills, reporting that they did not feel confident enough in their content knowledge to help their children. As was previously stated, Spanish-speaking parents were highly aware of the impact their own lack of English was having on their abilities to help their children.

These findings are somewhat consistent with previous tests of the model. Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler (2007) found that parental knowledge and skills, time and energy were relatively weak predictors of involvement at the elementary school level. In other words, parents involved themselves in spite of demands on their time and energy and low levels of knowledge and skills. At the middle-school level they found that parents' perceived resources of time and energy at the middle school level were more predictive of involvement. Similarly, Anderson and Minke (2007) found that parental

lack of resources, such as time, did not correlate negatively with their reported involvement at the elementary school level. However, in a recent test of the model with Latino parents Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2011) found that although the life context variables of parents' knowledge and skills did not predict involvement, time and energy did predict parents' school-based (not home-based) involvement.

This finding in the present study is significant in that the literature suggests that parental involvement at the middle school level declines (Catsambis & Garland, 1997; Eccles & Harold, 1996), perhaps in response to the increasing complexity of the curriculum (Woolley, Kol, & Bowen, 2009) and/or parents' perceptions of decreased abilities to help (Garcia Coll, Akiba, Palacios, Bailey, Silver, DiMartino, & Chin, 2002; Hill & Taylor, 2004). This is only partially born out in the interview data. All parents had demands on their time and energy and perceived that their skills and abilities were not strong, especially to render middle-school help. Yet all parents in the study found ways to overcome these obstacles in order to be involved at home even in homework related activities, and three parents worked around job commitments to be involved at school.

Implications for practice. This finding represents a further element in the counter-narrative to a deficit-based view of Latino parental involvement that school personnel may hold (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008) and suggest ways for school leaders to structure teacher professional development in culturally relevant ways. However, parents in the study did report a decline in school-based involvement. Findings showed that five out of fifteen parents in the study had previously volunteered at the elementary school level but did not volunteer at the middle school level supports research suggesting

lessened involvement in middle school. This could represent an opening for the school to follow up with an invitation to parents who had previously volunteered in the elementary school to further investigate the causes of their diminished involvement and to explore what might facilitate their continued school-based involvement in middle school.

Responding to Invitations for Involvement

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) theorize that general and specific invitations from the school, teachers, and their children are all associated with higher levels of parental involvement. Quantitative tests of the model confirm that general and specific school invitations are significantly correlated with both home and school-based involvement (Ice, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007). As well, specific teacher invitations predict involvement (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005; Maríñez-Lora & Quintana, 2009), and most powerfully predict school-based forms of involvement (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007). Specific child invitations for involvement most powerfully predict home-based forms of involvement (Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2011).

Consistent with these results, parents in this qualitative study reported receiving general and specific invitations from the school. Spanish-speaking parents appreciated the school's attempts to communicate in both languages, and having access to bilingual staff almost certainly played a role in parents' reported forms of school-based involvement. They reported responding to child and teacher invitations and reported forms of both home and school based involvement. However, they received more child than school or teacher invitations. Consistent with the results of the Green et al. (2007) study, parents also noted that child invitations for homework help came less frequently as

their middle school students became more independent in completing it. Parents also reported receiving far fewer invitations from their children's middle school or middle school teachers than from their children's elementary school or elementary school teachers. However, parents reported responding consistently when invited or requested to do so.

These findings are significant in two ways. First, the school has recently been designated a community school. By definition, community schools aim to forge partnerships with families and community organizations and aspire to become hubs of community activity (Clandfield, 2010; Coalition for Community Schools, 2004 and 2008; Dryfoos, 1994; Richardson, 2009). Emerging literature on the community school model (Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2003; Dryfoos, 1994; Richardson, 2009) point to improved results for students as parental and community involvement increases. Only one parent in the study indicated that she had visited the school's family center previously. No parent in the study referred to the school as a community school. One parent in the study noted that the exterior of the school was unwelcoming.

Second, all study participants reported a willingness to respond to teacher requests or invitations; however, few reported specific examples at the middle school level of teachers' invitations to become involved. English speaking parents reported a more two-way communication with teachers. Spanish speaking parents reported interacting with bilingual counselors with whom they were more likely to describe a trusting, longer-term, reciprocal relationship consistent with findings in the literature (Gonzalez, Border, Hines, Villalba, & Henderson, A., 2013; Reschly, & Christenson, 2012). As well, the school is home to a flourishing band and choir program and the band and choir directors have met

with notable success in recruiting parent volunteers (including Latino parents) for fundraising activities, chaperoning field trips, and attending musical performances.

Implications for practice. These finding suggests opportunities for the school to improve general school invitations for involvement and to continue to develop as a community school. Only three parents in the study had visited the Family Center. An event or Open House organized by the Family Center in conjunction with the counseling staff students' specifically showcasing the facilities, events, services, and parent programs available through the Family Center for Latino families could build upon existing relationships, augment parents' knowledge and skills, and increase community.

Parents indicated that the school communicated with them in a multitude of ways. Some of the most effective ways reported were notes sent home in English and Spanish, phone calls and voice mail messages, text messages, emails, and communication through the Parent Portal. This information contributes to the literature on Latino parents calling for more information about parents' perceptions of the most effective ways for the school to communicate with them (Anderson & Minke, 2007). Yet most of these forms of communication assume that the parent has a telephone connection, a telephone number that remains stable over time, and Internet access, as well as the skills to navigate the school's website and Parent Portal. Ongoing research indicates a digital divide, not only between non-Latinos and Latinos (Fairlie, 2004), but also between English speaking and Spanish speaking Latinos (Hambridge, Phibbs, Beck, & Bergman, 2011), and native born and foreign-born Latinos (Livingston, 2010). This suggests an opportunity for the school to survey students and parents about digital access and to use this information to plan

parent programs that would enhance the already effective ways that the school communicates with families.

When asked, Spanish-speaking parents unanimously agreed that there were staff members at the school who spoke Spanish or who could translate for them if necessary. At the present time, key staff members such as the After School Coordinator, the Attendance receptionist, and the school counselors are bilingual. A fourth recommendation for the school is to investigate ways to increase the number of bilingual staff in key positions. The first way to accomplish this goal is to encourage and fund current staff members to take Spanish language courses. The second option is more long-term. As the opportunity presents itself, (attrition and retirements) hire more bilingual staff in such key positions as the General Office receptionist.

A fifth recommendation for the school would be to convene Spanish speaking parents to investigate ways that the PTO could be truly inclusive and could accommodate the language needs of such a large group of parents. Several parents in the study indicated an interest in being more involved and were unable to do so due to language barriers. A related recommendation for practice would be to convene PTO meetings around highly relevant topics such as neighborhood safety.

Given research that suggests parental involvement both at home and at school increases in response to teacher outreach even at the middle and high school levels (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000; Simon, 2004) this finding could represent an opportunity for the school to increase teacher invitations to Latino parents. The literature suggests that Latino parents, particularly new immigrants may be striving to acquire functional levels of English and may not know about the structures or practices in US public schools

(Pérez-Carreón, Drake, and Barton 2005). These factors may affect their levels of involvement at school. In turn, school personnel are often monolingual (Palmer & Martinez, 2013), may possess superficial understandings of their own cultural and racial identities (Bloom & Peters, 2012), and may not have developed a philosophy or practice of cultural competence (Milner, 2011). This suggests avenues for the school to professionally develop and prepare teachers for successful outreach to its sizeable Latino population.

More Home-based than School-based Involvement

In response to a question asking them to rank the three most important things Latino parents do to support their children's educational success and throughout the interview, parents gave many more examples of home-based than school-based involvement. The findings of this qualitative study are consistent with results of previous quantitative tests of the model indicating that all parents, including Latino parents, report more home-based than school-based forms of involvement (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007; Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2011).

The Importance of Communication

In this study, when asked to describe the three most important things they do to support their children's educational success, all 15 Latino parents reported some form of parent/child communication, such as talking to their children and communicating values, goals, expectations and aspirations. Although in response to this prompt and throughout the interviews parents encouraged their children in their future aspirations, only one

parent mentioned putting aside money to fund her daughter's college plans. Another mother mentioned having to learn about scholarship and financial aid opportunities for her older son without much help from the school. Optimistically, she concluded that by the time her middle schooler was ready for post-secondary education, she would be an expert! Of the parents who talked specifically about their children's aspirations, all indicated that they would encourage the child by following the child's interests and not trying to impose their own wishes upon the child. While several parents had advocated for their children to be placed in more advanced English or mathematics courses, none associated placement in these courses with college or university admissions. No parents mentioned talking to their children about the type of courses they would have to take in middle school and high school in order to realize aspirations. These findings are consistent with the "non-interventionist" stance reported by Auerbach (2006).

On a more general level, examination of 2012 school survey data (personal communication with school principal, March, 2013) revealed that 87% of Latino students and 84% of all students agreed with the statement "I definitely plan to go to college someday." Seventy-seven percent of all parents agreed with the statement. This recent survey data and the present study's findings are consistent with research indicating that many Latino parents hold high aspirations for their children's educational progress (Hill & Torres, 2010) but that fewer Latino parents possess the necessary knowledge and skills to guide their children towards appropriate courses (Auerbach, 2006) or report financial preparation for college plans (Catsambis & Garland, 1997).

Implications for practice. These finding represent an opportunity for the school to further investigate parents' aspirations for their children and to use this information to

increase parents' knowledge and skills about the type of academic trajectory in middle and high school that would lead to the possibility of post-secondary education and routes to financial planning for post-secondary education, such as scholarships, financial aid or student loans. While not every parent in the study indicated that they aspired to a post-secondary education for their children, several indicated that they would attend school programs if invited to do so and one indicated that she had to learn about post-secondary possibilities on her own. Such an information gap suggests an opportunity for the school to increase school based involvement while providing some parents with much needed information about how to prepare to fulfill their children's educational aspirations. Models such as the Check and Connect program provide examples of goal-setting and planning with parents.

Limitations of the Present Study and Implications for Research

As previously stated, this qualitative study presents limitations. First, the lack of generalizability of the case study, as there is no direct comparison to non-community school Latino parental engagement. Second, the case study design does not establish causality or explore correlations among factors. Third, this study relied on the goodwill, time, and energy of Latino parents. Simply by being interviewed they indicated their willingness to be involved, and thus no uninvolved parents participated. Fourth, this study relied on parents' self-reports without data from the potentially corroborating perspectives of students, teachers or school personnel. Fifth, the culture, ethnicity, first language and SES of the researcher differ from that of the majority of the participants and may have limited data collection and/or analysis.

Originally, this study was conceived as a much larger mixed-methods study that would incorporate a quantitative test of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model by administering the survey to Latino parents in a community school and comparing the results with qualitative data gathered from interview and focus-group data from parents, students, teachers, administrators and district personnel. Gathering the perceptions of various stakeholders in such a mixed-methods study would have the advantage of confirming or disconfirming parents' self-reported behaviors and enhancing the validity of the data by triangulating it from the perspectives of students, teachers, and school personnel. Scholars testing the model quantitatively have similarly recommended a more mixed methods approach (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2011). Given the scope of such a study, a bilingual and bicultural research team would strengthen fidelity of data collection and analysis from a variety of bilingual and bicultural participants. As well, testing the model in a middle school with a much more developed identity as a community school, could explore its impact on the models' constructs.

The present study was necessarily limited in size. In this small-scale study, two thirds of the parents did not feel confident in their level of English language skills and preferred to be interviewed in Spanish. As well, there was wide variability as to the time they had lived in the United States. The latter, in particular, could affect the size of their social networks, the degree of familiarity they felt with the school system, and the extent to which they felt welcomed to participate. A second recommendation for further research would be replicating the study with a much larger sample, so that variables such as development of English language skills and length of time living in the United States

could be further explored as they relate to parents' decisions to become involved in their children's educational success.

Citizen-Scholar-Activist

The researcher plays many roles and must be clear with herself and with her participants about the ultimate purpose of the research. While fulfilling the requirements for my doctoral degree, I depended in large part upon the generosity of the school staff and families. I asked myself "How will this research benefit them?". Quiroz (2001, p. 327) wrote, "I was therefore compelled to analyze these narratives [in her research] by what Ellis and Bochner (1996) call the "ethical pull" of converting information into experiences readers can use, and by the idea that academic work should in some way make a difference..." In the same vein, what will I "do" with the research that empowers families, helps school personnel, or benefits students?

To answer these questions, I will share my findings with leaders, faculty, staff, and families at the school. School personnel are to be commended for the efforts they make to reach out to families using multiple forms of communication. Latino families are to be commended and recognized for the ways they support their children's educational success, particularly at home, and for the resourcefulness they display in overcoming reported barriers.

School leaders, in particular, have influential roles to play in educating themselves and their faculties on expanded definitions of parental engagement that include recognition of the value of home-based involvement. The Latino parents in this study cared deeply about their children's educational success and surrounded their children with love, support, and encouragement at home. One of the ways parents

supported their children at home was by communicating and encouraging educational aspirations. I will share these findings with school leaders and the broader community in hopes of reinforcing a strengths-based perspective on Latino parental involvement. School leaders can also connect the findings of the study with School Improvement Plan data that shows the high aspirations parents hold for students.

In working to provide information and assistance to parents in realizing these high aspirations, school leaders and counselors have key roles to play. Principals provide resources such as time, materials, and necessary training, and can create administrative processes and structures to facilitate information programs to parents. School counselors, by definition, counsel and assist students and families to consider a range of post-secondary opportunities, including vocational training, community college programs, and four-year degree programs. The Family Center personnel has made significant efforts to solicit parental feedback on topics of interest in order to organize training and information programs. Sharing these findings with the school's leaders, counselors, and Family Center personnel could provide further evidence of family's interest in educational aspirations and need for information and assistance in how to realize these aspirations.

A potential further answer to this question could be the post-research implementation of the Teachers Involving Parents (TIPS) program designed by Hoover-Dempsey and others at the Vanderbilt Family-School Partnership Lab. Described by authors "a short-term in-service program to increase practicing teachers' beliefs and skills critical to effective parental involvement" (p.4) these six, one hour sessions could help teachers who volunteer to participate draw in parents. The resulting increase in teachers'

skills and invitations to parents to participate could help parents feel invited and valued by the school and increase their participation, thus benefiting students.

In sum, I chose to test the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) model because of the nature of its variables: they are salient to the process from the parents' point of view, open to intervention and influence by school personnel, and they suggest points of entry for practitioners. Sharing the findings of the study with all school personnel, from leaders to teachers to counselors to Family Center personnel is intended to recognize, foster, and further develop Latino family involvement in this community school.

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Appendix A

Interview questions and prompts for semi-structured interviews

Role Construction – Activity Beliefs	
Question 1.	What do you do in your family to help your child or children be successful in school? (Walk me through an evening at your house. Tell me about a time when you helped your child at school.)
Prompts:	Please rate on a scale from 1-5 how important the following supports are for helping a child be successful in school. Five is most important and 1 is not important at all.
	volunteer at the school communicate with the child’s teacher regularly help the child with homework support decisions made by the teacher stay on top of things at school explain tough assignments to the child help the child study for tests read with the child talk with other parents from my child’s school make the school better go to the school’s open house attend PTA meetings talk with their child about the school day encourage their child when he or she doesn’t feel like doing homework help child when he or she has trouble organizing homework help child try new ways of doing homework when he/she is having a hard time be aware of how he or she is doing with homework?
Role Construction - Valence	
Prompt	Tell me about your own experiences in school.
Role Efficacy	
Question 2.	What do you think Latino parents do best in helping their children do well in school?
	What are the three best things that Latino parents do to help their children succeed in school?

Prompts: get through to the child
help the child get good grades
feel successful in efforts to help child learn
know how to help child learn

Life context variables – time and energy

Question 3. How much time and energy do you have for the following?
(1 is no time, 2 is some time, and 3 is plenty of time and energy)

Prompts: help your child with homework?
communicate with the school?
communicate with the teacher(s)?
attend special events?

Life context variables – knowledge and skills

Question 4. To what extent (a lot, a little, not much) do you believe Latino parents . . .

know enough about the subjects of the child's homework to help
know how to supervise homework
know how to explain things about homework
have the skills to help out at school
know about special events at school

General and specific invitations from school and teachers

Question 5. Do teachers at this school...

- expect/ask you to help with homework
- talk about the school day,
- invite you to attend a special event at school
- Ask you to help out at school?

Question 6. Do teachers contact you via note, phone call or email?

Specific invitations from your child

Question 7. Does your child...

- expect/ask you to help with homework
- talk about the school day
- invite you to attend a special event at school
- ask you to help out at school?

Forms of involvement

Question 8. In what ways do you become involved in your child's schooling?

Prompts: communicating values, goals
at home
communicating with the school
getting involved at school

Appendix B

Phone Call Script to Parents Soliciting Interview in English

Dear _____,

My name is Anne Marie FitzGerald. I used to be a school principal and now I am completing my doctorate in Educational Leadership at Lehigh University. Dr. George White is my advisor in the College of Education at the university, and he is supervising my doctoral research.

I am conducting a research study on parental involvement. We would like to better understand why parents decide to become involved in their children's schooling. What makes it hard? What makes it easier? We also want to know where and how parents become involved in their children's schooling, for example, at home, with homework, at school, or in communicating with the school or the teachers.

You are invited to participate in this study because you are a parent at Broughal Middle School. If you agree to be in this study, I would like to interview you on this topic. The interview would take place at a time and place that is convenient for you and it would last about 30-40 minutes.

If you would like to participate, please let me know a convenient time and place when we can get together. If you need help with childcare, we can meet at Broughal Middle School in the Family Center and childcare will be provided. If you need transportation, I can pick you up and bring you to the school or to a location of your choice.

Appendix C

Phone Call Script to Parents Soliciting Interview in Spanish

Estimado _____,

Mi nombre es Anne Marie FitzGerald. Anteriormente fui directora de primaria en varias escuelas y ahora estoy finalizando mi doctorado en liderazgo de educación en la Universidad de Lehigh. El Dr. George White es mi asesor en el Departamento de Educación de la Universidad, y él está supervisando mi investigación de tesis doctoral.

Estoy realizando un estudio de investigación sobre la participación de los padres. Nos gustaría entender mejor por qué los padres deciden participar en la educación de sus hijos. ¿Qué factores impiden la participación de padres? ¿Qué factores facilitan la participación de padres? También queremos saber dónde y cómo los padres se involucren en la educación de sus hijos, por ejemplo, en casa, con la tarea, en la escuela o en la comunicación con la escuela o los maestros.

Usted está invitado a participar en este estudio porque usted es un padre de familia en Broughal Middle School. Si usted se compromete a participar en este estudio, me gustaría hacerle una entrevista sobre este tema. La entrevista tendría lugar en un momento y lugar que sea más conveniente para usted y duraría unos 30-40 minutos.

Si desea participar, por favor hágamelo saber el momento y lugar en que podemos reunirnos. Si usted necesita ayuda con el cuidado de los niños, podemos irnos a la Escuela Media Broughal en el Centro de la Familia y cuidado de niños será proporcionado. Si necesita transporte, puedo recogerle y llevarle a la escuela o en una ubicación de su elección.

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form for Parent Interview in English



LEHIGH
UNIVERSITY

INTERVIEW CONSENT FOR PARENTS

Who am I?

My name is Anne Marie FitzGerald. I used to be a school principal and now I am completing my doctorate in Educational Leadership at Lehigh University. Dr. George White is my advisor in the College of Education at the university, and he is supervising my doctoral research.

What is the research project?

We would like to better understand why parents decide to become involved in their children's schooling. What makes it hard? What makes it easier? We also want to know where and how parents become involved in their children's schooling, for example, at home, with homework, at school, or in communicating with the school or the teachers.

Why are you invited to participate?

You are invited to participate in this study because you are a parent at Broughal Middle School.

What would you have to do?

If you agree to be in this study, you will participate in a 30-minute interview. I will ask you several questions. Some of them will be about your own school experiences. Others will be about how you help your child with school. With your permission, I will tape record the interviews so I don't have to make so many notes.

Benefits of this study

You will be helping us to understand why and how parents become involved in their children's education. You will not receive any compensation for participating in this study. However, at the end of the study, as a "thank you", all participants will receive a \$5.00 gift card.

Risks or discomforts

Sometimes talking about your own or your children's experiences with school can be difficult. However, if you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions, you can skip the question. You can decide to quit the interview at any time, without explanation, and your answers will **not** be recorded. You can also decide not to participate at all.

Do I have to give my name?

No. I won't ask you to give your name on the recording. Instead of your name, I will put a number code on any notes that I make from your recording. If someone else helps me with the notes, they will not see your name, only your number code.

What will you do with the interview data?

All computer notes will be kept on my personal laptop, which is password protected. All printed notes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at Lehigh University. I will use the data you give me as part of my dissertation. I may use the data as the basis for articles or presentations in the future. I won't use your name or information that would identify you in my dissertation or in any articles or presentations. Once I finish my dissertation, I will erase the recordings, delete the computer files, and shred the paper notes.

What if I have questions or concerns?

You can call or email the researcher or her supervisor.

Anne Marie FitzGerald (Researcher)	503-830-3806	amf604@lehigh.edu
Dr. George White (Supervisor)	610-758-3262	gpw1@lehigh.edu

Who do I contact if I don't want to talk to the researcher or the supervisor?

If you have further questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints you can talk to the following people at Lehigh University's Office of Research. Your call or report will be confidential.

Susan E. Disidore	610-758-3020	sus5@lehigh.edu
Troy Boni	610-758-2985	tdb308@lehigh.edu

I agree to participate as a subject in the research project and to be audio-recorded.

Participant's Name: _____ (Please print.)

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form for Parent Interview in Spanish



LEHIGH
UNIVERSITY

CONSENTIMIENTO DE PADRES PARA ENTREVISTA

¿Quién soy yo?

Mi nombre es Anne Marie Fitzgerald. Anteriormente fui directora de primaria en varias escuelas y ahora estoy finalizando mi doctorado en liderazgo de educación en la Universidad de Lehigh. El Dr. George White es mi asesor en el Departamento de Educación de la Universidad, y él está supervisando mi investigación de tesis doctoral..

¿Cuál es el proyecto de investigación?

Nos gustaría entender mejor por qué los padres deciden participar en la educación de sus hijos. ¿Qué factores impiden la participación de padres? ¿Qué factores facilitan la participación de padres? También queremos saber dónde y cómo los padres se involucren en la educación de sus hijos, por ejemplo, en casa, con la tarea, en la escuela o en la comunicación con la escuela o los maestros.

¿Por qué está invitado a participar?

Usted está invitado a participar en este estudio porque usted es un padre en Broughal Middle School.

¿Qué tiene que hacer?

Si usted se compromete a participar en este estudio, usted participará en una entrevista de 30 minutos. Voy a hacerle varias preguntas. Algunos de ellos serán acerca de sus experiencias escolares propias. Otros serán sobre cómo ayudar a su hijo en la escuela. Con su permiso, voy a grabar la entrevista, así que no tiene que hacer tantas notas.

Los beneficios de este estudio

Usted nos ayudará a comprender por qué y cómo los padres se involucren en la educación de sus hijos. Usted no recibirá ninguna compensación por participaren este estudio. Sin embargo, al final del estudio, como un "gracias", todos los participantes recibirán una tarjeta de regalo de \$5,00.

Los riesgos o molestias

A veces, hablando de su propia experiencia o la de sus hijos con la escuela puede ser difícil. Sin embargo, si se siente incómodo con cualquiera de las preguntas, se puede omitir la pregunta. Usted puede decidir salir de la entrevista en cualquier momento, sin explicación, y sus respuestas no serán registradas. También puede decidir no participaren absoluto.

¿Tengo que dar su nombre?

No, yo no le pedirá quedé su nombre en la grabación. En lugar de su nombre, voy a poner un código de número en las notas que hago de su grabación. Si alguien me ayuda con las notas, no podrá ver su nombre, sólo su número de código.

¿Qué pasa si tenga preguntas o preocupaciones?

Usted puede llamar o enviar un e-mail a la investigadora o a su supervisor.

Anne Marie FitzGerald (Investigadora)	503-830-3806	amf604@lehigh.edu
El Dr. George White (Supervisor)	610-758-3262	gpw1@lehigh.edu

¿A quién debe contactar en caso de que no quiero hablar con el investigador o el supervisor?

Si usted tenga más preguntas, inquietudes, sugerencias o quejas que usted podría hablar con las siguientes personas en la Universidad de Lehigh Oficina de Investigación. Su llamada o denuncia será confidencial.

Susan E. Disidore	610-758-3020	sus5@lehigh.edu
Troy Boni	610-758-2985	tdb308@lehigh.edu

Estoy de acuerdo en participar como sujeto en el proyecto de investigación, y estoy de acuerdo en que la entrevista ser grabada.

Participant's Name: _____ (Please print.)

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F

Pre-Established Codebook, January, 2013

Code	Description	Example
Immigration	Parent states, alludes to, or describes immigrating to the US.	
Migration	Parent states, alludes to, or describes migrating to the mainland of the US	
Circulatory Migration	Parent states, alludes to, or describes circulatory migration (returning to Puerto Rico after having lived in the mainland US.)	
Parent's education	Parent states, alludes to, or describes his/her level of education	
Parent's school experiences	Parent states, alludes to, or describes how he/she experienced school as a child	
Parent's childhood experiences	Parent states, alludes to, or describes a childhood experience	
Parent's work	Parent states, alludes to, or describes his/her work situation	
Parent's Spanish language skills	Parent states, alludes to, or describes his/her Spanish language skills	
Parent's English language skills	Parent states, alludes to, or describes his/her level of English	
Siblings	Parent states, alludes to, or names child's siblings	
Homework help	Parent states or alludes to helping student with homework or finding someone else who can help with homework (spouse, sibling, family friend)	
Homework routine	Parent states or alludes to providing a set time for homework to be done or describes an afterschool or homework routine	
Homework organization	Parent states, alludes to the importance of, or describes a time when he/she helped the child organize homework	
Homework explanations	Parent states, alludes to, or describes a time when he/she explained a tough assignment to the child	
Homework encouragement	Encourage child when he/she doesn't feel like doing homework	
Homework suggestions	Help child try new ways of doing homework when he/she is having a hard time	

Test preparation	Parent alludes to or describes helping (or not helping) the child to prepare for test(s)
School day talk	Parent describes talking to child about the school day
Parent/child communication	Parent states, alludes to, or describes an example of the importance of communication
Reading	Parent describes reading (or not reading) to the child at home
Up to date	Parent describes knowing what is going on with the child at school, with grades, with friendships, or socially
Parent/Teacher communication	Parent states, alludes to, or describes communicating (or not communicating) with the child's teacher or teachers.
Support teacher decisions	Parent states, alludes to, or describes the importance of or gives an example of a time he/she supported (or not) the decision of the teacher(s).
Support school decisions	Parent states, alludes to, or describes the importance of or gives an example of a time he/she supported (or not) the decision of the school or a school administrator.
Volunteer	Parent states, alludes to, or describes the importance of (or not) or gives an example of a time he/she volunteered at the child's school or wasn't able to volunteer
Attend events	Parent describes attending (or not attending) school events such as Back to School Night, parent-teacher conferences or concerts.
Attend PTA meetings	Parent describes attending (or not attending) PTO meetings at school
Talk with other parents	Parent states, alludes to, or describes talking to (or not talking to) other parents from the child's school.
Improve school	Parent describes a time when he/she worked to make the school better for children
Time and Energy	Parent states, alludes to the importance of, or gives an example of how he/she made the time or had the energy to help student succeed in some way
Knowledge	Parent states, alludes to the importance of, or gives an example of how he/she possessed or didn't possess the knowledge to help student succeed in school
Skills	Parent states, alludes to the importance of, or

	gives an example of how he/she possessed or didn't possess the skills to help student succeed in school
School invitations	Parent states, alludes to the importance of, or gives an example of an invitation to come to a school event, program, or meeting
School communication	Parent states, alludes to, or describes receiving information from the school in the form of paper or a phone call from a school staff member or teacher
Teacher invitations	Parent states, alludes to, or describes a time when a teacher(s) invited the parent to participate (attending an event, interactive homework, conference, etc.)
Child invitations	Parent states, alludes to, or describes a time when a child invited the parent to participate (attending an event, interactive homework, performance, etc.)
Forms of involvement	Parent responds to last question about the most important forms of involvement

Appendix G

Revised Codebook, February, 2013

Code	Description	Example
Immigration	Parent states, alludes to, or describes immigrating to the US.	...yo me vine en mayo del 2011 a aquí.
Migration	Parent states, alludes to, or describes migrating to the mainland of the US	No conseguí trabajo en donde vivía, Puerto Rico. Vine para acá...
Circulatory Migration	Parent states, alludes to, or describes circulatory migration (returning to Puerto Rico after having lived in the mainland US.)	Yo nací en Brooklyn, pero a mí me llevaron pequeña a Puerto Rico.
Parent's education	Parent states, alludes to, or describes his/her level of education	...saqué un bachillerato en ciencias y letras.
Parent's school experiences	Parent states, alludes to, or describes how he/she experienced school as a child	Mire, cuando yo empecé a entrar a la escuela, en el tercer año, yo empiezo a tener problemas con matemáticas.
Parent's childhood experiences	Parent states, alludes to, or describes a childhood experience	Mi niñez no fue tan buena.
Parent's work	Parent states, alludes to, or describes his/her work situation	Uno, uno de mis trabajos, era en la factoría.
Parent's Spanish language skills	Parent states, alludes to, or describes his/her Spanish language skills	I speak fluent Spanish and as you can hear, I have an accent.
Parent's English language skills	Parent states, alludes to, or describes his/her level of English	"... si son en cosas en traducir en inglés yo siempre utilizo el diccionario porque tampoco se mucho inglés..."
Parent's aspirations	Parent states, alludes to, or describes his/her aspirations (to learn English, to study, to get a better job, etc.)	Yo soy una persona de aspiraciones. A mí no hay ninguna barrera que me detenga.
Parent's example/model	Parent states, alludes to, or describes setting an example	Si usted no tiene un ejemplo para darle a su hijo,

	or serving as a model for their child/children	empiécelo.
Parent advocacy	Parent advocates for child in school situation	Ahí me bajó la nota y mire que hablé con la maestra de todas las formas, busqué ayuda para que le dieran tutoría.
Siblings	Parent states, alludes to, or names child's siblings	Menores que él son dos. Son uno que está en segundo grado, y la nena de Kindergarten.
Homework help	Parent states or alludes to helping student with homework or finding someone else who can help with homework (spouse, sibling, family friend)	Si, el me pide mucha ayuda en cuestión de matemáticas...
Homework routine	Parent states or alludes to providing a set time for homework to be done or describes an afterschool or homework routine	...ella llega, al menos que uno llegue a hacer algo, una diligencia, pues, llegamos, y ella se pone cómoda, y ella llega y come algo, y después yo le digo: "Hay que hacer las asignaciones".
Test preparation	Parent alludes to or describes helping (or not helping) the child to prepare for test(s)	después que estudia, él me hace un bosquejo y ahí, yo le, sabe yo le pregunto lo que él estudio y él me contesta...
General school help	Parent alludes to or describes helping (or not helping) the child with school work in general	La pongo a que practique matemáticas
School day talk	Parent describes talking to child about the school day	Siempre lo hacemos cuando vamos en el automóvil. "¿Qué tal te fue? ¿Cómo estuviste hoy?"
Tools	Dictionary, Internet, etc.	Siempre que no entendemos algo les digo vamos a la computadora y buscamos la información.
Parent/child communication	Parent states, alludes to, or describes an example of the importance of communication	The second most important thing is to try and talk to them.
Fosters	Parent states, alludes to, or	Que hace – nosotros le

independence	describes an example of how he/she fosters the child's independence, for example in encouraging the child to complete homework independently or try something difficult, or to ask for help.	decimos: "Bebé, hazlo tú solita. Y, lo que tú no entiendas lo preguntas".
Reading	Parent describes reading (or not reading) to the child at home	En Honduras sí, cuando iba, leíamos los libros, porque había un libro – hay un libro de enseñanza que ellos tienen.
Up to date	Parent describes knowing what is going on with the child at school, with grades, with friendships, or socially	...siempre están hablando muy bien de ella.
Temperament	Parent describes, alludes to or states knowing the child's personality, characteristics or temperament	Porque él es más tierno, él es más sentimental. Mi hija como que salió poquito más fuerte y como que tiene su lado de ver las cosas...
Child's progress	Parent states, describes, or alludes to the child's progress in school	Mi hija tiene unas buenas notas. Entonces, mi hijo está arrastrando unas notas de B y C.
Parent/Teacher communication	Parent states, alludes to, or describes communicating (or not communicating) with the child's teacher or teachers.	...hablan muy bien de ella, le dicen los estudiantes: "Mira, Stephanie ya vino hace poco".
Support teacher decisions	Parent states, alludes to, or describes the importance of or gives an example of a time he/she supported (or not) the decision of the teacher(s).	So I think it is important to support the teacher and I think it's important to set your boundaries and let the teacher know.
Support school decisions	Parent states, alludes to, or describes the importance of or gives an example of a time he/she supported (or not) the decision of the school or a school administrator.	Pero en Puerto Rico tuvo una situación con él nene en la escuela y no de parte de maestro, sino de parte de directora que tomaron decisiones por mí, por él nene para él niño, y no fueron muy saludables para su salud, o sea mentalmente.
Volunteer	Parent states, alludes to, or	I volunteered at [school

	describes the importance of (or not) or gives an example of a time he/she volunteered at the child's school or wasn't able to volunteer	name] in the library.
Attend events	Parent describes attending (or not attending) school events such as Back to School Night, parent-teacher conferences or concerts.	I did go to the little talent show.
Attend PTA meetings	Parent describes attending (or not attending) PTO meetings at school	They are important. It's a way to keep yourself informed and I thought the last one, the one where we met at I thought was very useful because, you know it concerns – you're comfortable with bringing concerns to the attention of your principal or to your administrators at the school. No, la única vez que yo pude tener comunicación con un padre de familia, fue un – de un problema, llegamos a la comunicación. Entre el hijo de ellos con mi hija.
Talk with other parents	Parent states, alludes to, or describes talking to (or not talking to) other parents from the child's school.	Si, tiene importancia [trabajar para mejorar la escuela] porque le digo que la mayoría de los padres hacemos caso mismo de que también nosotros tenemos responsabilidades dentro de la escuela.
Improve school	Parent describes a time when he/she worked to make the school better for children	Pero sí, dedicó ese tiempo a él.
Time and Energy	Parent states, alludes to the importance of, or gives an example of how he/she made the time or had the energy to help student succeed in some way	
Knowledge	Parent states, alludes to the importance of, or gives an example of how he/she possessed or didn't possess the knowledge to help student	Pero, yo lo que hago, es que le doy – la pongo a que practique matemáticas.

Skills	succeed in school Parent states, alludes to the importance of, or gives an example of how he/she possessed or didn't possess the skills to help student succeed in school	Le digo sinceramente que yo a veces la chequeo (las tareas) y si veo algo que no entiendo, se lo doy a mi esposo.
School invitations	Parent states, alludes to the importance of, or gives an example of an invitation to come to a school event, program, or meeting	...venimos cada vez que nos dicen, los, los dos venimos y chequeamos las notas.
School communication	Parent states, alludes to, or describes receiving information from the school in the form of paper or a phone call from a school staff member or teacher	Si, como ahora que tengo los papeles aquí, que viene el PSSA.
Teacher invitations	Parent states, alludes to, or describes a time when a teacher(s) invited the parent to participate (attending an event, interactive homework, conference, etc.)	Hubo una vez y no pude ir, que nos invitaron, eran como unos 15 o 20 minutos para estar en el salón con el niños.
Child invitations	Parent states, alludes to, or describes a time when a child invited the parent to participate (attending an event, interactive homework, performance, etc.)	La nena, ahorita la de Kinder, me dice "Mama, acuérdate de la Movie Night el viernes."
Forms of involvement	Parent responds to last question about the most important forms of involvement	Ser un ejemplo.

In Vivo Codes

Code	Description	Example
Consejos	Parent states or alludes to giving the child advice about life	Como amigo, tienes que aconsejar a los niños.
Educación	Parent refers to child as "bien educado/a or describes what he	Si, la educación está en el respeto a los demás y en el

	or she means by educacion.	respeto a sí mismo. Si yo me respeto, yo voy respetar a los demás. El respeto y educación son una manera muy importante en nuestras vidas.
Echar para adelante	Parent refers or describes “getting ahead”	Porque así, los estudiantes, los niños ven tú, las ganas que tú tienes de que ellos echan adelante.
Iglesia	Parent states, describes or alludes to the importance of church	Nosotros vamos a la iglesia, nosotros les enseñamos a los nenes de ir a la iglesia.
Pendiente	Parent describes being attentive to or monitoring child’s development or actions	...uno tiene que estar pendiente de ellos en cualquier aspecto de bullying, algo que no le guste de la escuela, cualquier cosa.
Unidos	Parent describes family as united	Somos un poco más unidos y nos estamos preguntando cómo nos sentimos, que nos pasa.

Anne Marie FitzGerald

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Center for Developing Urban Educational Leaders
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Education

Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership
Lehigh University, May 2013

Master of Education, Administration and Supervision
The College of New Jersey, August 2000

Principal's Certificate
The College of New Jersey, August 2000

Ontario Teacher's Certificate, 1983

Bachelor of Education
University of Western Ontario, 1983

Bachelor of Arts
University of Western Ontario, 1982

Higher Education Teaching and Curriculum Development

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY, BETHLEHEM, PA

Adjunct Instructor

Organizational Theory and Change Management, Spring 2013

The Principalship, Part II, Winter 2013

Instructional Leadership, online course, Fall 2012

Family and Community Engagement, Spring 2012

Instructional Leadership, Summer 2011

Curriculum Developer

Engaging Families and Communities UCEA Module

Preparing School Leaders to Serve Diverse Learners

Graduate Assistant

Center for Developing Urban Educational Leaders