RECONCEPTUALIZING THE ROLE OF LATINO FATHERS IN SETTING THE PATHWAY TO COLLEGE FOR THEIR CHILDREN

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SIGNATURE PAGE

DISSERTATION: RECONCEPTUALIZING THE ROLE OF LATINO FATHERS IN SETTING THE PATHWAY TO COLLEGE FOR THEIR CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to provide a better understanding of Latino fathers as an untapped resource with the ability to positively influence the academic experiences of Latino youth. It provides context for educators and community members by expanding research knowledge about an authentic family-school partnership. The design of this study utilized qualitative methods, developing a narrative analysis of six, self-identified Latino fathers. This study used focus groups as a way to collect personal stories regarding their parental involvement, supports and obstacles, and the Funds of Knowledge, invisible strategies, such as generosity and kindness, they continue to value and utilize as they impart these strategies to their children. The findings indicated that Latino fathers have a very strong commitment to their children’s education, debunking majoritarian stories, which claim that Latinos do not care about education for their children (Yosso, 2006) and validating Auerbach’s (2007) assertion that minority parents strongly value the education of their children and express those values in unexpected ways.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Latinos are the most rapidly growing ethnic minority in the United States and the most academically lagging (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Half of all Latino students fail to even graduate from high school. Research indicates a failure to graduate is not just an immigrant crisis and instead is the reality for many Latinos who were born in the United States (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). The U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, (2007) utilized data based on 2,400 eighth and ninth graders from San Diego, concluding that immigrant students outperformed native born due to immigrant optimism (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). According to a recent Pew Research Center survey, immigrant optimism is noted with first-generation Hispanic immigrants, “44% of all Hispanic adults – and fully half of all first-generation Hispanic immigrants – say that today’s children in this country will grow up to be better off than people are now” (Escobar, 2006, para. 3). The belief that today’s children in this country will grow up to be better off than people are now is higher with Latinos as compared to the view of Blacks and Whites.

The literature is consistent in terms of Latino enrollment in public elementary schools, secondary schools, and college that Latino academic achievement is improving. Latino enrollment is projected to increase 33% between 2011 and 2022. The Latino college enrollment has increased 22% between 2009 and 2011 (Benson, 2013) and is projected to increase 27% between Fall 2011 and Fall 2022, (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2014). College enrollments may have decreased overall, but the Hispanic population is on the rise (Lopez & Fry, 2013). In 2012, 49% Hispanics enrolled in college compared to 47% non-Hispanics, 42.1% among Whites.
Despite the increase of college enrollment, Latinos continue to be underrepresented and are less likely to attend a four-year university with a gap of 11.1% between Latinos and non-Latinos. Further, Latinos make up 38% of the population, however, 11% have earned a Bachelor of Arts degree as compared to 30% of all Californians. More high performing Latinos start in community college with only 40% completing after 6 years. In 2012, 69% of Latino freshmen started in community college, 14% in California State, 5% in University of California, and 8% in a for profit college (Benson, 2013; Lopez & Fry, 2013; Rivera, 2013; Roach, 2013). Further data indicated that only 14.5% of Latinos earn a Bachelor of Arts compared to 21.2% Blacks, 51% Asians, and 34.5% Whites (Lopez & Fry, 2013).

**Statement of the Problem**

The high percentage of Latino students who graduate from California high schools who have not satisfied the pre-college requirements are influenced by the lack of school policies and practices that promote a college going culture (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Gandara and Contreras (2009) wrote, “It would be simplistic to suggest that a single cause or even a combination of factors could entirely explain the low level of achievement of many Latino students. The situation is far more complex than a simple cause-effect model” (p. 28).

Gandara and Contreras (2009) and Schneider, Martinez, and Owens (2006) noted some conditions that contribute to low achievement, indicating the impetus is in the early years involving the role of the parents/family and transitioning to societal factors, which involve the role of educators. They further noted literacy activities prior to children entering formal education, parent education levels, living in a single-parent home, being
economically disadvantaged, and English language proficiency as factors in Latino students’ academic success (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Schneider, Martinez, & Owens, 2006).

There is a growing body of scholarship revealing misunderstanding and perceptions about the role of Latino parents in education and the concept of parent involvement as defined by dominant, mainstream schools (Auerbach, 2007; Chavez, 2008). Latino parents believe “their roles and responsibilities regarding their children’s academic development are grounded in socio-cultural values about education which encompasses being moral, responsible, respectful, and well behaved” (Quinones & Kiyama, 2014, p. 150).

Schneider, Martinez, and Owens (2006) noted that parents who actively participate in their children’s education are a key factor to educational success. They further noted that, “although parents and children share high educational aims, their aspirations do not necessarily translate into postsecondary matriculation” (p. 179).

The role of the educator may impede academic success when they demonstrate a lack of empathy, bias, and weak relational ties to Latino students. A lack of Latino teachers, in turn, resulted in a lack of role models for Latino students. Further, in high Latino and socio-economically disadvantaged populations, class sizes are high, and teachers are inexperienced (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Schneider, Martinez, & Owens, 2006).

The Latino education gap is a persistent problem, contributing to a comparative disadvantage in human capital. Terriquez’ (2013), The State of Latinos in Higher Education in California encourages action:
When we improve Latino educational outcomes in California, we all benefit….

Despite the clear benefits of college attendance and completion for Latinos and for the state of California, we are not on track to meet the 2.3 million additional degrees our economy will require. This should sound an urgent alarm for all of us.

(p. 19)

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the role of fathers as a positive influence on their children’s educational success, setting the pathway to college. This study also provided a greater understanding of the Latino father’s Funds of Knowledge as an important resource, imparted to their children as a means to set the pathway to prepare for college (Quinones & Kiyama, 2014; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2001). Counteracting the deficit perceptions of Latino fathers helps to reconceptualize the role of the Latino father in promoting school success and supporting their children’s education (Quinones & Kiyama, 2014).

Research Questions

The following questions were identified to understand the perspective of Latino fathers in setting the pathway to college for their children and are based on the literature, particularly the work of Quinones & Kiyama (2014):

Question 1: How do Latino fathers in this study perceive and support their children’s education?

Question 2: What do Latino fathers perceive as supports and obstacles to an authentic family-school engagement?
Questions 3: What Funds of Knowledge do Latino fathers have that represent important resources for educational change?

Question 4: What recommendations do Latino fathers have for improving the educational status of U.S. Latino students and their families?

Theoretical Framework

Auerbach (2007) discussed deficit thinking in the role Latino parents play, specifically lower socio-economic parents, in engaging with their children’s school. She compared them to privileged White parents who participate in parent nights, help with homework, and chaperone field trips. Typically, the teacher will assume that if Latino parents do not carry out these actions that they are not concerned about their child’s schooling. This study utilized a theoretical framework informed by three interrelated bodies of research to understand Latino parent involvement. Each will be utilized to contribute to the research, provide a lens on the role of the Latino father, and inform schools about how they can support parents for Latino children’s educational issues.

Nord (1997) established that parent involvement factors involve attitudes, policies, and characteristics of the parents and the schools. Tying these factors together is to think of the involvement as a result of the resources available to the family: social capital, human capital, and physical capital. Nord (1997) defined social capital as encompassing the quality of the relationships within the family, the way the parents interact with their children and each other, the educational aspirations parents have for their children, the home environment, the time that family members have to devote to each other, and the quality and destiny of interpersonal relationships the families can draw upon. Human capital is defined as the parental education levels and the skills and
abilities that parents and other family members have. Finally, physical capital is defined as family income, the assets in the home including community institutions such as schools, libraries, parks, and recreation centers.

Auerbach (2007) studied how “marginalized parents construct their role in promoting their children’s access to educational opportunity, specifically college” (p. 250), debunking deficit thinking about the role Latino parents play in their children’s education. She found that “support had multiple meanings” (p. 258), placing parents’ position on a continuum of support, referring to the continuum as An Alternative Typology of Parent Roles.

To help educators create a more comprehensive school-family partnership, Epstein’s (2010) current research demonstrated patterns that may affect an authentic partnership. In her framework, Epstein (2001) surmised six types of involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community.

A more detailed review of Auerbach’s (2007) typology and Epstein’s (2010) framework will be included in a review of family involvement models. The combined, interrelated bodies of research, helped to provide understanding of the experiences of Latino fathers and their perspective of their role as Latino fathers in supporting their children’s education and providing a pathway to college.

Significance of the Study

We have a vested interest in helping Latinos succeed in education, because it will provide economic, political, and societal benefits to society as well as the Latino population (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Humphreys, 2009; Nevarez & Rico, 2007). In
recognizing the various barriers that contribute to the Latino education gap, this study helps to provide a better understanding of Latino fathers as an untapped resource with the ability to positively influence the academic experiences of Latino youth. This study also provides a context for educators and community members by expanding research knowledge about an authentic family-school partnership.

There is limited literature on the significance of the Latino father’s role in creating a pathway to college. The implications of this study may encourage further research, decreasing the gap in literature.

Definitions

The following terms will be used as defined throughout the study. These definitions are provided to bring clarity.

**Funds of Knowledge.** “Historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2001, p. 33).

**Human capital.** Parental education levels and the skills and abilities parents and other family members have (Nord, 1997).

**Latino/Hispanics.** Tienda and Mitchell (2006) wrote that Latino and Hispanics are used interchangeably. “It encompasses both the descendants of early Spanish settlers in what is now the United States and immigrants and their offspring from Spanish-speaking countries in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America….The most numerous are Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central and South Americans, and Spaniards” (p. 1).
Physical capital. Family income, the assets in the home including community institutions such as schools, libraries, parks, and recreation centers.

Social capital. Encompasses the quality of the relationships within the family, the way the parents interact with their children and each other, the educational aspirations parents have for their children, the home environment, the time that family members have to devote to each other, and the quality and destiny of interpersonal relationships the families can draw upon (Nord, 1997).

Organization of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide a better understanding of Latino fathers as an untapped resource with the ability to positively influence the academic experiences of Latino youth. Chapter 2 will provide an overview of the previous literature on the Latino education gap, what parents know or have to know to prepare their children for college, barriers to parent involvement, notable family involvement models, the Funds of Knowledge, and the roles fathers play in preparing their children for college. Chapter 3 will describe the research design, research population, context of the study, instrumentation, data collection methods, and data analysis of the study. Chapter 4 presents the researcher’s story, a brief description of the recruitment of the participants, the researcher’s findings embedded in a narrative of each participant, resulting in the grand story. Chapter 5 includes a narrative analysis, a summary of essential themes and findings, recommendations, implications for future research, and concluding remarks from the researcher.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature on the Latino education gap make clear that the number of Latinos graduating from high school is increasing; however, many are not attending college (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Humphreys, 2009; Nevarez & Rico, 2007). Notable populations of those who do attend college do not complete their college education (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Humphreys, 2009; Nevarez & Rico, 2007). The economic resources of Latinos have global implications with respect to purchasing power and the economic welfare of the nation (Nevarez & Rico, 2007).

The literature review will begin with an analysis of the economic and societal impact of the Latino education crisis and out-of school and in school barriers for academic achievement. Next, an examination of literature on the importance of parent involvement in creating a college pathway and studies explaining what parents need to know to prepare their children for college will be reviewed. Subsequently, a review of the literature on the barriers to parent involvement in their child’s education will be included, followed by a review of notable family involvement models, and a review of Funds of Knowledge as a counter to deficit theorizing about Latino students and their families. A review of the literature on the role of the Latino father in preparing their children for college will complete this review of the literature. For the purpose of this review, the terms Hispanics and Latinos will be used interchangeably, as used by the reference source.

Latino Education Gap

The 1989 Latino National Political Study and the 1990-1991 panel Studies of Income Dynamics found that Mexican immigrants, both female and male, experience
either steady or declining wages across the generation when education level is controlled, thus rejecting for this group the linear assimilation hypothesis that successive generations experience ever greater assimilation (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Nevarez’ & Rico’s (2007) Latino Education: A Synthesis of Recurring Recommendation and Solution in P-16 Education described the economic and societal benefits of improving the educational achievement of Latinos. Nevarez’ and Rico’s (2007) report included data indicating that the purchasing power of the Latino population was projected to reach 926 billion by 2007. By 2014, Hispanics were projected to reach $1.3 trillion. The growth in buying power was attributed to growth in the Hispanic population due to higher rates of natural increase and strong immigration.

In a 2013 article in the Los Angeles Daily News, Gazzar wrote, “Area business and academic leaders argued that more should be done to help Latino and other minority students succeed in college, which will strengthen the local economy and the workforce” (Gazzar, 2013, par. 7). She quoted David Rattray, senior vice president of education and workforce development for the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, “You have a tremendous and growing portion of California’s youth whose parents brought them to this country with a dream for a better life, with a possibility or pathway to success. As we learn how to give the strong pathways to education, they can power our economy in the next century” (par. 5).

With the shortage of an educated workforce, the nation is dependent on educating the fastest growing ethnic/racial population, the Hispanic population (Nevarez & Rico, 2007). Doubling the rate of Hispanics graduating with a bachelor’s degree will have both public and private benefits; revenues saved in public welfare, health care, and law
enforcement and revenues earned from an increase in tax revenues and contributions to Social Security and Medicare, as well as an increase in disposable income (Vernez & Mizell, 2001). Although more attention is paid to the economic benefits, “the societal benefits of an educated citizenry is more likely to engage in political, societal, and economic functions that actualize the democratic ideals of the United States, such as justice, peace, due process, honesty, egalitarianism, and human rights” (Nevarez & Rico, 2007, p. 3).

**Barriers to Academic Achievement**

**Out of School Factors.** Out-of-school factors (OSFs) play an important role in academic achievement (Berliner, 2009). OSFs are common among high poverty communities and affect what schools can accomplish and the potential for success.

Berliner (2009) identified six negative OSFs that can potentially affect academic achievement. They are: (1) low birth weight and other prenatal conditions; (2) inadequate medical, dental, and vision care; (3) food insecurity; (4) environmental pollutants; (5) family relations and family stress; and (6) neighborhood characteristics.

Gandara (2010) noted that Latinos who are segregated from the mainstream lack access to peers for the mainstream U.S. creating inhibited norms, standards, and expectations of the broader society. Segregated Latinos are more likely to attend under-resourced schools, poorer facilities, and have less qualified teachers. Neighborhood socioeconomic status, proximity to environmental dangers, and mobility rates greatly affect students’ attitudes, attendance rates, and behavior (Gandara, 2010).

**Educational opportunities.** Schneider, Martinez, and Owens (2006) described barriers to educational opportunities for many Hispanics in the United States. Schneider,
et al., (2006) noted that Hispanics entered school at a disadvantage because Hispanic parents did not participate in literacy activities prior to their children entering formal educations, such as reading to their children, despite income levels. Second, teacher assessments of students’ language proficiency unduly influences instructional practices and placement in remedial programs (Schneider, et al., 2006). Third, the relationship between Hispanic students and their predominately non-Hispanic teachers encourages disengagement from academic work (Gandara, 2010; Hill & Torres, 2010; Schneider, et al., 2006). Finally, the lack of academic guidance pertaining to course selections and college choice is noted. Latino students are underrepresented in Advanced Placement courses, are more likely to be placed in vocational courses, and are less likely to be placed in college preparatory courses (Hill & Torres, 2010; Schneider, et al., 2006).

**Qualified teachers.** Factors within the school should be addressed as well, such as teacher quality, school facilities and resources, and a rich curriculum. Huffington Post (2014) reported poor schools continue to have unqualified teachers. The report surmised that there is a gap in high poverty schools, indicating that there are approximately 21.9% of classes taught by teachers who are not certified as compared to 10.9% in low poverty schools. This gap is alarming in terms of No Child Left Behind and the requirement to place highly qualified teachers in low performing schools.

Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor (2007) summarized the effects on academic achievement when a teacher is under-qualified and not credentialed, finding that students who have under-qualified teachers stand to achieve 0.30 standard deviation lower than if a highly credentialed teacher taught the students. A qualified teacher is defined as fully credentialed and a major in the field (Darling-Hammond, 1999).
**School Facilities.** Further review of the literature indicated a direct correlation to school facilities and academic achievement. Research on school facilities as it pertains to achievement contends that students who attend schools in good condition outperform students who attend schools in poor condition (California Department of Education, 2007; Earthman, 2002). Hill and Torres (2010) uphold that Latinos attend the most poorly equipped schools in the most impoverished school districts and have inadequate instructional materials.

Facilities also affect teacher performance. Lack of resources and proper facilities may impact a teacher’s decision to stay in the position. Crowding, lighting, and overall aesthetics will affect delivery of curriculum as well as the ability to receive and learn the curriculum. Kozol (1991) wrote about the *savage inequalities* in school districts on the East Coast and lists poor facilities and lack of resources as a condition or symptom of inequality.

**Curriculum.** The review of literature for inadequate curriculum is limited and conflicting. Madrid (2011) noted that inadequate curriculum is a component of the Latino education gap. Contrary to Madrid, The California Department of Education (2007) reported that poor facility conditions and access to the curriculum affects the delivery of curriculum and not the curriculum itself. Levin (2007) concluded that there is not sufficient data to indicate that curriculum can be attributed to academic achievement in high poverty schools. However, we must heed the issues of poor facilities, unqualified teachers, segregation, and material resources.

The barriers to academic achievement noted may appear grim and beyond our scope in supporting and educating children. However, with new information reported by
Excelencia in Education (2014), a positive trend is noted with the role Latino families are playing in decreasing the Latino education gap. This review will be utilized to further support the design of reconceptualizing the role of Latino fathers in preparing their children in creating a pathway to college.

**Barriers to Parent Involvement**

The hidden curriculum “refers to school-and classroom-based social relations that transmit messages legitimizing class-based positionalities in regard to work, rules, authority, and values that maintain capitalist sensibilities” (De Jesús, 2005, p. 346). De Jesús (2005) further utilized Althusser’s concept of the hidden curriculum, inserting “by proposing that ideology has a material existence in the rituals, routines and social practices that both structure and mediate the day-to-day working of schools” (p. 346). Hill and Torres (2010) called for “schools to consider their own cultural biases and assumptions so that they can be mindful of the hidden or implicit curriculum and expectations that may not be readily apparent to Latino parents who may be unfamiliar with the U.S. educational system” (p. 106). They suggested that there are significant barriers to building partnerships due to the ambiguity of some parent involvement strategies and the belief that Latinos feel that their cultural beliefs are challenged or devalued. They call for action, indicating a “need to develop the future human capital of the United States to assure its global competitiveness” (p. 108). Moodie and Ramos (2014) established that barriers are both structural, attitudinal, and cultural. In this section, cultural factors, barriers to involvement, and parents’ perceptions of barriers will be explored.
Cultural factors. Chavez-Reyes (2010) stressed, “Historically, schools have been used as institutions of deculturalization and assimilation” (p. 486). Understanding the Latino’s cultural and family context can significantly affect parent involvement and support a foundation for the students’ identity and strengths (Chavez-Reyes, 2010; Gonzalez, Eades, & Supple, 2014; O’Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Latinos value education, extending the definition of education beyond academics, trusting and believing in the quality of the American educational system (Hill & Torres, 2010). Believing that they have sacrificed greatly to give their children a better life, Latino parents do not wish for their sacrifices to be squandered. They wish for higher academic standards, stricter dress codes, and higher expectations for conduct (Hill & Torres, 2010). They teach their children “dignity in conduct, respect for others, love for family, and affection for children” (p. 105). They believe “their desire for economic and academic achievements is embedded in a desire to nurture one’s family, rather than individual pursuits” (p. 105).

Poza, Brooks, and Valdes (2014) identified three behaviors from immigrant parents that described involvement in their children’s education; asking questions about schooling; altering children’s schooling experience; and attending events related to children’s education through organizations and social networks outside the school. Zarate (2007) explained, “When asked to define parental involvement, Latino parents mentioned life participation more frequently than academic involvement” (p. 8). Activities noted as life participation activities included:

- Be aware of child’s life;
- Be aware of and monitor child;
- Be aware of child’s peer group and interaction with peers’ parents;
• Teach good morals and respect of others;
• Communicate with child;
• Be aware of and encourage child’s abilities and career aspirations;
• Provide general encouragement;
• Discuss future planning;
• Monitor school attendance;
• Exercise discipline and provide behavioral cuing;
• Establish trust with child;
• Provide advice on life issues;
• Warn of dangers outside the home, such as illegal drugs;
• Get to know teachers to assess child’s safety;
• Volunteer to observe school environment. (p. 8)

Zarate (2007) noted activities as academic involvement:
• Attend parent-teacher conferences;
• Sign homework as required by teacher;
• Know when to expect report cards;
• Ask about homework daily;
• Listen to the child read;
• Visit classroom during open houses;
• Ask questions about homework;
• Ask friends, siblings, and other family members for homework help for child;
- Have high expectations for academic performance;
- Purchase materials required for class;
- Drive them to tutoring and school activities;
- Go to the library with them;
- Be present when required to pick up report cards at school. (p. 8)

Hidalgo (2005) surmised that understanding the oppression of Latinos helped to form a construct of how Latinos make meaning of their lives. He indicated that “the standards of collective experiences of racial oppression, familism, shared cultural values, and collective forms of resistance comprise the nature of knowledge for Latino/a families” (p. 398). Educación, education, is not merely considered academic achievement but also refers to training in responsibility, morality, and interpersonal relationships (Moodie & Ramos, 2014). Educators are charged to understand the construct of a Latino epistemology, such as familism, reciprocity, and dignity, to inform educational practice at the classroom level and community level.

**Barriers to involvement.** Chavez-Reyes (2010) wrote that there is a traditional assumption indicating that all families possess adequate resources to actively participate in a child’s education. The lack of translators and child care, meetings held at inconvenient times, school events and conflicting hours with work schedules, teachers making parents feel incompetent, and teachers who talk down to parents are insensitivities noted by Latinos, making them feel unwelcomed and misunderstood, thereby creating increased barriers to parent involvement (Chavez-Reyes, 2010; Hill & Torres, 2010; O’Donnell & Kirkner, 2014).
Poza, Brooks, and Valdes (2014) found deficit philosophies to parent involvement that “propagate beliefs about parent apathy” (p. 120). Parents cited work demands and lack of teacher accessibility as barriers to participating in their children’s school (Zarate, 2007). In contrast to parents’ perception, Ishamaru (2014) stated that parents are seen as part of the problem and not valued as a resource. Zarate (2007) provided examples of expectations of parent involvement in school leadership and administrative support by educators such as: participation in school committees; PTA membership; student advocacy; community activism; sewing curtains for a classroom; hosting luncheons for faculty; attending and staffing school events; fundraising; monitoring the gate and; preparing food for events (p. 11). In terms of parenting and academic support, educators expected parents to: monitor attendance; ‘controlling kids’/Behavioral monitoring; emotional support; authoritative parenting; offering entertainment as a reward and incentive; helping with homework; reviewing report cards; making sure student completed homework; observing class; seeking tutoring for their children and; staying on top’ of academic progress (p. 11).

**Parents’ perceptions of barriers.** Many Latino parents are uncomfortable with an equal partnership with schools (Hill & Torres, 2010). They hold the profession of teaching in high regard and are reluctant to challenge the expertise of the teacher (Hill & Torres, 2010). Teachers who are not trained in the Latino culture do not understand the Latino’s culturally expected way of engaging in schoolwork. Some teachers view the Euro-American attitude toward education as normative and find other cultures as deviant (Hill & Torres, 2010). Latino families value their language as a means of social
interaction and communal life, learning to be part of a unit, whereas, educators view the language issues as a liability (Chavez-Reyes, 2010).

Many Latino families perceive that schools are not open and welcoming (Ishamaru, 2014). Parents experience schools as alienating and disempowering contexts (Ishamaru, 2014). They cited language as a major issue, with conferences held in English only and meetings held at inconvenient times (Chavez-Reyes, 2010) and as an “insurmountable barrier to participation in their children’s academic tasks” (Zarate, 2007, p. 9) such as homework, progressing as their children progressed through school (Zarate, 2007). In Zarate’s (2007) study, parents reported that communication from the schools were impersonal, infrequent, and without adequate notice. Understanding the barriers to parent involvement will help to move toward authentic school-family partnership. A review of notable family involvement models will further support an authentic home-school relationship.

**College Pipeline for Parents**

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2004) reported, “States that adopt effective education policies can increase the success rates of students at four key transition points spanning the period from high school to completion of a college degree” (p.1). The writer surmised that the educational pipeline will increase the educational capital by increasing the high school graduation rate, improving college access, persistence in college, and completing college. In recognizing the Latino education gap, identifying the out-of-school factors and educational system barriers, we are able to move forward in decreasing the gap and increasing educational capital. Schools are critical in influencing what courses are taken which, in turn, are indicators of
college attendance (Schneider, et al., 2005). In this section, review of the literature on supporting Latino students on how to navigate through the pipeline will be discussed.

Gandara (2001) proposed early intervention to support the lack of Latinos being prepared for college. She evaluated programs appropriate for students in the K-12 system. To name a few, she identified Achieving via Individual Determination (AVID), Project Grad, Urban Partnerships, and Kids to College. Her analyses of the programs demonstrate their support of intervention in the student’s academic pipeline. Chabolla’s (1997) work also asserted that early intervention is necessary for Latino students to attend and persist in college. She wrote that the completion of Algebra is a predictor to college enrollment and that universities must work closely with public schools, engaging parents in the process.

Asserting that Hispanics are underrepresented in college-prep classes and over-represented in the juvenile justice system, Cooper, Denner, and Lopez, (1999) surmised how teachers, family members, and young adult staff in community programs can serve as cultural brokers toward academic success. They stressed that teachers utilize Latino parents as a valuable resource. Linking home to school has the potential of nourishing children’s aspirations. Utilizing parents as brokers, promoting el buen camino, a good moral path, supports academic achievement. Utilizing siblings as mentors can further support the pipeline to college. Further, they maintain that Latinos have close family ties that offer companionship and emotional support at school, enhancing motivation and achievement. Finally, they identified program staff as cultural brokers, asserting that these staff members can serve as comadres and compadres, godmothers and godfathers, assisting as mentors and role models, supporting parents in school and life.
This review supports the importance of early intervention and the importance of the involvement of stakeholders in supporting Latino students on how to navigate through the pipeline. The barriers that prevent parents from being involved are subsequently reviewed.

**Family Involvement Models**


**Epstein’s framework of six major types of involvement.** Epstein’s Framework for Family Involvement was created to help educators develop a more comprehensive school-family partnership (Epstein, 2010; Epstein, 2001). She wrote the student is at the center of a school, family, and community partnership. The overarching purpose of creating a partnership is to help children succeed in school and in life, however; she indicated that partnerships can also improve school programs, improve the school climate, provide family services and support, increase parents’ skills and leadership, and connect families with others in the school and in the community (Epstein, 2010).

Epstein (2010) emphasized that “it will be important to confirm, extend, or correct the information on results…to help schools make purposeful choices among practices
that foster various types of improvement” (p. 397). Her research demonstrated patterns that may affect an authentic partnership. Important to Latino communities in lower socio-economic areas, her research indicated: schools in economically depressed areas show more contact with families about problems and difficulties children are having as opposed to positive contact; affluent communities are more positively involved; partnerships decline as the student gets older; and single parents, parents who work outside the home, parents who live far, and fathers are less involved. She further declared that positive, balanced partnership programs and opportunities for families to become involved would strengthen the family-school partnership.

Epstein (2010) reviewed her original framework for involvement, surmising six types of involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Epstein (2010) recommended for educators to utilize the framework as a guide for discussions and to customize plans and actions to create a family-school partnership, providing sample practices for each type. For the purpose of this research, only the areas that pertain to barriers to parent involvement described by Latino families are described below. Schools must select which practices will help achieve the goals of student success and will create a positive climate specific to their school site. Epstein’s redefinitions help to close the gap of understanding toward an authentic family-to school relationship with Latino families.

**Parenting.** Epstein (2010) acknowledged challenges that need to be met to allow for authentic involvement and a need for redefinitions of some basic principles. She noted some challenges in parenting: enabling families to share information about culture, background, and children’s talents and needs; providing information to all families who
want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building; and making sure that all information for families is clear, usable, and linked to children’s success in school. She redefined *workshop* to mean more than a meeting about a topic held at the school building at a particular time, and it may mean making information about a topic available in a variety of forms and can be viewed, heard, or read anywhere, anytime.

*Learning at home.* Epstein (2010) acknowledged challenges in learning at home, redefining homework to mean not only work to be done alone but also interactive activities shared with others at home or in the community, linking schoolwork to real life. She also redefined help to mean encouraging, listening, reacting, praising, guiding, monitoring, and discussing, not “teaching” school subjects. She proposed to move toward: designing and organizing a regular schedule of interactive homework that gives students responsibility for discussing important things they are learning and helping families stay aware of the content of their children’s classwork; coordinating family-linked homework activities, if students have several teachers; and involving families with their children in all important curriculum-related decisions.

*Collaborating with the community.* Epstein (2010) further described challenges with collaborating with the community, redefining community to include not only where students live, but neighborhoods that influence their learning and development. She proposed: informing families of community programs for students and ensuring equity of opportunities for students and families to participate in community programs or to obtain services. She challenged that we don’t rate *community* by low or high social or economic qualities but to include strengths and talents to support students and families.
Tenets of inclusive pedagogy. Chavez-Reyes (2010) draws from inclusive pedagogy for English Learners, utilizing four tenets of inclusive approaches. They are:

- Accept and value the language and culture of immigrant families and their children to authentically interact and collaborate with parents.
- Acknowledge unequal power relations between schools and parents.
- Focus on human relations to cultivate interpersonal relationships between parents and community members and teachers and administrators.
- Empower schools and families to work together for successful academic development of ELL’s. (p. 475)

Making a call for action from administrators, Chavez-Reyes (2010) provided inclusive strategies to be utilized to increase parent involvement and decrease barriers. She categorized their role into three categories; personnel, atmosphere, and community outreach. First, she called for administrators to hire bilingual teachers and staff or hire interpreters and liaisons, recruit parents and volunteers from the community, and create teacher-as-learners professional development communities. Second, the school atmosphere should be engaging and inclusive. Her suggestion was to set a clear, deliberate agenda for parent involvement throughout the year during staff meetings, practice servant leadership, create a personable environment for families and parents, support a multicultural curriculum, create a family center, and promote and facilitate school events and activities that integrate and engage all parents. Third, she called for community outreach with administrators conducting needs assessments, connecting to
community organization leaders, focusing on rapport building, and becoming knowledgeable about resources in school and community (Chavez-Reyes, 2010).

**Ferguson’s six principal areas of inquiry.** Ferguson (2008) conducted a review of literature relating to the school-family connection. He included a 2005 framework for effective family involvement identifying common characteristics and actions found in effective programs. In terms of characteristics, there were commonalities in relationships, recognition, and involvement. Specifically, relationships among family, community members, and school staff that foster trust and collaboration; recognition of families’ needs, class, and cultural differences that encourage greater understanding and respect among all involved; and involvement of all stakeholders in shared partnerships and mutual responsibility that support student learning. In terms of actions, commonalities in preparation, focus, and advocacy were identified. Specifically, preparation of all those involved, school staff and families, to support learning and participation in family-school partnerships that encourage meaningful engagement; focusing on meaningful outcomes and purposes that relate directly to learning expectations for students; and advocacy for an inclusive educational culture that involves all stakeholders in supporting students in their academic pursuits. Ferguson (2008) found that new research reinforces previous findings and supports the importance of family involvement in educational success.

Utilizing this framework, Ferguson (2008) identified a new perspective that provided greater insight into the characteristics and actions identified:

**Sense of welcome.** When school-family partnerships are characterized by a sense of welcome, they incorporate processes that foster relationships between educators and
noneducators, allowing all involved to discover that each family member, no matter the background or ability, can engage in supporting a child’s education in meaningful ways.

**Misconceptions among stakeholders.** Effective efforts to engage families use strategies that reveal and confront misconceptions that blind both school staff and families to the roles families can play in ensuring that all children reach their full potential academically, emotionally, physically, and socially.

**Use of and issues related to resources.** As those involved target their resources and identify additional resources to support student learning, they will increase involvement and create opportunities for effective engagement for family members.

**Home context and student performance.** Effective school-family connections prepare educators and non-educators to engage in two-way partnerships that uncover contextual barriers to purposeful family involvement while simultaneously creating opportunities to encourage and maintain family support for student learning.

**Program structures.** Structures that effectively support school-family connections avoid isolated family involvement events by adopting a systemic approach to preparing both educators and non-educators to take on roles that ensure that the academic, emotional, physical, and social needs of all students are met.

**Roles of those involved in school-family connections.** By building the self-efficacy of those involved in these efforts for the roles they need to take on, effective school-family programs create a ground swell of support to meet student needs and create the foundation for long-term, systemic improvements (Ferguson, 2008).

**Ishamaru’s conceptual model of district-community collaboration.** In the pursuit of educational equity, Ishamaru (2014) called to action new rules of engagement
that emphasize that parents advocate for themselves, “emphasizing and strengthening their capacity to exercise power and leadership in creating more equitable learning environments” (p. 189). Creating a conceptual model of district-community collaboration, she highlighted four key findings from her case study:

1. Parent - Nondominant parents are seen as educational leaders who contribute and help shape the agenda.
2. Goals - Systemic change within a culture of shared responsibility.
3. Strategies - Adaptive change to build capacity and relationships of a broad range of stakeholders.
4. Process - Reform as a political process that addresses broader issues in the community.

**Auerbach’s alternative role typology: From moral supporters to struggling advocates.** Drawing from a three year, ethnographic study, Auerbach (2007) illustrated an alternative typology of parent involvement in the pursuit of educational success. Her case study posed the question of how marginalized parents whose children were in a college access program constructed their role in promoting their children’s access to educational opportunity. Recognizing tensions between home and school, she explored parent support through their values and aspirations in order to debunk deficit thinking about marginalized families and parent involvement. She described that “parent involvement is treated as a social fact on neutral terrain rather than a socially constructed phenomenon on the contested terrain of schooling” (p. 251). Auerbach (2007) affirmed that minority parents show value of education in doing well, having high educational aspirations, and responding to teachers’ requests. Auerbach (2007) discussed the invisible
strategies that parents provide such as making sacrifices so their children can attend better schools and limiting chores to allow for study time, stating that teaching sociocultural values should be considered legitimate parent involvement.

Aurerbach’s (2007) alternative typology of parent roles defined parent support in a continuum from Moral Supporters to Struggling Advocates with the ambiguity of Ambivalent Companions somewhere in the middle:

**Moral Supporters.** Supporters who embrace the concept of education, however, their involvement is limited due to their limited base knowledge of how to navigate through the educational system. The parents operate on the belief that if their child did not have the *ganas*, motivation, there was not much that they could do about it. Their support should depend on the needs of their children, focusing on their children who had *deseos*, the desire to go to college. The Supporters would provide *consejos*, narrative advice, providing cautionary tales designed to steer children away from what mistakes they made in the hopes that their children would not make similar mistakes. Supporters were not passive supporters, but made sacrifices and cleared potential distractions.

**Struggling advocates.** Make the most effort to help their children navigate through the school system. They were noted as the only parents to consistently mention and enact specific strategies for promoting college pathways, persisting despite barriers. Advocates use social networks to leverage access to college-going cultural capital.

**The Ambivalent Companions.** Ambiguous and in the middle of the continuum, their support is indirect and home-based, providing strong emotional support, close communications, and help with school projects. They are described as, “applauding from the sidelines” (p. 270). Companions are focused on listening to their children to learn
their needs through open communication. They take their cue from their children, supporting their children’s education more directly than Supporters, but less consistently than Advocates. Companions are constrained by several factors such as: mothers with psychological problems; their own negative school experiences; and they see college as more of a threat than an opportunity.

These parent involvement models provide an alternative method of understanding parents’ roles in their children’s educational goals, helping to reconceptualize parent involvement. For the purpose of this research, all parent involvement models will be referenced with a focus on Epstein’s framework and Auerbach’s typology. A review of Funds of Knowledge will provide a deeper understanding of the invisible strategies and lessons imparted to Latino children.

**Funds of Knowledge**

Poza, Brooks, and Valdes (2014) concluded that anthropological training is necessary to understand the nature of culture, asserting that social literacy and critical consciousness benefits student literacy, academic achievement, and school and social transformation. They included research on collective wisdom, describing it as “shared knowledge acquired by relatives and others in the social network in the recipient society to navigate institutions and the challenges of new experiences and contexts” (p. 124).

Latino immigrant children are not instructed explicitly at home on such things as household tasks, but learn through cumulative learning which is in opposition to how schools teach children and how parents are expected to support their children at home (Poza, et al., 2014). Hill and Torres (2010) wrote about the invisible strategies that Latinos utilize to support their children’s academic achievement. Funds of Knowledge,
the collective intellectual and social knowledge that families and communities possess (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), are the invisible strategies that Latinos use to motivate their children to be academically successful. Chavez-Reyes (2010) described Funds of Knowledge from an ecological perspective, using the concept of *dichos* or cultural sayings, in Latino families as a way to teach their children morals and values and can be used as assets toward academic success. *Consejos*, words of advice, are also imparted by Latino parents, charging their children to have determination, optimism, disposition, and motivation (Alfaro, D., O’Reilly-Diaz, K., & Lopez, G., 2014).

Gonzalez, Eades, and Supple (2014) suggested we utilize parents as experts. Chavez-Reyes (2010) suggested that power be shared in order to empower parents to assume responsibility for their children’s education. Further, “accepting and using the ways parents raise their children (Funds of Knowledge) strengthens student academic development and their resolve to complete their education” (p. 498). Utilizing Latino parents in their children’s education, operationalizing *consejos*, has been found to nurture student character and disposition toward education.

Oughton (2010) reviewed the origin of the term Funds of Knowledge, asserting that Velez-Ibanez and Greenburg (1989) introduced the term in their anthropological case study of Mexicans on the borderlands, describing the formation of cultural resources. Moll, et al. (1992) utilized the term in order to develop strategic connections from home to school. Oughton (2010) claimed that Funds of Knowledge relate to Bordieu’s notion of cultural capital, where parallels can be drawn. However, he cautioned that care be taken in utilizing the term as there have been shifts made in its interpretation as it is utilized in different studies. He suggested that a conceptualization of cultural capital consisting of
Funds of Knowledge be made. For the purpose of this study, his critique is noted of the uses of Funds of Knowledge and attempt to maintain the integrity of the original term and purpose of this conceptual framework to counter deficit theorizing of Latino students and their families (Hogg, 2011) as this study explores the cultural capital, the Funds of Knowledge, that fathers impart on their children.

The Role Latino Fathers Play in Preparing Their Children for College

Research is limited on the role Latino fathers play in their involvement in their children’s education, thereby preparing their children for college. Most research has been conducted on the role mothers play in their children’s education, and until recently fathers were the hidden parent (Nord, 1997). Nord (1997) concluded that the father’s involvement is equally important to the mother’s role and has a strong influence with the child’s academic achievement as well as the likelihood of ever being suspended or expelled from school.

Terriquez (2013) explored patterns of Latino fathers’ school involvement and theorized the contributions they make in their children’s lives. Acknowledging a lack of research, he noted a leading model includes three dimensions: availability, being accessible to the child; interaction, consisting of one-to-one engagement; and responsibility, referring to the parent attending to the child’s needs and welfare. Terriquez (2013) identified three predictors to whether Latino fathers are involved in their children’s school:

1. The first is noted as racial/ethnic differences in paternal involvement, noting that “Mexican men are more likely than White men to endorse traditional gender-segregated roles” (p. 664), relying on their partners to take care of
their children. He further noted that fathers exhibit high levels of familism, meaning family cohesion, closeness, and reciprocity.

2. The second predictor noted is the role of immigrant acculturation or the adoption of norms and behaviors of the mainstream population. He noted that as Mexican immigrants become acculturated they spend less time supervising and interacting with their children. He clarified that this does not necessarily transfer to their involvement in their children’s schools.

3. The third predictor related to educational attainment and household income, noting that upper-class parents possess more cultural capital on how school systems work, facilitating intervention in the schooling process.

Terriquez (2013) surmised that his findings were broad and charged that further investigation is necessary. Terriquez (2013) provided some direction for educators: assumptions should be avoided, support for fathers in navigating through the educational system be provided, and that cultural brokers are employed in order to support the father’s involvement.

Summary

This review has noted the issues of the Latino education crisis, its economic and societal impact. Out-of-school and in school barriers for academic achievement are described and early interventions for parents are identified in order to create a college pipeline. Barriers to parent involvement are described. The concept Funds of Knowledge is explained and research on the role of the Latino father in their children’s education is summarized. There is a gap in the research regarding Latino fathers and their role in
setting the pathway to college for their children. The literature review helps to support reconceptualize the role of the Latino father to investigate fathers as an untapped resource with the ability to positively influence the academic experiences of Latino youth. Chapter 3 will describe the research design, research population, context of the study, instrumentation, data collection methods, and data analysis of the study.
Chapter 3: Methodology

There is a growing body of scholarship revealing misunderstandings and misperceptions about the role of Latino parents in education and the concept of parent involvement as defined by dominant, mainstream schools (Quinones & Kiyama, 2014). Latino parents believe their roles and responsibilities regarding their children’s academic development are grounded in socio-cultural values, which encompass being moral, responsible, respectful, and well behaved (Quinones & Kiyama, 2014). The primary purpose of this study was to provide a better understanding of Latino fathers as an untapped resource with the ability to positively influence the academic experiences of Latino youth. The study was designed to provide a greater understanding of the Latino father’s Funds of Knowledge as an important resource imparted to their children as a means to set the pathway to prepare for college (Quinones & Kiyama, 2014; Moll, et al., 2001).

Research Questions

Counteracting the deficit perceptions of Latino fathers helps to reconceptualize the role of Latino fathers in promoting school success and supporting their children’s education (Quinones & Kiyama, 2014). This chapter describes the methodology used to investigate the research questions about how Latino fathers in this study supported their children’s education. The following research questions helped to guide the study, primarily based on the work of Quinones and Kiyama (2014):

Question 1: How do Latino fathers perceive and support their children’s education?
**Question 2**: What do Latino fathers perceive as supports and obstacles to an authentic family-school engagement?

**Question 3**: What Funds of Knowledge do Latino fathers have that may represent important resources for educational change?

**Question 4**: What recommendations do Latino fathers have for improving the educational status of U.S. Latino students and their families?

**Research Design: Narrative Methods**

A narrative study goes beyond telling stories. In a narrative analysis, the researcher explores a research problem by understanding the experiences of an individual, most typically through personal storytelling, making connections beyond individuals (Creswell, 2012; Lichtman, 2014). Taylor (2006) takes a discursive analysis, approaching narrative “as a resource and as a construction” (p. 97). A narrative analysis through storytelling and discourse analysis of Latino fathers was utilized to identify and describe their socio-cultural values of education and their impact on promoting school success and supporting their children’ education, analyzing perceived barriers, and formulating recommendations for breaking down these barriers.

Creswell (2012) described the major characteristics of a narrative study as the experiences of an individual, social and personal; chronology of experiences, past, present and future; first person life stories; restorying from the field texts; coding for themes; and collaboration between the researcher and participant. Creswell (2012) defined narrative discussion as a “written passage in a qualitative study in which authors summarize, in detail, the findings from their data analysis” (p. 254). He described various forms of narrative discussions and this research utilized a discussion of themes of
the Latino fathers’ perception of barriers and recommendations for creating an authentic family-school engagement. Creswell (2012) further suggested that dialogue that provides support for themes are included.

Creswell (2012) lists the following characteristics of a narrative study:

- Seeks to understand and represent experiences through the stories individuals live and tell.
- Seeks to minimize the use of literature and focuses on the experiences of the individuals.
- Seeks to explore the meaning of the individual’s experiences as told through a story or stories.
- Seeks to collect field texts that document the individual’s story in his or her own words.
- Seeks to analyze the stories by retelling the individuals’ stories.
- Seeks to analyze the stories by identifying themes or categories of information.
- Seeks to situate the story within its place or setting.
- Seeks to analyze the story for chronological information about the individuals’ past, present, and future.
- Seeks to collaborate with the participant when writing the research study.
- Seeks to write the study in a flexible storytelling mode.
- Seeks to evaluate the study based on the depth, accuracy, persuasiveness, and realism of the account. (p. 506)
**Context of the Study**

Demographics play a role in the predictability of creating a college-going culture (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Community profiles are useful in understanding the aspects of a community and shedding light on particular areas of concern or interest from multiple vantage points of stakeholders (Hawtin & Percy-Smith, 2007). The community was selected for high Latino population with one school district to limit variability. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the city’s population is 115,000, 69% Latino, 25% Asian, and 5.9% white. The school district has 14 elementary schools within the district with a 78% Latino population.

**Participants**

Initial participants were recruited through announcements at school, district, and community meetings. Initial volunteers recruited and recommended other fathers. The study focus, questions and focus group interview methods were briefly described. Criteria for volunteers were Latino fathers of elementary school age children attending public schools in the community. Ten men volunteered with six men meeting the criteria. Focus groups were planned at a time and place convenient for the fathers.

Rapport was developed immediately within the groups, facilitating the interview process. The fathers were able to elaborate, building upon the responses of the fathers within their group. Due to their cohesion, there was minimal need to conduct individual interviews. Two of the participants contacted me for progress on my study, demonstrating excitement to be a participant in important research.
Data Collection

Focus groups

Merriam (2009) defines focus groups as a method of qualitative research data collection when groups of people who have knowledge about a particular topic are interviewed together. Cresswell (2012) further elaborates, “Focus groups are advantageous when the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information and when interviewees are similar to and cooperative with each other” (p. 218). Focus groups were conducted with groups of two to four Latino fathers, eliciting group interaction through open-ended questions to encourage elaboration from the fathers. The questions were:

1. How do you help your child with their homework?

2. What school events do you attend--like parent conferences, back-to-school night, or open house?

3. How often do you get messages sent by the principal? Paper copies, email, website or school newsletters?

4. How often and what kind of parent committees do you join, like School Site Council, English Language Advisory Committee, or PTA?

5. What other kinds of participation do you do to support your children’s education?

6. What does the school do that helps you feel welcome and able to contribute? Can you give me an example?

7. Do you have an example of a time that the school has done that has made you feel unwelcomed or unwilling to participate in your child’s school?
8. Whether you feel welcome or unwelcome, are there any personal obstacles that prevent you from participating in your children’s school?

9. Who had an influence on you in supporting your children’s education?

10. What lessons did your father teach you that you’ve passed on to your children? Your mother? [Structure a comparison.]

11. Do you have any stories from your childhood that describe support you received from your family? Especially your father?

12. If not your father, who provided you with advice or strategies (consejos) that has influenced how you support your children’s education?

13. What can the school do to make it easier to become involved in your children’s education?

14. Based on our conversation today, what can fathers do to become more involved in their children’s education?

Stake (1995) suggested that a strong action plan is in place because “getting a good interview is not so easy” (p. 64). He suggested that the interview is piloted, questions are presented to the interviewee in advance, analysis of the interview is completed within hours of the interview, and he suggested the possibility of utilizing informants to provide alternative perspectives. The interview questions were piloted with two fathers outside of this study. The participants confirmed that telling the researcher’s story provided credibility and trust with the participants, allowing them to develop a rapport with the researcher.

Utilizing Lichtman’s (2014) and Creswell’s (2012) interviewing action plans I:
1. Completed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application and acquired approval.

2. Acquired permission to interview from the interviewee.

3. Determined a suitable place to interview, free from unnecessary distractions.

4. Identified specific topic areas that needed to be covered within the interview, asking probing questions to cover the topic areas. Other questioning strategies utilized were elaboration, neutrality, and wait time.

5. Utilized a recorder and took notes to document interviewees’ responses.

Data Analysis

Merriam (2002) stressed, “Data analysis is essentially an inductive strategy…all the while looking for common patterns across the data” (p. 14). Creswell (2012) wrote “interpretation in qualitative research means that the researcher steps back and forms some larger meaning about the phenomenon based on personal views, comparisons with past studies, or both” (p. 257). Creswell (2012) described the process of analyzing and interpreting data, asserting that researchers need to:

**Prepare and organize the data for analysis.** Analysis began with the first focus group, allowing me to make adjustments as necessary. The focus groups were recorded utilizing a hand-held recorder. Merriam (2002) proposed that in qualitative research, data collection and data analysis occur simultaneously, cautioning that if one waits until all data is collected the risk of gathering more reliable and valid data is lost. The recordings were transcribed utilizing a transcription service to convert audiotape recordings or field notes into text expeditiously to maintain reliability and validity while other focus groups were conducted.
Explore and code the data. First and second cycle coding is recommended by Saldana (2013). Lichtman (2014) described open coding as examining raw data to begin to develop names and categories. A first cycle of coding was utilized to develop an attuned perspective to the individual stories within the focus groups, examining the raw data provided by the transcriptions. Initial concepts and themes were developed as the participants’ individual stories were vetted.

Code to build description and themes. Lichtman (2014) described axial coding as the second step moving toward relating the initial codes to one another. A second cycle of coding was utilized to refine the data and move toward the development of a theme, concept, or theory, thereby collecting and analyzing data simultaneously (Merriam, 2002; Saldana, 2013). While building descriptions and themes, I searched for the story within the data.

Represent and report qualitative findings. Lichtman (2014) described selective coding as the final step in which important codes are selected to represent key concepts. Selective coding was utilized, resulting in the Grand Story.

Interpret the findings and validate the accuracy of the findings. Lichtman (2014) summarized the data analysis process, describing a relationship between questions, data, and meaning. She wrote that there are two basic goals for an analysis; to search for concepts and themes, and to look for or analyze the data for narrative or stories. The stories of each father are illustrated in Chapter 4.

Gillham (2012) emphasized that, in collection of evidence, the researcher must be organized. He suggested that the researcher maintains a case study database. Maintaining a logbook is a fundamental part of the database; it is the audit trail. He also suggested that
the researcher remain alert to multiple sources of evidence: what people say, what you see them doing, what they make or produce, and what documents and records show. Interviews and detached observations were collected and maintained in a database accessible only by the researcher. Collections of notes were kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s residence. The findings of the study were descriptive, conscious of the audience, and support the interpretation of the data (Merriam, 2002).

**Researcher**

The researcher was the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis (Lichtman, 2012; Merriam, 2002). I understood the purpose of this research to respond and adapt appropriately and was able to clarify, summarize, check for accuracy, and explore further while gathering data. Merriam (2002) warned against the risk of human bias that can impact the study, asserting that the researcher needs to be aware of biases, identifying and monitoring them.

Gillham (2012) described the researchers’ role as the naturalistic researcher, understanding the role brings one’s own dynamic and recognizing that research investigation is not neutral. He says that recognizing this is part of doing good research. The interpretation of the researcher “will carry more weight if the data you gather, the manner in which you organize the data, and the vehicle you use to present your research supports your findings” (Lichtman, 2014, p.41). Lichtman (2014) discusses approaches to bracketing, which entails identifying your views and then putting them aside; inter rater reliability, which entails having others review the data; and triangulation, which entails collecting data from multiple sources. It is inevitable for the researcher to have views on
the topic, otherwise the researcher would not be interested in the topic in the first place (Lichtman, 2014).

Understanding any potential biases I may have had as an educator and woman, I pondered how I would engage the participants in the study. I decided to tell them my personal story first in order to provide context to the interview questions as well as develop a rapport with the fathers. The researcher’s story is provided in Chapter 5.

**Positionality**

Gillham (2012), Lichtman, (2014), and Merriam (2002) see the researcher as the primary data collection instrument in qualitative research and analysis. Insider positionality is when the researcher’s self or identity is aligned or shared with participants, sharing multiple identities or profound experiences (Chavez, 2008). She cautioned that an insider’s “bias may be overly positive or negligent…” (p. 475) if the study lacks empirical evidence of insider positionality. Chavez (2008) described partial insiders as those who share a single identity or few identities with a degree of distance or detachment from the community.

I was raised in the community, but moved out of the community in my teens. I have worked intermittently in the community since 1984, but continuously since 2001. For the purpose of this dissertation, I identified myself as a partial insider, acknowledging a degree of detachment from the participants as a female with an understanding of cultural perspectives and values.

Advantages to insider positionality could be:

- A nuanced perspective for observation, interpretation, and representation;
- An equalized relationship between researcher and participants;
• Expediency of rapport building;
• Immediate legitimacy in the field;
• Economy to acclimating to the field;
• Insight into the linguistic, cognitive, emotional, sensory and psychological principles of participants;
• Knowledge of the historical and practical happenings of the field;
• Detection of nonverbal gestures of embarrassment and discomfort;
• Identification of unusual and unfamiliar occurrences. (Chavez, 2008, p. 479)

Partial “insiderness” was utilized as an advantage to develop a rapport with the participants. Sharing my personal story provided immediate legitimacy with the fathers. My insiderness also provided me with insight into their linguistic, cognitive, emotional, sensory and psychological principles. It also provided me with the ability to detect nonverbal gestures of embarrassment and discomfort.

Disadvantages or complications to insider positionality could be:

• Over-identification or over-reliance on status obscures researcher role or goal of research;
• Social roles in group or community events or affairs;
• Overload with exchange or reciprocity requests from participants;
• Requests to take sides in community political and moral issues;
• The rise of value conflicts as a result of research and community member role;
• Compromised professional ethics and/or research results;
• Participants’ perceptions and expectations co-opt researcher or constrained role;
• Observer and/or participant role may be culturally inappropriate;
• Large amounts of impression management to maintain rapport and/or identity;
• Selective reporting;
• Difficulty with recognizing patterns due to familiarity with community.

(Chavez, 2008, p. 479)

Creswell (2012) stated that in qualitative reporting, the report is written reflexively. He described reflexivity as “being aware of and openly discussing his or her role in the study in a way that honors and respect the site and participants” (p. 474). As the primary researcher, further care was taken in writing the analysis of this dissertation by reviewing transcriptions of the fathers multiple times for accuracy and writing reflexively, being cognizant of selective reporting. Additional care was taken with the disadvantages of insider positionality as described by Chavez (2008).

Summary

This study was a narrative inquiry, analyzing data collected in focus groups of self-identified Latino fathers. The focus of this study was to determine the role fathers describe creating a pathway to college for their children. Chapter 4 presents the researcher’s story, a brief description of the recruitment of the participants, the
researcher’s findings embedded in a narrative of each participant, resulting in the grand story.
Chapter 4: Findings

Some men teach from a place of experience, sharing the kind of wisdom that comes from everyday living.

Some men come from a quiet corner of their hearts and share smiles and laughter just as easily as anything else.

And the greatest of these are the men who give back a little bit of all that makes them so special.

Author Unknown

The Researcher’s Story

I’ve been involved with the Promise Foundation, a backbone organization that convenes stakeholders; school districts, families, the city council, and local businesses, by mobilizing resources, coordinating systems, and incubating promising projects aligned to the mission of the Foundation. My initial intent was to write a dissertation on community-based organizations and creating a college going culture. As I researched community-based organizations, I noted various facets that support success. Through the funnelling process, conducting research, and working with the Promise Foundation, parent involvement was impressed upon me as a large component for educational success. In the Promise’s focus groups, mothers are primarily invited to sit at the table. Subsequently, as a principal, I noted that fathers were becoming highly involved as defined by socio-cultural values, with two fathers serving on my School Site Council as Chair and Co-chair. I became intrigued with the deficit thinking of parent involvement of Latinos and, more specifically, the lack of research regarding the role Latino fathers play in supporting educational success.
I recall my younger days, growing up in El Monte as a young Latina, with the understanding that I would attend college. It was more of an expectation stressed to me by my parents, more specifically my father. However; he did not engage me in discussions of how I would get there, how I would pay for it, or how I would be successful in college. My mother was a high school graduate and my father obtained his GED in the Navy. He attended community college upon his return, however, he was one of many Latinos who started college but did not finish. To support my educational goals, I was sent to private schools with the expectation that the school system would guide me toward the path to college. This is typical of a Latino family, deferring to the school system to teach and direct a college pathway.

My parents did, however, provide me with internal strategies that continue to serve me today. For the purpose of this dissertation, these internal strategies are referred to as the Funds of Knowledge imparted to Latino children as resources that support educational success. My mother imparted generosity to me in terms of seeking to understand why people behave the way they do, especially when they approach you with anger or judgment. She worked for the school district in different capacities and I recall a story she relayed to us, her children, when she worked as an elementary school secretary. She told us about a woman who would come into the office, always angry, being contentious, to the point that whenever my mother would see her coming she would begin to feel dread. However, she made a decision to not engage negatively with her, so she would smile and always politely ask her how she could help her. One day she came in and thanked my mother for always being kind. She told her that she was going through a hard time. She was a single mother of four children with no support from the father. She
had no other support system. She had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer and was worried about who would care for her children. My mother was happy with herself that she never engaged with the woman’s contentious behavior. It reminded her that we should always seek first to understand, imparting to us generosity and kindness. My father imparted tenacity to me; don’t quit, don’t give up. He also taught me how to change a tire on my car. That, for me, is symbolic of his desire for me to be independent and to have the ability to take care of myself. I vividly remember the day we worked on the driveway, changing the tire on my car. I’ve carried these lessons with me throughout different stages of my life, as a student, a wife, a mother, and now as an educator.

Merriam (2009) suggests, “Stories are how we make sense of our experiences, how we communicate with others, and through which we understand the world around us” (p. 32). My investigation into the role Latino fathers play in supporting educational success is presented through narratives from six participants. The interview questions were designed to provide answers for the research questions; how Latino fathers perceive and support their children’s education, what they perceive as supports and obstacles to an authentic family-school engagement, what Funds of Knowledge Latino fathers impart to their children as important resources, and what recommendations they have for improving the educational status of Latino students.

**Participants**

I investigated the role of Latino fathers in their children’s educational success. The criteria for inclusion were self-identified Latino fathers of elementary school children, English speaking or bilingual proficient. Each father had a story to tell, providing insight into their childhood and their influences as they entered adulthood and
parenthood. I began the focus groups by sharing personal stories with the fathers to provide context about internal strategies, Funds of Knowledge. Included in this chapter are the stories of each father; pseudonyms were used to maintain confidentiality.

Zapata’s Story

Zapata was born in Nicaragua and is the only child of a single parent home. He is a high school graduate, a business owner in the community, is married, and has twin girls entering fourth grade. Zapata’s dad was non-existent. When speaking about his father, he stated,

Yeah, I met him twice. Met him once. Saw him twice, I did. I’m not very impressed with that. He doesn’t impress me. I’m more impressed by the guy[s] that are in front of me. I look up to these guys more. This guy being younger than me, I believe I’m a little bit older…I see these guys involved, it like really hits me.

His educational experience was in the United States, attending school in Los Angeles during mandatory busing,

I was part of the LA Unified School District and from my – this is my personal point of view with that is – horrible school district, too many kids. It’s a huge district. I was bussed from LA to Van Nuys and I was totally out of my element in the beginning because I’m used to being around pure Latinos going to nothing but White schools.

He recalled waking up very early in the morning to catch the bus to school and arriving home in the evening,
I had to be up at five a.m. to catch the bus at six-twenty to be at school at eight. That was exhausting. I’d get home – what, school was out at three? I’d get home at around five-thirty. I was dozing off as I was doing homework. My mom didn’t understand my homework. She couldn’t help me with it so, you know, I didn’t know. She didn’t speak English very well. She could barely understand it, reading it, so, I didn’t…there wasn’t any tutoring for me. You know, I did my best and-

His mother, who was Spanish speaking, would ask him daily if he finished his homework,

Yes, Yeah. She’s like, “Do your homework. Are you done?” I would like – sometimes half the time I’d lie – I’d lie just so I could go out and play. “Yeah I’m done.” Okay. And she wouldn’t even review it because she wouldn’t understand what it was about. So I was outside playing and that was it. That was it for me, you know…

Zapata stated that he helps his daughters with their homework by trying to help them problem solve first,

I personally, I sit down with them and I help them out with the problem solving. So if they have something that they can’t do on their own, I’ll help them out with it and if I can’t find the answer, Google it and then explain it to them. But, I’ll sit down with them and actually go through their homework, read it with them and do work – problem solving with them. But, if let’s say they don’t understand it, I’d try to have – come up with the – a way where they’re going to understand it by the time they’re done with the problem so they get a better idea of what the
problem is – not the problem solving itself. Hopefully they do understand how to answer it as well.

He attends most of the school’s events, parent conferences, back to school night, and open houses. He stated that although he is not in the PTA, if the president approaches him, he would help when he can. He has a flexible work schedule so, as long as he knows in advance, he will take the time to help, often chaperoning for their field trips,

So, I want to be – I want to know who’s around my kids. I want to know who’s teaching them. I want to get to know them. I want to be involved so they know that if there is an issue they can come to me. Their mom is not around because she’s working but she’s also very involved as well. Talks to them every day. “How’d it go?” And she wants to know what event they’re going to…my work schedule allows me to. So whenever I do get a chance, I’m involved as much as I can. I feel a lot safer if I’m around. Like if a kid – I – recently one of the kids fell. She fell and I, “Are you okay?” – I kind of like – I don’t know – if my daughter were to fall, I would have want[ed] to be there, pick her up say, no everything’s good and I was present so, I like being around. I really like to see what they’re doing.

Zapata reflected on his involvement with his daughters, expressing that he wants his daughters to remember that he was there for them,

My father wasn’t really there. So, I figured when I have kids, I want to be the opposite. I knew that growing up... My mom, she had a rough one with me but she kept me straight. I never got involved with drugs, none of that. I stayed away from it. Until this day, I stayed away from all that. I have her to thank for that.
She was the man, my brother, my best friend, and she’s awesome. She’s a strong lady. She means the world to me man.” If she can be that strong of a woman, so can my daughters. I have to start molding them now. Now is the time to do that. If I can do that now, when they get old they’re going to be, [ok] and they graduate from college and they get the profession where they want to be. I’m going to let them flow, meaning I’m going to let them [go] where they want to go. If one of them wants to be a professional fighter, I’ll do that. I’ll back it up. I’ll always be there if she falls down. I’ll be there to pick her up.

He stated that his wife has initiated the topic of college with their daughters and that he is beginning to as well. Zapata went on to express his comfort level with the district and school personnel,

I’ve rarely seen – met people from the district... they’re somewhere else – they’re not here- I don’t see them. I’ve seen you as a principal. You’re very welcoming and a lot of the teachers are the same way. They want parents to like it here…So, it allows me as a parent to say, you know what, I want to be able to participate and – they make you feel real comfortable….The majority of the teachers here are very open to that and well, as a parent, you know what, I like that. So, I will be engaging. Absolutely. And once I’ve got to know them personally– I always tell them, “Hey I’m here and you guys need something else, please ask…I will do it.”

He could not think of a time that he felt unwelcomed. He recalled a time when he had a concern with a particular teacher; however, he contacted the principal and she addressed his concerns and helped him resolve the issue. Zapata further noted that the people in this
city are pretty welcoming. Comparing it to Los Angeles, he stated that it was due to the size of the city, mentioning that he also volunteers with the police department.

Zapata reflected on the internal strategies, Funds of Knowledge, his mother imparted to him. He described his mother as having good people skills. His recollection began with,

Physical activities, I’ve always been very physically active since I was a kid…with all the years I put into training myself physically and then martial arts. So, it kind of just all bonded together. I find myself doing it for a living and absolutely love it. It does have to touch back with having people skills. If you have good people skills, people [respect you]. I actually learned that from my mom. My mom was always walking in the room and engaged everybody, whether it’s a child to the oldest person, engaged them and say good morning. Be polite because if it’s the first time they see you, that will be a lasting impression because you’re able to always be [polite]…walk in and be polite. That helps a lot. Being polite and being able to represent yourself, that has always gone a long way. My mom did teach me that and it helps me out now in what I do.

As one gentleman reflects on the machismo, macho attitudes of their fathers and the expectations for their sons to be macho, Zapata reflected,

We’re starting to change. I think when you cry, it’s a way of expressing yourself and releasing those emotions that you need to get out. I’m totally all for that. When my daughters cry and, then explain to me why you’re crying after the fact but let it out. Especially me being a man, I’ll break down like that and I don’t care. I’ll cry in front of anybody. My mom told me that. “Be emotional because
you got to be in touch with your emotional side in order to understand the other
people or else, how are you going to understand them?” You see a guy crying and
you’re like: “Hey, you’re” – No, there is a reason why he’s crying. He’s letting
something out so let him cry, and then after you can be there for him.

Zapata will encourage his daughters to be emotional as well and then work
through the problem and move forward. He will also teach them to stay in touch with
their Latino side, referring to their language. He wants them to be respectful and polite.

Finally, Zapata offered a recommendation to encourage and engage fathers in
their children’s education. He suggested that teachers approach fathers and ask them to
help. He believes that more fathers would be more involved if they were asked, as he was
from a teacher. He stated,

One of the things is I didn’t have to get told by like…none of the teachers told me
to get involved. So, I think if the teachers were more engaging especially with the
fathers, if the teacher were like: ‘Hey, can you at least make it’. Let the teachers
be a little bit more engaging with the fathers and say: “Hey, can you participate.”
Ask them: “Can you be here at least once a month?” It can be a snowball effect. If
you do it once they’re gonna want [to], maybe do it again and next thing they
know, they’re more involved.

Referring to the two other fathers in the room, Zapata ended with, “I’m not saying
that we’re more involved, but we are.”

Bobby’s Story

Bobby was born and raised in Los Angeles with two parents and four siblings.
Bobby’s parents are immigrants from Mexico and are Spanish speaking. He has two
daughters, the oldest will enter fifth grade and the youngest will enter third grade. Bobby is a high school graduate with a license to practice in the family business. Bobby works in his family-owned business as a *sobador*, a Mexican bonesetter.

Similar to Zapata, he attended school in Los Angeles County during mandatory bussing. He recalled,

I went to Catholic School – private…In the United States, yeah. In Los Angeles. I went to public up until the fourth grade and then there, I was transferred. A new little system back then wanted to get kids out of the community, trying to get them in different locations so like I was bussed all the way to Sun Valley. Way over there it was a total culture shock. Even if I fit in – I looked like I fit in with some of the kids but I just – different cultures and I was there for one year then I came back and that’s when I entered private school.

Unable to help Bobby with his homework, his parents would order him to do it. He recalled,

More on gritas (*yelling*). They didn’t have an understanding of homework, [if it] was part of reading and writing English. They would yell it. At least my mom would. She would yell at me. “Go do your homework. Andale, trabajo, andale.” (*hurry, work, hurry*).

Bobby’s wife helps their daughters with their homework. He stated,

Well, I’m not the primary person that helps them because I get home too late. So by that time sometimes it’s eight o’clock, they’re already done with their homework. But when I do, I’ll sit down, especially with the younger one and try
to help her with her problems, writing or if I come in to something I don’t know, I ask my wife.

He is, however, able to be involved at school due to his work schedule,

Why I attend the – that one – parent conferences. Sometimes I have three. But, I do all the breakfasts in the mornings and part of the – this…School Site Council…the Back to School, and Open Houses – and the ELAC. So that’s what.

I try to be involved in -like they said to you (referring to the two fathers in the group), you can get to know the teachers too. So if there’s an issue or issues for them, to ask for help if something comes up. I attend a lot of field trips – involved in that way too. I do it because I have the time in the morning. Like they said too – I have the flexibility. So if it helps and works for me. It’s fun. It gives me something to do.

…I like doing it, especially watching all the kids. It’s fun. Kind of vigilant too.

On the topic of discussing college with his children, he stated,

Yes, we’ve been doing it. At first, the older one, she’s like she would be scared “because I don’t want to go to college” She’s special needs…Yes, [it] intimidates her but it’s just – but, now, gradually, you just keep repeating it over and over. It’s like, okay, we’re going to go here because I know it’s important for them to get familiar with that at a young age because once they’re older, they don’t - it’s hard for them to maybe want to go to college. We go on vacations, we’ll try to make a trip to whatever the schools out there.
Bobby’s father worked long hours and his mother was a stay-at-home mother. Bobby reflects on his ability to be involved and why it’s important to him, drawing on the influence of his wife, family, and cousins,

My dad, he worked hard, but I always find him working most of his time…I mean, if I look back on it now my parents weren’t involved in my – in my schooling really. But I thought that was normal and then when I get involved – when I got involved I just thought – okay, just do it…Even for my graduation like, was it eighth grade? Only my father showed up and he showed up late. My mother’s family, they were – at another graduation. My other brother was graduating from high school.

…we have that flexibility though. I know some parents, well they have to work and they’re at work all day so it’s more difficult for others to volunteer and do something but as far as me, the flexibility I have with them. I will take advantage…you know you want your kids, they’re going to remember this because you’re the father.

Bobby became engaged in a conversation with the fathers in his focus group regarding their comfort level with the district and the school personnel. In his reflection, he agreed with them that school personnel are welcoming,

…Makes you feel comfortable…It invites you to want to get involved because it’s very easy to talk to…It has to start there…But, teachers being so welcoming helps.

The topic of machismo, macho attitudes, was initiated within the group. Bobby asserted that it was an expectation back then. However, men expressing themselves and
showing emotion is more accepting now. He agreed with the group that it was good to show their children that they could have emotions; however, understanding the consequences is important as well. He reflected that they may be of this opinion because the fathers in his group all had daughters.

Bobby reflected on the internal strategies, Funds of Knowledge, his father and mother imparted to him. He stated that he learned how to be a father from his father, recalling that they were always around family despite his long hours at work. He shared a story about his mother’s generosity,

…She was a homemaker. So, she was always at home. There are five of us but I remember as a little kid, I don’t know how but there would be these hobos that would come down to my mom’s, to our house, and they would knock on the door and they would ask if she had any – like can she help them out. She would tell them to wait down the steps. ‘I don’t have any money but I can make some food.’ So, somehow people knew that. My mom, she would cook them tacos or something and she would give them the food and they would sit outside. They would eat. So, one time my, my brother, my older brother, he would go out and sit with one of the[m] and just be talking. But, my mom did that. The people would come by and she had that heart. I think you see that and yes I tend to give myself and help out other people if I can because that’s what I saw. That’s what I grew up with. I contribute that to her.

Finally, Bobby shared his recommendations on how to encourage and engage fathers to be involved in their children’s education. He agreed with the fathers in his
focus group, recommending that teachers simply ask fathers for their help. He suggested that a room be designated for fathers to meet.

**Louis’ Story**

Louis is the youngest of six children. He is a first generation American; his parents migrated from Mexico to California. Louis grew up in the same city his children attend school and graduated from a local high school. He works as a barber at his family owned shop and is a single father of two daughters. One will enter 6th grade and the youngest will enter 2nd grade.

He mentioned that his parents did not help him with his homework growing up; it was his older sister who assisted him. He believes his father was too busy and his mom’s priority was taking care of the household. He stated that they both speak Spanish, but understand English. He reflected,

Well, I have a Hispanic background, and I thought it was normal…Normal, the fact that our dads were not involved because they’re always working. I can only see my dad was always working. You know, he just made sure that we had food on the table was paid, roof over our heads. As long as we weren’t injured when we were, you know, doing something we’re not supposed to. As far as school-wise, I don’t remember ever sitting down and saying let’s go over this or let me check this because he was always home late.

Discussing potential language barriers with his parents, he noted:

I think they used that as an excuse, to be honest because they understand pretty well. They could pretty much read. They just don’t like to speak it. But that’s part of the understanding. They, they understand it, you know, pretty well. Not, I think
– I think there could have been a little bit more – more push in the educational
direction. It was kind of more like, if you want to, do it. If you don’t, it’s okay. As
far as projects and all that stuff, it was kind of like – not saying they didn’t – they
weren’t there for us, but as far as educational, it was that extra push towards that
direction. I think that was supposed to be –

His older sister would help him with his homework, further reflecting,

…The one older than us, she was always the one making sure. She was in high
school. She was always on top at school, graduated with honors. She always
stayed on top of us as far as that part. But if the question is, was our parents
involved? I think not that much because of the fact that it wasn’t really – their
country. In their country it’s not really pushed. It’s more work. So if you work
hard enough, you get to do this. It’s not if you study hard enough, you’ll get to do
this. It’s more work, physical work.

Louis stated that he has his older daughter help the younger daughter with her
homework, believing that it is mutually beneficial for his daughters,

Well, I take it on a different point of view. I help her out to a certain extent I
believe that what she’s doing is review of what she’s learning at school. So, I
believe she understands what she’s doing. If she does get stuck, I do help her out,
and after something I don’t understand, I also have a – my older daughter which is
eleven, Alice, so I ask her to kind of break it down for her and she’s actually
really good at that and kind of helps me with certain things that I don’t remember
because it might be a little tricky or I might understand it a certain way but may
not be the way that she would want it (referring to the teacher).
Yeah. So, if I asked Alice she’s closer to her level than I am. So Alice would be able to break it down for her right away. She kind of listens to her a little more as far as I am understanding. Yeah. So, they finish really fast, you know. Alice, I’ve noticed that she doesn’t do it for her, she just explains it to her like – so I think that’s – it kind of helps both of them. And I just check it at the end and make sure and I sign off on it and make sure everything’s complete, and that’s all.

Although Louis has not had the opportunity to volunteer or join any committees due to being new to the district, he does attend school events,

I also have attended just about every meeting that they ask for which is parent conference, Back to School Night, and Open House. I also have the flexibility due to my job. I’m able to set a time where I’m going to – where I’m going to leave work and be with – attend with her. I find it fun and I think that it – she’ll look back at it and remember those days that I – like oh, “You know my dad was with me when we were doing this” – and since I can, I take advantage of it to be honest. My job allows it so.

Louis provided some discussion about the flexibility and proximity that allows him to attend school events,

I have the flexibility and I do take advantage. Our work does work based off appointments. But, we do get to work with our own community because my work is local, literally five minutes away from the school so a lot of clientele base that I’ve had over the years, they come to school. So, it makes it maybe, maybe it makes it even easier. Like for my daughter who was – so much easier when she
came here to feel – yeah, to transition because she felt welcome because everybody already knew her.

Louis discussed being new to the school and feeling welcomed,

I’m new to the school but I do see the welcome from the teachers the short time that I’ve been here. I’ve been here approximately like six months with my daughter and the teachers that she’s had, they’ve been very polite, very welcoming as far as with sharing her information or maybe things she needs help on or maybe things that the teacher herself needs help, and I don’t mind doing anything. Honestly, I don’t.

He takes a moment to compare the district he is from to this particular school district. His feelings of dissatisfaction for his past district is noted,

Okay, the district here…, I don’t know if it’s the community or what it is but it was – it’s been a lot more flexible and easy going and as far as – for my transition from (named) District to there. (Named) District was a lot more limited, more closed off as far as I – for help, if you need something it’s like you had to go to a third party to get attended. Yeah. The doors were a lot more closed over there. And when you needed the Principal to open those doors you had to wait all the time. There was always that, “well he’s not in right now.” or “Come back tomorrow at this time he’ll be here.” Or, “you need to set an appointment,” and I think that if it’s involving a child and it needs to get done, you’re not going to be waiting around till the next day. You shouldn’t have to. The principal should be there to attend to your needs as far as you know your kids needs. So I really – I dealt with it as respectfully and as patiently as I could because I have to, for my
daughter’s sake, but it was just the hassle of having to wait and maybe he wasn’t going to be there again or you know and not having the answer right away when I needed it because in my case, the things that I needed were at that moment – because like I said, I’m a single father and I have to move. I can’t be waiting around. I need things to get done and I’m always on the move and I don’t have time to wait. I don’t have time to come back. If it ain’t one thing, it’s another and I have to keep moving, I guess [it’s] the way I am, and then that’s when my situations are put in front of me so I can’t – I can’t wait around and I always felt like I always had to wait and I dealt with it because I had to and here everything’s been a lot more flexible. I’ve had inconveniences here also, but I think we were able to address it right then and there and I like that. I don’t know if it’s the community itself that’s a lot more- more together. Not like it is over there because over there, it’s like everybody’s a little more distant and everybody can’t – does her own thing and you kind of feel like –

Louis is involved in the family business, second generation from his father as a barber. He discussed the skills he learned from his father as a barber,

Honestly, it’s more of a social, people skills type of work where the way you address and you are addressed and, very highly known because you can do very great at what you do. But if your people skills are not there, it makes no sense. You will not have a base client. So, you would not have reoccuring clients. You will not have a bond even with other[s] like say, like for a mother who was to bring her child or a sister or anybody. It’s just you wouldn’t have that. See, one more base offer, what family environment where anybody and everybody can
come and sit down and enjoy the time while they’re being serviced….Yes, so social skill[s] is very important.

He noted that he also learned from his father that he was going to make mistakes, it’s what you learned from your mistakes that mattered.

He spoke of his mother and her “sweet heart”,

…My mom, she is the sweetest woman on Earth. She has a very sweet heart. My dad is the opposite. So, my mom is the sweet one, the generous one, very helpful and very respectful. My dad, he’s a rough Hispanic. He’s old school as far as…It’s more of, how can I say, that a little bit of machismo. That’s how it was.

The conversation shifted to the Latino male’s expectation of machismo,

It’s a different world. You can express yourself. It’s more accepting. I think it’s better for them because as a child, I wasn’t allowed to cry in front of my dad. He didn’t believe in that. No matter what the situation was, you bite down and fight through it and that’s it. There’s no to that. You’re just going to do it.

He continued with a discussion on his belief that this concept is changing for Latino males,

I do, because I’m able to let go a lot more than I was when I was a child. I believe that it made me a little more defensive when I was a child. So, it kind of made me engaged more in such situations. So, instead of releasing it, I kind of just engaged. I don’t want that for my kids, I want them to be more calm.

I was very impulsive when I was a child. I was like, go right down there without second thought of a consequence. I don’t want that for my daughters. I want them to be able to express themselves and process and think of what they’re doing and
what their actions can cause...because it might sound like a good idea right now, but in the long term, is that really the best idea for you?

Adding,

It’s the generational, their generation that’s the way they’re built. There’s no other way for them. I can honestly say that the time now, with us evolving as father[s] or trying to bring in like a hybrid father where we can leave both parties like the soft one and strong.

Finally, Louis’ input on how to engage more fathers in their education was to provide the fathers with options. His addition to the conversation included how to approach fathers who have other priorities, including watching sports,

It’s going to be something else, make time for that. Like, give them the option that if maybe, if they could have time because they’re busy working or etc. But they can know that this next one around, they can be part of it – like give them that plan. Have that plan be all ready, not just: ‘Oh, can you come, because next week we’re doing something?’ To some dads, it’s kind of pushing them away to be honest.

Maybe announcements too...Because the more you see it, the more you want to do it.

Dionicio’s Story

Dionicio is the youngest of eight children, growing up in Mexico, and migrated to the United States when he was nineteen years old. He received his high school diploma in Mexico. Dionicio is married with three children, one entering first grade and twins who will enter 3rd grade.
Dionicio recalled growing up and attending school in Mexico in a small Pueblo, town. He had to pay tuition to attend high school,

Yes, when I was in Mexico…because I was studying in Mexico, but…I was studying for my family because when you have school, you need money to pay everything. Mexico’s completely different than here. The high school there, you’ve got to spend a lot of money. More than here. If you don’t have money, how will you support? So I told my mom, “You know mom, I have to quit, I go work in the USA because we need…” Yeah. It’s different. You have to pay for books, you have to pay for everything. Usually, when I…I live in a small pueblo…small town. So, I have to travel 45 minutes every single day…Go and return everyday. So, it was really hard. And also I have to pay for everything. If you don’t have money, how can you do it? It’s impossible. That’s one of the reasons I stop[ped] study because I need money. In Mexico, you can work in a whole, complete week, and when you get your check, your salary…on Monday you have to pay for food and everything. When you [put] your hand in your pocket, where’s your money, all gone already. It’s really hard in Mexico because you work a lot for almost nothing.

…The money you pay for the food, is greater that the money you get when you work. It’s the reason why everybody from all the countries are here, because here is better than there. And when you are here, you can make $10, $15, $20, and there you make the same in one week. It’s a lot different. That’s why I don’t understand why the government, the people say, “Why are there a lot of people coming here?” Because they are hungry. Where is food? Here. That’s why
everybody is here. This [is] why they never stop…They can put 1000 walls, and
everybody jumping to get food. There’s a campo…In the fields, yeah. You work
the whole day, you don’t do nothing. You start at 6 AM; you’re done at 7 PM;
you return home; you’re tired; you sleep and when you wake up, you work the
same…When you get the check, it’s not enough to pay everything. Completely
different right here, because here, you can work one day, you can [buy] food –
you can go eat, you can go with your family outside. There, no, it’s impossible,
because everything is very expensive.

It was his hope to attend college; however, he had to begin supporting his parents,
and then time passed and he had to forgo his dreams of attending college.

Dionicio explained the educational system in Mexico,

Until 6th grade, you don’t have to pay anything. The government gives you the
books, almost everything. And when you start high school, you have to pay for
books, you have to get different work, different clothing, and it’s real expensive.

If you don’t have money, how will you support? That’s why everybody goes to
the sixth. At sixth, it’s over. You need to have good money to pay for everything.
Thats one of the reasons - If you’re here, two, three, five persons, it’s just the
same. Because when you stop paying, your father say[s], “Sorry son, I can do
nothing.” It’s not because they don’t want to help, because they can’t help you. If
you don’t have money, how can you help your kids?…I go up to high school. I
was the last one. Only me. And after that, in Mexico, there’s this place call[ed] –
after that is secundaria (community college), and after that, college. In college,
Dionicio works while his wife is a homemaker. As a couple, they agree with the value of education. She helps with their homework and participates in school committees such as ELAC, DELAC, and the Promise parent committee. He stated that he takes care of the children while she attends meetings, “So that’s a way I can help her.” He is able to attend school events such as Back to School Night, parent conference, and Open House. He described his ability to participate and his wife’s ability to participate,

All of it. All I can go, because usually, if I have time, I go. Because I usually work the whole week, and I’m only off on Mondays. So if I get some time, I’ll be there. Or in the day after, if the Open House is in another day, I’ll be there too. The more time I can…when I have time, I go, because it’s important for me. It’s my family. I want a better future than I got. Yeah. She’s the one who does something with the school because for her, it’s most important. They are my kids…because she wants a better future for them. So, all the time – she’s got the time for that. That’s why, the reason I’m working all the time because she doesn’t work, but she helps me that way. That’s the best way she can help me, because the most important for me is my family, and they are my family.

He added that if he wants to know how his kids are doing, he visits with the principal. He described other ways he supports his children’s education,

For example, usually…my younger, she had to learn the DOLCH words. So, when my wife has to go to school, I stay and study…and my other kids, every
Friday they got exams, so I make them to be prepared for the next day. So that’s a way I can help them, for the next day, become ready.

His thoughts about why he thinks Latinos attend college, but do not finish,

Because, for me, in my opinion, you never have to stop to support your kids until they’re done. Because I told my kids, “Hey, I don’t have money. The only thing that I can help you is to study. But if you do nothing, when you go, that’s your problem, not my problem. But the best I can do is help and to go to the top. If you don’t want to stay there, it becomes your problem. You want to work the whole day like I do?” They say, “No! I think one of the problems is a lot of the kids, when they start college, they start looking for jobs. Sometime[s], they get a good job, they get money, forget college, “I will keep working.” I got a couple of friends who’s working here, they got out of college because they got a good job and they quit college because they’re getting more money than if you stay in college…I think that they (educators) probably have to convince the parents, because the parents, they have to know, have to see – if kid starts working, they will stop. It’s true, I have example “Oh, I will get a part time”. For me, I will say, “No! You got a part time, okay, where is the college?” Because they got some money in their pockets, they forget the college, “I’ve money in my pocket”… …When my kids start to go to college, they will not work until they are done. Because if [they] don’t know nothing, I don’t want them in the future say, “Papa, give me money for rent.” Because I don’t have money, I don’t want to hear that. I want to hear that they live in a good place with no help from me. That’s the best I can give from me.
Dionicio described feeling welcomed at his children’s school,

…Because all the time, when I want to talk to him (the principal), he has the time to answer any questions I got. That’s the way I can feel that he helps us. …If he doesn’t have time, and you say what time, and you come later…yeah, he give me a chance to give me one appointment. Yeah, the teachers are too, because when I have many questions about did they do something wrong, did they try to help to fix the problem…

Recalling his parent’s inability to participate in his education, he stated,

…When I grew up, my father, he doesn’t know how to write. He doesn’t know how to multiply, because he was really poor. He was a orfano… orphan. My father have no mom. He only have my grandpa. It was really difficult for him. He tried to help me, but he doesn’t know how to help me, because – he doesn’t know how to help me. So that’s why, if I got the opportunity I want to help my kids because I want to do something better than my dad [did] for me.

He added,

…one of the reasons is because his time with me was almost nothing. Because usually he worked 6 AM to 7 PM, he arrived at the house. And usually, in the weekends, he goes, with his friends drinking in the bars and everything, and he never stayed with us. So I told myself, when I start my family, I don’t want to live my life like that. I tell my wife, because when I want to go somewhere, we are going to go somewhere together.
Dionicio draws from the influences, internal strategies, Funds of Knowledge, from his father, his mother, and his wife. He discussed what he has learned and what he hopes to teach his children from each of them respectively,

Do everything correctly. If you start, you stole something, it’s bad for you. That’s what he teaches me all the time. If you’re working hard, maybe one day you’ll get something. But if you do wrong things, nothing good is coming…That’s why if you see somebody do something that is not correct, walk away. Because if you stay there, you’ll have problems too. Those problems never disappear, they will stay in your life all the time...When he’s drinking, sometimes he can be really crazy. But he – I understand him, because no one was behind him to tell him not to be like that. That’s why I think he is – he doesn’t have anybody to teach him. That’s why he was like that. He taught me a lot of things, a lot of good things. In the field, he taught me how to plant something, how to sharpen the thing, to clean in the field. He taught me a lot. He was – I told you already, maybe he doesn’t know how to exactly, but he tried. He taught me a lot of things. When I have animals, cows, he taught me how to get the milk, how to chop something. He taught me a lot of things.

His mother was a foundation for the family,

Everything - to love for my kids and my family. Because she loved my family a lot, she likes us all together. My brothers and sister all the time have problems. So she’s teaching, “Stay together the most that you can.” Yeah, and to try and help my wife with everything. Because when I started having difficulties, she told me, “If you want to do something, try to do the best you can. If not, let it go.”
…She did everything for us. She tried to, whatever – sometimes when we don’t have money, and I want[ed] to get something, for example, by asking, if she don’t have for everybody, she buy[s] it but not for herself. That’s the way. Even my kids, if they need something, I can’t do it, I do the best I can. And I try to give it because I remember when she do that…It’s Latino style, to sacrifice for your family.

His wife also impacts his thoughts on the importance of studying,

…But the thing for school, my wife gave me her ideas…

She got the opportunity to study in Mexico, and she knows, everybody knows, that if you study, something good is coming. If you don’t study, it’s difficult because you don’t know anything. You don’t know how to speak with a person, you don’t know how to do something. The key is studying. It’s the key to open all doors. If you study, you can open every door. If you don’t study, you’re going nowhere.

Dionicio found it difficult to make any recommendations or suggestions for the school to encourage fathers to attend or participate in events. He stated,

It’s difficult, because, usually, the school is in the morning, and everybody works in the morning. The parents work in the morning. Because if you go to work – everything is starting at 7 AM, so you have to be at work. It’s impossible to the fathers to go there in the morning time. Usually, the father has to support the family. Usually….When it’s a night meeting I’ll be there. Because, for my own opinion, my kids are the most important things. Because a lot of parents, “Oh, it’s football time. Okay, away with you, I’ll go see the football.” But for me, no. For
me, it’s different. I love football, but if my kids have something to do in school, it’s more important we give them everything. But, every family is different.

In terms of helping educators develop a deeper understanding of the Latino culture, declaring that it’s the part of Mexican culture to sacrifice, he elaborated on the differences:

No, but the thing is, I don’t know how can I explain [it] to you, how can I tell you here to explain? How can I tell you about the education, because it’s completely different here than Mexico? Because if you see here – in Mexico, if you went to school, if your parent’s go for you, the teacher say[s] something, but if nobody go for you, the teacher never say something. You never have communication like here…And then, if you’re in school and you don’t have your homework, maybe they send you to detention. There they only have one rule…For example, if you have the teacher on the board and you are talking with your friend, he’ll say, “Quiet, or you go to the office”. There, no, there’s a piece chalk, just throw it to your face. Yeah, it’s different there than here. Completely different. So, how can I compare. I think it’s not great to compare, because it [is] completely different…

…let me put this example. Here, if you don’t have money, you can go – somebody can go and get it for you. There, nobody’s giving nothing. If you don’t have food, it’s your problem. Here it’s different. If you don’t have money, there a lot of food – food stamps, those things. Mexico, nothing. If you don’t have food, it’s your problem. If you’re not eating, it’s your problem, because nobody will help you…
During our conversation, Dionicio shed some tears. At the end of our conversation, he volunteered why he cried,

Yeah. Because you know what, what is different here than Mexico? In Mexico, you’re really poor, but when the rain, the rivers are full because of all the water. It’s in the middle of the day raining, and then the sun is coming out and everybody is going out to the river jumping, enjoy. My life was really poor, but I was really enjoying it. That’s why I started to cry, because I remember that thing. We don’t have enough to eat, but I enjoy my life. So that’s a thing I want to do with my kids, and I like it when they enjoy my life. I don’t want to spend in a restaurant, but we’ll go somewhere where we spend time together and they enjoy…

Anderson’s Story

Anderson was an only child raised in California by a single mom. He graduated from a high school in Los Angeles. He recalled growing up with kids who were involved with drugs and alcohol and his decision to stay clear from them. When he finished school, he joined the military. He is currently married with three children. All his children attended schools in the school district. His youngest will enter high school and his eldest was recently accepted to a competitive state university.

Anderson stated that there was nobody standing behind him, influencing him,

That’s the biggest issue that I had that no one tried to encourage me. I was like literally alone and once I have somebody, a friend or a best friend I just look at him, I just look at him. I just look at the people that are around me, that I don’t
want to be like them. I’ve seen a big, big picture, big mirror that what am I going
to do with these people that they were doing drugs, they were doing alcohol.

Anderson is a highly involved parent, helping his children with their homework
and participating in various committees. He described his involvement,

Well, that’s a good question, how I help. If I want to help my child, I just – if I
don’t understand, I go search on the internet or I go to their meetings on the
school, and I speak with the teachers that I don’t understand the homework or the
class that my daughter or my son have. That’s how I try to help. I want to help
them because I always try to do the right thing. Not for me, not for the neighbor,
not for anybody, for my kids. That’s why we brought them in life. Show them that
you are there for them. So that’s how I feel for them, and I will say that’s how I
am a responsible dad, and I want them to succeed in life. Yes, it’s really important
that you go to the meetings because that’s how you know how your child – how
everything is going on in the school, and the relationship with your child.

He described his involvement. The primary way that he’s involved in his
children’s education is through a couple of advisory committees, one is the English
Language Advisory Committee at the school level, and the other one is a similar
committee at the district level. He’s very active in both committees. He made a
recommendation; that parents be involved in their children’s education because he
considers that to be essential to their academic success.

Anderson described a time when he felt unwelcomed at his children’s school,
however he also provided the reasoning behind the school’s actions,
I came in and I was looking for the principal to talk about something… and they look[ed] at me and, “You cannot go in there. You cannot come in here.” And I say, “Why?” “Because you cannot come over here, because you’re going to speak with the principal or you’re going to say something to the principal.” And I say, “I’m not even saying anything. I want to go to talk to the principal because my son needs something.” He missed one of the – I don’t quite remember but to make it shorter, he didn’t do some homework, something like that, but I don’t recall… that specific issue. But, I didn’t care less. You’ve got to understand one thing, if you’re not welcome one of the other days you’ll be welcome because you’re not perfect, and you’re going to be there regardless. I’m those kinds of persons that it’s not my fault and it’s not their fault, it’s the part of society.

Anderson spoke of the lessons learned from his mother, the internal strategies he continues to utilize,

My mom taught me, she says, “You already are eighteen, you’re already growing up.” And I give her big applause to my mom because she taught me that the street is not the right thing to be. I was too much for her and she says, “If you don’t pay attention what I tell you, you can stay over here or you can leave, one of those two options,” and I said to myself, “Well, where I’m going to be going?” My mom’s giving me and she taught me that she was talking straight up. She put me those two options and what was my option? I left.

…Yes, I came back to see my mom, I grabbed her, I hugged her, and I kissed her. I said, “Mom, thank you very much.” Why? Because that was a good experience for myself. It gave me a good experience. She loves me more than anything else,
right? So, I learned from her that was a good lesson. It was good that she taught me that you have to learn in life. I said to her, ‘Thank you mom. I appreciate what you did’.

However, it’s his wife that has had the greatest influence on him, …the woman, the wife. Once you have a great, great woman on the side of you, that’s how we both – you’re rolling, you’re going to the level that I’m so thrilled. My role model is my wife. She put me – I learned a lot from her.

Anderson strongly expressed his opinion on the importance of being involved in your child’s education,

So that’s what I encourage every single parent, that man and woman, I encourage them to go to the meetings, get involved – not that soap opera is good, not that football is good, not that basketball is good. I mean that part of the life, but the education of the kids is more important.

**Julio’s Story**

Julio grew up in Mexico, the fourth of eleven children. He has a ninth grade education. He met and married his wife in Mexico, migrating to California in search for a better life and opportunities. They have three children who attend school in this school district. Julio described his life in Mexico as a child,

Well, in my case I have a really bad experience there [as] a young boy. Around me, I have a lot of friends they got a high education. They got [a] program in my little town where I live in Mexico supported by USA women. They have, you know, Hacienda…The ranch and they have poor kids. They support kids they don’t have no father, no families. Yes, orphans, and they got some help for the
[children] because she was the owner of the Hacienda. So, beside that and the same place I live there with my [parents] with my brothers. But, I was so close to these guys – friends. But they got opportunity to study. In my side, I can’t study, and I want to because it was, for me, interesting for me to learn, but I don’t have opportunity. I had to work, I worked from when I was almost six, seven years to help out my father in the farm. So I did the best for me and worked until the ninth grade, that’s what I did. …I don’t have the opportunity to continue. I worked hard and helped my two sisters to be teachers. I was working in Guadalajara for a while. I had a [job] to make more money, but still I was not happy for that. So, this is the experience I got... So, when I came over here, I was working so hard, and I don’t make no money – just for my body. So, when I got my family the first thing I think – me and my wife, we are going to focus on our kids. Maybe our time has passed. I don’t say like it’s done but [we’re] going focus to what will happen to them...I look in help for everywhere, but most I will focus on my kids to be studying hard to see what happens in the future for them...

He expressed his regrets, once again, about not being able to complete his education. He speaks more about the boys from the Hacienda and that, if he had similar support, he would have accomplished more in his life,

Then, when they finish their education, [became] be a teacher, be doctors, engineers. So, I saw how they work over there, and I would like to be in there. But no, I can’t, because this is for some[body] else. But, my father said, “They can’t do nothing for me.” And another thing, I [had] nobody behind me to show me how to do this. I can do something else, maybe not high but I never had
nobody behind me. Even [when] I came over here, I was so young, seventeen years old. If somebody was behind me to tell me, you know you can do this, what you want to do, I [would be] doing it. But nobody was – nobody told me anything, and I was working everywhere, the construction, the restaurants, driver – well, all kinds of jobs. *Mil usos* (a thousand uses).

Julio described how he helps his children with their homework,

In my case, we make a plan. When it’s a matter of the school, I ask how they are [doing] in school first, and they say if they have any problems or no. So, I ask a second question, if they have a lot of homework. They say “no” or “yes” or “I have a project.” But, sometimes I have to take them to the library because they have some material we don’t have. And, I let these kids rest when they come home. If they want to do their homework later on, I ask “how long do you think you’re going to finish?” and they say, “it’s not going to take me too long, they’re going to take me an hour, hour and half.” I say, “well, if you finish your homework after you eat, you want to go rest and then start working on your homework is okay, but if you want to start, I want to give you time to play games on your computer or on your system.” And that’s the deal we make most of the time and that work[s] for us.

He elaborated on the amount of time he allows his children to play on their computers,

A little, like an hour and half. Sometimes a couple of hours, but I split it. They will not be straight because it’s sometimes too much time. Sometimes…I make
excuses and I take [them] out of the house to go to some place or walk in a mall or the park or somewhere.

Julio explained the importance for him to attend meetings and school events,

Okay, in my case, to be in the meetings or open houses or any events in the school is really important for us. Because, our kids they [see]…our interest in them to be – we are going to know how they’ve been. So, sometimes, “okay my dad is behind me all the time.” Yes, they know we care. So, we have a lot of communication with my kids, her mother and me, and most of the time we are in school. Normally, if we can go [to] any meeting, we ask to speak with the teacher of the kids. But, now, if you miss a meeting, it’s really easy to see what happened in the system or the computers. So, we have the telephone or the email of the teacher that we can ask.

Julio expressed understanding the work of educators as he describes feeling welcomed at his children’s school,

…We have to understand the principal. The teachers have a lot of work and sometimes it’s not because they don’t want to attend. It’s because you make a program, and sometimes the program doesn’t match with the meeting [time] with a father or something. But, sometimes we have something to do, and that’s why we ask for the specific time, and that’s maybe why people feel uncomfortable because of that. We have to understand that teachers have a lot of kids with different ideas. Some kids, they live with problems and kids absorb this too, the problems of the fathers. So, I think our problems – it is very important to be involved with them. No matter how hard it is. Sometimes, I have really a bad
situation, and I try to make that my kids don’t see my situation because it’s not [their] problems. I want the[m] to be all right, focusing in school. In the school, I understand teachers can deal maybe with all the class. But, there’s only one kid to make a big difference and that kid making worse the whole class. And, you have to understand that too…I told my wife you have to understand [the] teacher, they can[‘t] control in the classes. Because it’s too many different things, you have so little, so don’t be so picky.

Julio reflected on how he role models for his children, taking classes at the adult school. He went to school for two reasons, “For myself and in order I can help my kids.” He also expresses how he protects his children from the big problems of life,

In a case, I had to take some classes – and not for helping my kids. They don’t need too much help. They are alright. In adult school…Yes, and they see me, I do my work and I show my work as I do that. “But, I made a mistake to not go before, so don’t follow. Go straight and do the best.” I [get] a lot of experience over there because I see young kids working for technical diplomas in high school. And, I tell my kids what could happen. Th[ese] kids is working for high school, but they should be finished before. Sometimes I let them you know about little problems…so they don’t think too much. For example, if I don’t have [money to] take them to [the] zoo or Disneyland or whatever, at least they are not aware I’m not spending because I don’t have money because I have these problems. I say, I don’t have the time, but later on maybe I have the times. It’s going to happen and we plan to take them... But, at that time [we] will not let these kids to know my problems or have my problems.
Julio described the lessons he teaches his children,

In my case, I tell my kids that right now, that work is chang[ing] every day. Every second, the technology change[s] too much. I say that, “Right now, the system change[d] a lot for the worst. Every time you go you see computers. Now, we have competition and not with people around you, in the whole world, because we have students from the whole world, in the United States.” So I told my kids…competition is really hard because you compete with the best and the worst students. And here, in the United States with Asian people…because they have a really high education. So, try to do the best for you. Welcome everybody – not just your space, it is our[s], don’t let somebody take it from you.

Julio discussed how he had to teach himself to survive, using his experiences to teach his children,

…My father had no education. We are a big family. My father didn’t have the time to give us a message on how to continue our life. Yes, he goes to work and bring the food and that’s it. Just sleep and work. He didn’t have plans for the future. Because of that, I had no new shoes most of the time. What I got is used from somebody else, like from my big brother. And even the clothes.

We explained to my kids things like that. I [take] my kids over there, still, right now. To show them around how it is…how people live. And I told them how [it] was to go to school for me. We get right up, 4 o’clock on the morning to take the first class at 7 o’clock [in] math. And, walk a way five kilometers, two miles and a half, everyday. Raining or not, the weather is. I explain to my kids that I never missed a day in class, never, no matter what. And they don’t miss no classes here
either. My wife and I had one day an argument because one of our kids was sick. And she don’t take the other kid because the other kids was sick. And I said, “No, no, no! That not work like that. He’s sick he stays. But he has to leave. It’s school. Imagine he was sick for a week, and then he go sick for another week. So, it was two weeks. No!” and my wife is like, “Yes, you are right. It will never happen again.” Yes, life for me is with the wrong people. Let me survive. I learn[[ed] other things. I know all kinds of jobs. How to wrap up food. I drive, nobody taught me to drive, I learned myself. I don’t know if it was good to learn by myself. It happens.

The Funds of Knowledge imparted to him was from his grandmother, who told stories. “She told us stories to learn.” He continues to tell stories to his children in order to teach them. He lightheartedly recalled her stories,

…my little town where I lived, you can hear all kinds of stories. But most of the stories we have over there are monster stories, like Llorona (the Weeping Woman), that was number one. If you don’t be a good kid, then the Llorona comes and pick you up…They give us stories like somebody is hanged over there, so don’t cross over there because…things like that. When I was a little boy, I was everywhere. Everywhere by myself I don’t know where I was. In my mind I was ok, but jumping everywhere. When I was seven or eight years old, my father sends me to another ranch like a mile away. No light or nothing. By myself…I was crying because I was so scared. I went for masa for the tortillas, because, at that time the machine was broke[n]. I was so embarrassed because that was supposed to be for women. So, I was in my burro, to go over there but, I don’t see
anything. Just the animal, burro, walking itself…And, I see a little light over there and I was, ‘ok, over there’. Most of the time I was so scared and crying.

When I tell my kids, I tell them how I was, where I was, what time and what I did. Julio was able to stay out of trouble by playing soccer. He involves his children for the same reasons,

I involve my kids too. I teach them... I teach my kid[s] on how to play soccer and always don’t [get] involve in bad things. I was vice-president for Fathers in Schools too, to be in a lot of meetings. So, [if] I have a time, I will be there.

Anyway, my wife and myself, we try to work. Sometimes, she is on nights and I am on days or vice-versa so someone don’t leave the kids at home. It’s not easy, but we have to do it because we don’t have another. That is the only way we could do that. We don’t want to leave our kids with other people. Never did we leave them with other people to take care of.

Julio discussed two recommendations for fathers to be involved in their children’s education,

So, if fathers they really want to know how their kids are, recommend to go (meetings and conferences). But, if they can’t, they can go online, and they can find out how the kids are. And, we can get information to help the kids behind in classes. So, I think that’s all I have to say. I have another suggestion to be involve[d] by fathers in school. I am [happy] for my kids that they have reconocimientos, (recognition). Okay, this is the only way some fathers get involved because they feel like some kids will see something. So, I think they should they do this for every student. Some student[s] can get anything like to ask
somebody to pick up the trash, something like that. No matter – anything, little thing to make it important [for] that student, to be early in school, to help the teacher to close the doors or windows, anything, something. And that way whether they go the first time, the kids going to [help with] something. Maybe the kid is going to feel like “yes, I can do this.” And, maybe someday they’ll give us something if we read a lot, do math well, come early, helping teacher. These things – the kids feel – and the father, mostly the father. The kids know that it’s easy to do this, close the door, open, or help the teacher, or bring the paper inside. That, anyway, they can do it. But the father, when they hear – “Oh, my kids participate!”

**Summary**

Open coding was utilized to notate potential relevance throughout the process of gathering data as each transcript was reviewed and is described in Chapter 5. Merriam (2009) stated, “Assigning codes to pieces of data is the way you begin to construct categories. After working through the entire transcript in this manner, you go back over your marginal notes and comments (codes) and try to group those comments and notes that seem to go together” (p. 179).

Saldana (2013) suggested that a copy of the research questions is kept nearby in order to maintain a focus on coding decisions. Saldana (2013) submitted that Axial Coding extends Open Coding, moving toward Selective Coding and leading to an accurate development of themes. As themes were developed, each research question was referenced and is demonstrated in Table 4.1, resulting in the grand story.

Table 1.1 The Grand Story

86
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Support for Education</th>
<th>Supports and Obstacles for Participation</th>
<th>Primary Influence</th>
<th>Funds of Knowledge</th>
<th>Recommendations for Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zapata</td>
<td>Sits down with daughters, teaching them how to problem solve.</td>
<td>Owns his own business, has time flexibility.</td>
<td>Mother.</td>
<td>Learned good people skills from his mother.</td>
<td>Suggested that teachers approach fathers and explicitly ask them to help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Nicaragua, raised in California.</td>
<td>Utilizes Google.</td>
<td>This city, as a community, is welcoming.</td>
<td>His father was absent from his life.</td>
<td>Learned to be in touch with his emotional side.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobby</td>
<td>Wife helps his daughters with their homework.</td>
<td>Works in the family business, has time flexibility.</td>
<td>Parents.</td>
<td>His father is a sobador, Mexican bonesetter, he is a sobador.</td>
<td>Recommended that teachers simply ask fathers for help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised in Los Angeles.</td>
<td>Volunteers and involved in committees.</td>
<td>The school is welcoming.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Learned how to be a father from his father.</td>
<td>Suggested a room at the school is designated for fathers only to meet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated from a private high school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learned generosity from his father.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both parents spoke Spanish.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis</td>
<td>Attends school events.</td>
<td>Works in family business, flexibility of time.</td>
<td>Parents.</td>
<td>His father is a barber, he is a barber.</td>
<td>Recommended that options were available for fathers to choose which events they can/will participate in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised in the same city the study took place.</td>
<td>Does not volunteers at school or participate in committees,</td>
<td>Feels welcomed at the school.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Learned social skills/people skills from his father.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated from high school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learned that it was okay to make mistakes as long as lessons were learned.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both parents spoke Spanish.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attributes feeling welcome due to the community.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Learned generosity, to be helpful and respectful from his</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dionicio</strong></td>
<td><strong>Works to support his family.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Work schedule prevents him from participating in school committees.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Feels welcomed at the school.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Father taught him how to work in the fields; plant, sharpen tools, milk the cows, and use tools to chop.</strong></td>
<td><strong>He found it difficult to make recommendations, finding it difficult for fathers to attend meetings due to the responsibilities to their jobs and families.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised in Mexico.</td>
<td>Wife does not work, helps children with homework, is involved in committees.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated from high school in Mexico.</td>
<td>Attends school events.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started <em>secundaria</em> (equivalent to community college), did not complete.</td>
<td>Studies with the children; sight words and test preparation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both parents spoke Spanish.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Anderson** | Involved with children’s homework, utilizing the internet or contacts the teachers when necessary. | Recalled a time when he felt unwelcomed; he was not able to make contact with the principal without an appointment. | Wife. | His mother taught him how to be independent. | Recommended that fathers put aside distraction, television and sports, making their children a priority. |
| Raised in Los Angeles. | Attends school events. | | | | |
| Graduated from high school in Los Angeles. | Participates in district and school committees. | | | | |
| Single parent home, mother spoke Spanish. | | | | | |

| **Julio** | Involved with children’s homework by setting aside tie to work. | Feels welcomed at the school. | He taught himself to survive. | He stated, “…my father didn’t have the time to give us a message on how to continue our life. He didn’t have plans for the future.” | He recommended that teachers give awards to their children as often as possible, this will bring the fathers to the school. |
| Raised in Mexico. | He asks questions about their assignments. | | He considers himself a man with *mil usos*, thousand uses. | | |
| Moved to California at the age of seventeen. | Takes them to the library for resource materials. | | | | |
| Ninth grade education. | | | | | |
| Both parents spoke Spanish. | | | | | |
Polkinghorne (1991) stressed “When the self is thought of as a narrative or story, rather than a substance or thing, the temporal and dramatic dimension of human existence is emphasized” (146). Telling their stories in raw form, passionate and unembellished, Zapata, Bobby, Louis, Dionicio, Anderson, and Julio demonstrated the emphasis of their existence in the role they play as Latino fathers preparing their children for educational success. Beyond the grand themes generated from our discussions, other commonalities existed among the men that resonated. They were men of pride, intelligence, and tenacity revealed by their uninhibited willingness to share their stories. From varying backgrounds, they overcame life obstacles whether it was the absence of a father, poverty, the inability to complete their educational goals, or mandatory bussing.
Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the role of fathers as a positive influence on their children’s educational success and setting the pathway to college. Schneider, Martinez, and Owens (2006) found that parent participation prior to entering formal education is one of the most important factors in school success. There is a gap in the literature about the roles and perceptions of Latino fathers. This study adds to the limited body of research on this topic by examining six fathers’ perceived role in supporting their children’s education.

This study provides context for educators and community members by expanding research knowledge about an authentic family-school partnership, utilizing fathers as an untapped resource. Because traditional expectations of parental involvement use dominant cultural stereotypes, Latino parents have been characterized as less engaged than their White counterparts.

A specific source of support investigated here are Funds of Knowledge, the invisible strategies that Latinos use to motivate their children to be academically successful (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). However, there has been no research to describe the Funds of Knowledge that they convey to their children about education and success in schools. This study addresses that gap in literature and the problem of educators seeing Latino fathers as uninvolved in their children’s education. It further helps to debunk traditional views noted by Zarate (2007) from educators who defined parental involvement to include monitoring the gate, sewing curtains for a classroom, attending and staffing school events, and fundraising.
The design of the study utilized qualitative methods, developing a narrative analysis of six, self-identified Latino fathers with elementary school aged children. This study used focus groups as a way to collect personal stories from Latino fathers regarding their parental roles and actions, supports and obstacles, their role models, lessons learned that are passed on to their children, the level of support they perceive from their children’s school, and the assistance and obstacles that affect an authentic home-school partnership.

The six fathers described their commitments to their children’s education and schools. As volunteers, they were interested in the topic of Latino fathers and their children’s education, so this was not an unexpected finding. However, their values and commitments were far more congruent with what are considered universal values and commitments than those reflected in beliefs about low levels of Latino engagement in schools. The analysis supported recommendations for improving the educational status of U.S. Latino students and their families by identifying perceived obstacles to an authentic family-school engagement and the Funds of Knowledge Latino fathers have that may represent important resources for educational change.

**Research Question 1. How do Latino fathers in this study perceive and support their children’s education?**

Debunking majoritarian stories, which allege Latino parents do not care about educating their children (Yosso, 2006), each father provided at least one instance of how he supports his children’s education. If they were not able to physically help with homework, they supported the process by providing a designated time and place. They were resourceful, taking their children to the library, researching on the Internet, or
utilizing Google. Three fathers indicated that the mother or older sibling helped with their children’s homework, but they helped their children study for a test or checked homework.

Auerbach (2007) maintained minority parents value education, including the silent strategies parents provide such as making sacrifices on behalf of their children’s education. She demonstrated parental roles in a continuum of support: Moral Supporters; Struggling Advocates; and Ambivalent Companions.

1. Moral Supporters – approving, motivating, encouraging, and indirectly guiding with consejos, advice.

2. Struggling Advocates – monitoring, advocating, seeking information, and negotiating for access.

3. Ambivalent Companions – encouraging, communicating, protecting, and occasional assisting on request (Auerbach, 2007).

Julio often guides his children with consejos, showing them where he grew up as a source of motivation to pursue an education, serving his children as the Moral Supporter.

Serving as Struggling Advocates by making the most effort to help their children navigate through the school system; Zapata teaches his children how to problem solve, Dioncio studies with his children by practicing sight words and test prepping, and Anderson will search the Internet or contact his children’s teachers for clarification.

Bobby and Zapata volunteer to chaperone field trips in order to keep a watchful eye on their children, demonstrating the role of the Ambivalent Companion. The recent arrival of Louis’ children in the school district has created some ambivalence in his
involvement, instead *applauding from the sidelines* (Auerbach, 2007, p. 270) defining his parental role as the Ambivalent Companion.

This study sought to determine the level of involvement of Latino fathers in their children’s education. The Latino fathers in this study understood the importance of being involved by attending meetings, volunteering, and supporting their children with their school work at home. Every father recalled the lack of participation of their fathers in their education. They each express their desire to be different than their fathers, as hybrid dads. They described being hybrid dads as a generational change in how young fathers participate in their children’s lives. These terms were used by Louis and echoed in the responses by all fathers.

**Research Question 2. What do Latino fathers perceive as supports and obstacles to an authentic family-school engagement?**

Ferguson (2008) identified the importance of creating a sense of welcome. By allowing all to be involved, parents can help to engage in supporting a child’s education in meaningful ways (Ferguson, 2008). Five fathers declared they always felt welcomed at their children’s school, many times they are able to see the principal without an appointment. However, Anderson recalled a negative experience at his children’s school when he was not able to see the principal without an appointment.

Bobby and Zapata are able to volunteer at their children’s school because they have flexible work schedules. Three fathers attested they were willing to volunteer if their work schedule allowed. Zapata, Bobby, and Anderson participate on school site committees, and two fathers stated that their wives participated. Similar to Bobby and Zapata, Louis has a flexible work schedule, however, he does not volunteer at his
children’s school. As he gains a comfort level as a new parent, he plans to volunteer in the future. All six fathers make the time to attend school events.

Louis and Zapata suggested that the welcoming culture of the community supported the welcoming culture of the schools. This change may be attributed to the characteristics of a large Latino community and program initiatives such as the Promise, a community-based organization that included parents on the advisory board as well as parent committees. Dionicio, Julio, and Anderson mentioned their wives’ involvement in the Promise.

This study sought to identify perceived obstacles and supports from their children’s respective schools. Barriers identified by the fathers were not attributed to the schools’ actions, instead noted as personal barriers such as inflexible work schedules and meetings. They professed their willingness to attend events and meetings if convenient times for meeting were available. Each father was bilingual, three fathers spoke English as their primary language and three fathers spoke Spanish as their primary language, yet, no father identified language barriers as an obstacle for access to their children’s school.

**Research Question 3. What Funds of Knowledge do Latino fathers have that represent important resources for educational change?**

Solorzano and Yosso (2002) explained that the centrality of experiential knowledge draws explicitly on lived experiences such as storytelling. The Latino culture engages in storytelling for survival and liberation (Solarzano & Yosso, 2002). I shared my personal stories of growing up in the same community to develop rapport with the fathers. I also engaged in storytelling to provide an operational definition of Funds of Knowledge.
I shared my story of my father teaching me how to change the tire on my car when I was a teenager, vividly recalling the day. I expressed that for me, this was symbolic of my father teaching me to be independent and to have the ability to take care of myself. I also shared a story about my mother’s generosity to a woman she would encounter frequently. I told the participants that these were lessons that have remained with me throughout different stages of my life; internal strategies that transmit culture and values that I now share with my children.

I explained these as the Funds of Knowledge, the invisible strategies that Latinos use to motivate their children to be academically successful (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Using *dichos*, cultural sayings, in Latino families as a way to teach morals and values and can be used as assets toward academic success (Chavez-Reyes, 2010). Each father in the study described Funds of Knowledge that were imparted to him from his father or mother. Their personal stories exhibited commonalities that resonated about overcoming life obstacles with the tenacity to change the course for their children. Five of the six fathers indicated they received their most prevalent Funds of Knowledge from their mother. The Funds of Knowledge defined by the participants as people skills, social skills, generosity, and the ability to show emotion, kindness, sacrifice, and independence. They all communicated that they share their personal stories with their children as a method to encourage them to do well in school and to be successful in life.

Bobby, Louis, and Dionicio learned the skills of their fathers’ trades: Bobby works as a *sobador*, a Mexican bonesetter, in his family owned business; Louis works as a barber in his family’s barbershop and; Dionicio shared that he learned how to work in the fields planting, sharpening tools, and milking the cows. These skills have carried
them through life; however, it was the internal strategies they learned from their mothers that they share with their children.

Bobby, in particular, shared a story about his mother who would feed the *hobos*. He recalled that these men would come to their door looking for money. His mother would tell them she had no money but could make them something to eat. She would ask them to sit on the steps outside while she cooked tacos for them. In one instance, his older brother sat outside with one of the men, engaging the man in storytelling. Bobby described his mother as generous and that this generosity has carried with him as he works as a *sobador*, working with his clients. He said, “I tend to give myself and help out other people if I can because that’s what I saw. That’s what I grew up with. I contribute that to her.”

Auerbach (2007) says that socio-cultural values should be considered a legitimate component of parent involvement. Enabling families to share information about culture, background, and children’s talents and needs are challenges that need to be met for authentic involvement (Epstein, 2010). Each father engaged in story telling about his childhood into young adulthood. They each shared that they engage in storytelling with their children as lessons and they will continue to tell them stories as they grow up. Their stories were unfiltered extending beyond stories of their fathers, recalling experiences as young boys and at times causing them to be emotional.

Dionicio volunteered why he became emotional during the interview.

In Mexico, you’re really poor, but when the rain, the rivers are full because of all the water. It’s in the middle of the day raining, and then the sun is coming out and everybody is going out to the river jumping, enjoy[ing] - my life was really poor,
but I was really enjoying it. That’s why I start, because I remember that thing.

We don’t have enough to eat, but I enjoy my life.

This study sought to identify Funds of Knowledge the fathers have that serve as important resources for educational change connecting homes to schools. The Funds, or internal strategies, were dispositions imparted to them, serving them in the role they play as fathers as well as men in the community. Their storytelling elucidated the importance to Latinos to share lived experiences, describing the Funds of Knowledge they acquired, increasing cultural wealth as stories continue to be told.

Research Question 4. What recommendations do Latino fathers have for improving the educational status of U.S. Latino students and their families?

Ishamaru (2014) described parents as educational leaders who contribute and help shape the agenda. This study sought to involve fathers, asking for recommendations to facilitate Latino fathers’ involvement. The participants made the following recommendations, directed toward school personnel:

1. Overtly ask fathers to help in the classroom or chaperone a field trip.
2. Provide a variety of options for fathers to choose from.
3. Provide various opportunities to recognize their children’s accomplishments and participation, thereby encouraging fathers to attend events.

Anderson’s advice: “Make your child’s education a priority by putting aside distractions such as television and sports.”

Epstein’s Framework for Family Involvement was developed to help educators describe a more comprehensive school-family partnership (Epstein, 2001; Epstein, 2010).
She identified Decision Making as one of the six types of involvement, saying parents should be included in school decisions for comprehensive programs, developing parent leaders and representatives (Epstein, 2010). Five fathers provided recommendations on how the school could make it easier for fathers to become more involved in their children’s education. Asking fathers to help or participate resonated and was agreed to by the participants. Providing options for meeting times and events and enticing fathers by giving their children recognition awards were also suggested. Dionicio’s concern regarding the difficulty for working fathers to attend events and meetings supported the need for schools to schedule convenient times for meeting. Bobby’s suggestion to provide a room for fathers only was innovative and important.

Implications for Policy and Practice

We have a vested interest in helping Latinos succeed, providing economic, political and societal benefits (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Humphreys, 2009; Nevarez & Rico, 2007). Acknowledging Latino fathers as an untapped resource supports our interest in preparing Latino children for academic success. Valdes (1996) stressed “The dilemma is whether to try to ‘help’, and whether to encourage others to help...” (p. 204). Describing parent engagement programs, Valdes (1996) wrote, “Instead, it is the experts who decide that certain kinds of families need certain kinds of treatment, and it is the experts who are engaged in coercive behavior” (p. 199). Gandara and Contreras (2009) cautioned that the role of the educator might impede academic success when they demonstrate a lack of empathy, bias, and weak relational ties. Based on my experience and this study’s findings, I believe that educators need to redefine how we view parent
involvement or parent engagement of Latino fathers in their children’s schooling from the federal level to the site level.

As this study has demonstrated, Latino fathers have much to offer in the way of influencing their children by taking active roles in their education and imparting their Funds of Knowledge through actions and storytelling. Moving forward, educators need to identify what these activities and Funds of Knowledge are in the Latino community, how they can encourage more fathers in the tradition of storytelling, and expand opportunities and resources responding to the needs described here for respect, considering family schedules, and welcoming behaviors. Further, identifying how districts and schools can use these Funds of Knowledge not only to involve more fathers in school activities, but more importantly, to learn how these Funds of Knowledge can be utilized to support classroom instruction and improve a college readiness culture.

Ferguson (2008) suggests that identifying and targeting resources will increase involvement and create opportunities for effective engagement. Federal policy identifying fiscal resources explicitly targeting the involvement of [Latino] fathers of underperforming students would be an important source of resources. At the district level, prioritizing resources toward increasing the involvement of Latino fathers from Title I funds and the new Local Control Funding Formula should be established. School plans and school site committees need to demonstrate increased parent involvement by creating an authentic school-family partnership as a priority and a means to increase academic achievement.
Recommendations

Valdes (1996) argued, “Programs are directed at families, whether they involve parent education, bringing about parent involvement, or fomenting parent empowerment, are in essence, interventionist. They are designed to change families” (p. 197). The stories and interviews of the participants were insightful, guiding the researcher in providing recommendations, being mindful of not wanting to change families.

Professional development using Funds of Knowledge. Chavez (2010) suggested setting a clear and deliberate agenda for parent involvement throughout the year, during staff meetings. Engaging parents in decision and collaboration must become a priority at the district and school site level. Professional development should include:

1. Identifying Funds of Knowledge that can be identified and contributed by fathers;
2. How educators can encourage fathers to contribute and share their Funds of Knowledge with their children as a method of motivation and creating a positive disposition;
3. How districts and schools can use Funds of Knowledge to involve more fathers in school activities; and
4. How Funds of Knowledge can support classroom instruction and improve a college readiness culture.


Drawing from Ferguson’s Six Principal Areas of Inquiry (2008) professional development should also include revealing and confronting misconceptions about the
roles Latino fathers can play to support their children’s education and preparing educators to engage in two-way partnerships that uncover contextual barriers.

**Provide resources.** The California Department of Education require local educational agencies (LEA), districts and schools, that receive Title I funds must promote parental involvement in schools. Title I funding requires that LEA’s lower the barriers to participation by parents. Similar to Title I funds, the new CA Local Control Funding Formula provides additional resources for low-income families to participate in schools. Prioritizing resources to increase the involvement of Latino fathers by creating opportunities for effective engagement must be a priority.

Terriquez (2013) recommends the employment of cultural brokers. Resources should be utilized to provide a cultural broker, or liaison, to support father’s involvement. Feruguson’s (2008) framework identified common characteristics found in effective programs such as recognition of families’ needs, class, and cultural differences that encourage greater understanding and respect among all involved. Utilizing a cultural broker to serve as a liaison for the parents, educators, and community members will help to support an authentic family-school relationship and, more specifically, increase the involvement of fathers. Utilizing Epstein’s (2010) Framework of Six Types of Involvement, the work of the cultural broker will include:

- Neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families.
- Provide information to all families who need it or want it, not just the few who are able to attend workshops or meetings at the school building.
• Make flexible schedules and various opportunities for parents to attend workshops and meetings. This supports the participants’ recommendations to provide a variety of options for fathers to choose from.

• Provide information that is clear to parents who do not speak English well or do not read well.

• Provide various opportunities for parents to volunteer that is not limited to volunteering during the school day. Further, supporting the participants’ recommendation, provide various opportunities to recognize their children’s accomplishments and participation.

• Inform parents of various resources and opportunities for families and students. For example, Julio attended night school to brush up on his math skills in order to help his children with their homework. Opportunities for tutoring, recreation, health and wellness resources, etc. should be explored and disseminated to the families.

• Finally, provide a neutral space for fathers to meet. Bobby recommended a room for fathers to be identified.

**Incorporate Epstein’s (2010) Framework for Family Involvement.** Epstein (2010) described six types of involvement: Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision-Making, and Collaborating with the Community. Epstein recommended educators utilize the framework as a guide for discussions and to customize plans and actions to create a family-school partnership. Involving Latino fathers with district and school personnel, incorporating Epstein’s (2010) Framework for Family Involvement, plans can be customized based on the differentiated needs and
differentiated cultures of each school site. Acknowledging the challenges in parenting, she recommended that educators help all families establish home environment to support children as students such as:

- **Parenting** - Enabling families to share information about culture and backgrounds, storytelling about their lives, lessons learned, visits to places of the past;

- **Learning at Home** - Linking schoolwork to real life, such as assignments that require students to explore their family history, culture, traditions and, include encouraging, listening, reacting, praising, guiding, monitoring, setting a place and a time, finding resources at the library or Internet, asking questions and engaging in discussion regarding what was learned; and

- **Collaborating with the community** - Including strengths and talents to support students, families, and schools, include that community, meaning all those interested in the quality of education, not just those with children in schools. (Auerbach, 2007).

**Recommendations for Future Research**

1. **Extend the Sample.** Given the small number of fathers studied, increasing the sample of participants by extending the study through surveys or target recruiting is recommended.

2. **Extend Study to Mono-lingual, Spanish Only.** The participants in this study were all bilingual; however, the study was conducted in English.
Fathers who are Spanish speaking, recently immigrated should be studied. The Mexican education system does not parallel the United States system (Valdez, 2006). A study of recent immigrants would provide insight on how to engage newly arrived fathers and their families.

**Concluding Remarks**

There is a swell of literature demonstrating the importance of engaging parents in an authentic family-school partnership (Auerbach, 2007; Epstein, 2010; Ferguson, 2008). As the Latino educational gap persists and the role of Latino fathers becomes more prevalent with an increase in single fathers having majority custody of their children, or reversed roles with the mother working and the father providing the childcare, there is an urgent need to recognize the importance of involving Latino fathers in the education of their children. This study hopes to increase interest in this area.

The participants eagerly engaged in this study, exhibiting a great interest in being part of the bigger picture and increasing the involvement of Latino fathers. Their compelling stories exhibited the high level of trust they had for the researcher as an *insider*. They were all champions for change, hoping to make a difference in not only their children’s lives but in the lives of all the children who attend this district. It was my intent to convey their stories in a way that illuminated their pride, intelligence, courage, and tenacity and to draw the reader to its significance as well as engross the reader with the stories of these men. Their emotions and even tears demonstrated to me the strong influence of their own past toward wanting to make a profound difference in their children’s lives. I have the deepest gratitude toward these fathers who have given of themselves without hindrance. I honor their strength, their fortitude, and their stories.
By providing my personal story to the participants, I helped to develop trust and credibility, personalizing my role as the researcher. My rapport with the participants was illuminated by the honesty and trust the fathers displayed toward me. As educators, we can all strive to become cultural brokers with our parents and community, by engaging in storytelling across cultural differences not only with our parents but also with students and community members. The power of our stories transcends most boundaries.
REFERENCES


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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Reconceptualizing the Role of Latino Fathers in Setting the Pathway to College for Their Children Interview Questions

Research Question 1: How do Latino fathers in this study perceive and support their children’s education?

15. How do you help your child with their homework?

16. What school events do you attend--like parent conferences, back-to-school night, or open house?

17. How often do you get messages sent by the principal? Paper copies, email, website or school newsletters?

18. How often and what kind of parent committees do you join, like School Site Council, English Language Advisory Committee, or PTA?

19. What other kinds of participation do you do to support your children’s education?

Research Question 2: What do Latino fathers perceive as supports and obstacles to an authentic family-school engagement?

1. What does the school do that helps you feel welcome and able to contribute? Can you give me an example?

2. Do you have an example of a time that the school has done that has made you feel unwelcomed or unwilling to participate in your child’s school?

3. Whether you feel welcome or unwelcome, are there any personal obstacles that prevent you from participating in your children’s school?
What Funds of Knowledge do Latino fathers have that represent important resources for educational change?

20. Who had an influence on you in supporting your children’s education?

21. What lessons did your father teach you that you’ve passed on to your children? Your mother? [Structure a comparison.]

22. Do you have any stories from your childhood that describe support you received from your family? Especially your father?

23. If not your father, who provided you with advice or strategies (consejos) that has influenced how you support your children’s education?

What recommendations do Latino fathers have for improving the educational status of U.S. Latino students and their families?

24. What can the school do to make it easier to become involved in your children’s education?

25. Based on our conversation today, what can fathers do to become more involved in their children’s education?
Appendix B: Informed Consent

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
Information about Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study about the role of Latino fathers in setting the pathway to college for their children. This form provides you with information about the study. The study has been approved for conduct by the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona Institutional Review Board (IRB), to comply with federal guidelines for ethical research practices.

Dianna Mercado Beltran is conducting the study for a dissertation supervised by Dr. Nancy Sanders, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. Dianna Mercado Beltran will describe the study and answer any questions about the study and your rights as a research participant. If you have additional questions, you can contact the researchers using the information below.

If you have any questions about research participants’ rights, complaints about the informed consent process of this research study, or experience an adverse event (something goes wrong), please contact the Compliance Office within California State Polytechnic University, Pomona’s Office of Research at (909) 869-4215. Information is also available at the IRB website, www.csupomona.edu/research/irb.

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Your participation is entirely voluntary and will contribute greatly to this research.

Thank you for your willingness to participate.
You are invited to participate in a focus group and follow-up interview about the role of Latino fathers in their children’s educational success.

Purpose of the Study: The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the role of fathers as a positive influence on their children’s educational success. Current research has little information about the role of fathers in their children’s educational success. This study will look at ways that Latino fathers in particular support their children’s educational success.

Researchers: The study is being conducted for a dissertation by Dianna Mercado Beltran, as partial fulfillment of a doctorate in the Educational Leadership Program at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, under supervision of Dr. Nancy Sanders, faculty member and dissertation chair.

Study Methods: This study uses focus groups and follow-up interviews to collect personal stories from Latino fathers regarding their own parental models, lessons learned that are passed on to their children, the level of support they perceive from their children’s school, and an authentic home – school relationship. The focus group and interviews will be conducted in English.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in a focus group of two to four Latino fathers and follow-up individual interview is completely voluntary. At any point you can choose not to answer the questions or to leave. You have the right to request that specific responses are removed from notes and recorded transcripts during the study.

Confidentiality: Your answers will be confidential. Confidentiality means that you will not be revealed as a participant in the study or in any responses that can be attributed to you in a publication or report. We protect your identity by removing any information about individual participants and responses from the data. Pseudonyms will be used for respondent names and other identifiers such as schools that your children attend. No specific answers will be identified with you as a respondent. All responses will be described in reports and presentations only as a father’s response. In addition, members of focus groups will be asked to maintain each other’s confidentiality and not reveal personal information about others in the group.

Permission to Audio Record: You will be asked for permission to record the focus group with a digital recorder to supplement written notes. You indicate agreement by initialing the statement on the consent form below. Recordings will be transcribed for
data analysis and will not be used for any other purpose. They will be erased within 1 year of the focus group.

**Commitment and Compensation:** Your total participation in the study will consist of one focus group, which will last approximately 45-60 minutes, and a follow-up phone call or meeting to clarify and verify information from the focus group.

**Possible Benefits and Risks to participants**

**Benefits.** You will not receive any direct benefits or monetary rewards from participating in this study. Your participation is intended to contribute to the research, providing a lens on the role of the Latino father, and informing schools about how they can support parents for Latino children’s educational issues. Your participation in this study may help you better understand this important topic. You can ask the researcher for a summary of the study findings.

**Risks.** We expect that there are minimal risks of participating in this study. The results of the study will potentially be published in an academic journal, given at a conference, or presented to a district. The risk of accidentally disclosing your identity is minimized by careful procedures of data collection, de-identification, and storage. The risk to you of having your identity associated with the study is minimal given that the topic of parent involvement is of wide interest in education.

Dianna Mercado Beltran, is a principal in the School District. She has no supervisory or reporting responsibilities about information you provide except as required by law. She has designed focus groups and follow-up interviews according to professional standards for ethical research conduct. If you feel coerced or threatened by the request to participate in the study or respond to questions, you may contact Dr. Nancy Sanders, dissertation chair, or the Compliance Office of Cal Poly Pomona’s Office of Research at (909) 869-5105.

**Agreement to Participate in Research Study (Informed Consent)**

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona IRB Protocol #15-0214

**Consent:** I consent to participate in a focus group and follow-up interview for the study *Reconceptualizing the Role of Latino Fathers in Setting the Pathway to College for Their Children.* (See signature line below.)

I also consent to audio recording the focus group to assist with data analysis.

(participant initial here) ______
Your participation in a focus group and follow-up interview is completely voluntary. At any point you can choose not to answer the questions or to leave the focus group. You have the right to request that specific responses are removed from notes and recorded transcripts during the study.

*I have received a copy of the study information and this form for my records.*

Print Participant Name __________________________________________

Participant Signature _________________________________ Date________

*I hereby certify that I have given an explanation to the above individual of the study and its risks and protections.*

Researcher Name _______ Dianna Mercado Beltran ______________

Researcher Signature ________________________________ Date ________

If you have any questions, contact:

Dianna Beltran (909)770-3041, diannacmercado@gmail.com  OR
Dr. Nancy Sanders, (909)489-3511, nmsanders@cpp.edu

Copy to be provided to participant.