PARENTS AND SCHOOLS IN A NEW DIASPORA

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ABSTRACT

PARENTS AND SCHOOLS IN A NEW DIASPORA

The purpose of this study is to find out how public schools accommodate the growing Hispanic school population in a New Hispanic Diaspora in New Jersey, and what strategies Hispanic families and schools adopt to mitigate home-school discontinuity. This study also attempts to find out what constitutes the formation of Hispanic identity among parents and students, and what role ethnic identity plays in the schooling of Hispanic students.

The research methodology used in this study are ethnography and grounded theory which offer opportunities to grasp Hispanics’ points of view, their relation to life, their vision of their world, and their views on schooling and identity. The eleven subjects that were interviewed are first generation Hispanics from Mexico, Costa Rica, and El Salvador. They have lived in this New Hispanic Diaspora for three or more years, and have children attending the schools located in this school district. Each informant was interviewed a minimum of four times for one hour each time. Interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed.

The findings of this research study revealed that: a) The formation of Hispanic diasporic identity follows a developmental progression based on participants shared experiences; b) Hispanic parents’ educational experiences and beliefs influence their children’s education positively because parents view education as the road to economic success and betterment, and negatively because parents are not used to being actively
involved in the education of their children; c) Parents and teachers use numerous strategies to mitigate home school discontinuity; d) Responsive schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora provide accommodations, resources, strategies and programs that address Hispanic parents’ and their children’s needs; and e) Hispanic children live in two parallel worlds and their identity is shaped by their parents, peers and teachers.
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Finally, I would like to thank the informants who so generously volunteered to participate in this study. They not only offered their time but also a wealth of knowledge on the different topics of this study.
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband Oscar for being my study buddy all these years degree after degree; my parents, Raquel and Lito, who gave me support and encouragement from Metán and who learned through international calls about the dissertation process; my friends who were so understanding as to why we could not hang out; and to my Professor, Dr. Juan Cobarrubias for his support, encouragement, and faith in me.
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

An increasing number of Hispanic families are settling down in different areas of New Jersey where there have not been Hispanics before. As this happens, the whole structure of the host community is affected by the new settlers. Consequently, schools in these areas witness a dramatic demographic change in their student population and feel unprepared to face the challenges brought about by the newcomers. In addition, schools, in their search to better serve this new student population, pose insistent questions about who Hispanics are, who they seek to be, and what accommodations they merit.

Gilbert Gonzalez (as cited in Garcia, 2001) has documented that Hispanic children and their families are usually perceived as the foreigners, intruders, or immigrants who speak a different language or dialect and who hold values significantly different from the American mainstream. Confusion and fear often lead to detrimental policies and practices that affect Hispanic students and their families, and ultimately society as a whole.

Indeed, the education of Hispanic students in the United States has reached a crisis stage. Although the number of Hispanics attending public schools has increased
dramatically in recent decades, Hispanic students as a group have the lowest level of education and the highest dropout rate of any group of students. Conditions of poverty and health, as well as other social problems, have made it difficult for Hispanics living in the United States to improve their educational status and to close the achievement gap between Hispanic and White students (Pradon, Waxman, & Rivera, 2002). In fact, the National Center for Education Statistics (2008) reports that Hispanics represent 22.1% of the National dropout rate, while Blacks represent 10.7%, and Whites only 5.8%.

Hispanics are also increasing in numbers at a rapid pace. Their numbers are expected to increase so much that, by the year 2040, Hispanics will make up 25% of the United States population making them the largest minority in the United States. As Gold (2006) explained it, the country “will benefit or suffer with these students as they mature and become a significant force in the economy, culture, and society” (p. 2). For that reason, it would make sense to regard the education of Hispanic students as an investment in the future of our communities. It is necessary to provide Hispanic children with quality education that will help them become not only an integral part of American society and culture, but also active contributors of America’s wealth and growth. To this end, schools need to learn more about Hispanic students and their families in an effort to bridge the differences that exist among them.

In spite of the fact that there is abundant research on what needs to be done to address the educational needs of Hispanic students, there are still gaps in the literature that addresses identity formation among Hispanic parents and their children. There is also scarce research on the strategies that help bridge the discontinuity between Hispanic homes and American schools, and the experiences that influence children’s performance
at school. As a result, teachers and school administrators feel not prepared to deal with the challenges of educating Hispanic students.

Research on the disharmony between home and school practices, particularly for minorities, could have implications for educational policy and programming. It will provide educators and administrators with insights about the schooling of Hispanic students (Gonzalez, Macias, & Tinajero, 2001) and help them satisfy the need to face successfully the challenges of serving culturally and linguistically diverse students. Such knowledge could provide valuable guidelines to give Hispanic students an education that integrates their values, beliefs, histories, and experiences into educational strategies that will contribute to their educational attainment.

For instance, many researchers point out that the discontinuity between home practices and classroom expectations are common explanations of the disproportionate underachievement of some minority groups in American schools. The content of home-school discontinuity reflects the cultural incongruities that exist between a given ethnic group and the mainstream (Macias, 1987). Cultural variance across groups means different language styles, ethnic identities and variable approaches to different issues that characterize Hispanics and the mainstream society.

In conclusion, it is of great relevance to understand the relationship that exists between home and school, the discontinuities that exist between them, and the effects of these discontinuities on Hispanic students’ learning and academic achievement. The more is known about Hispanic families and about students’ experiences, what characteristics they possess as an ethnic group, and what makes up their ethnic identity, the more likely
educational institutions are to develop responsive strategies to improve educational outcomes for Hispanic students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out how public schools accommodate the growing Hispanic school population in a new Hispanic diaspora in New Jersey, and what strategies Hispanic families and schools adopt to mitigate home-school discontinuity, as well as social, economic and language barriers. Moreover, this study attempts to unveil what constitutes Hispanic identity in this new diaspora, and what role ethnic identity plays in the schooling of Hispanic students.

Research Questions

This study attempts to find the answers to the following research questions:

1. What kinds of experiences contribute to the formation of Hispanic identity in this New Hispanic Diaspora in New Jersey?

2. What kinds of schooling experiences do participants bring from their home countries? And how do these experiences influence their children's educational experiences?

3. What kinds of accommodations do schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora provide to Hispanic children and parents to help them overcome cultural, linguistic and social barriers?
4. How do families mitigate home-school discontinuity?

5. How does students' ethnic identity change as a result of social interaction in this school community? Is there a new identity emerging as a result of schooling in this New Hispanic Diaspora?

Significance of the Study

This study provides insights about how we can improve the educational prospects for the growing Hispanic population in American schools, and it describes the process of adaptation that a school district in a New Hispanic Diaspora undergoes in order to successfully meet the needs of its Hispanic students. This study also shows how Hispanic identity changes or consolidates as Hispanics move to the United States, and interact socially with their new environment.

This study is expected to be useful to school administrators, teachers, policy makers, and researchers by contributing to the general body of knowledge regarding the education of Hispanic students. Trying to find answers to questions on schooling and Hispanic identity is necessary because Hispanics and the rest of the United States need to know: what identifies the soon-to-be largest minority in our country; what strategies Hispanic families adopt to mitigate home-school discontinuity; and what strategies school districts implement to better assist Hispanic students. This may also shed light on how the composition of the growing Hispanic population may influence the future of the United States.
Definition of Terms

**Administrator:** The superintendent, principal, assistant principal, and supervisors who are in charge of making administrative decisions in a public school.

**Bilingual Education:** a method of instruction that involves teaching all subjects in school through two different languages -such as in English and Spanish- with varying amounts of time spent teaching each language used in accordance with the program model.

**Bilingual:** Having the ability to speak two languages.

**Coyote:** Someone who specializes in human smuggling, bringing people across the United States border from Mexico for a fee.

**Diaspora:** A settlement of migrants who maintain a strong collective identity and strong ties with their homelands.

**English Language Learners (ELLs):** Students who are learning English as their second language.

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**English Proficient:** Having the ability to read, write, and speak in the English language.

**Hidden Curriculum:** The idea that schools do more than simply transmit knowledge, as laid down in the official curricula, such as unwritten social rules and expectations of behavior.

**Hispanic:** A Spanish speaking person from Latin America who lives in the United States. In this study, the terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably.
Home-School Discontinuity: Incongruence between what has been learned at home and what school teaches.

Latino: A person from Latin American descent who lives in the United States and who may or may not necessarily speak Spanish. In this study, the terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably.

Learning Styles: Different approaches or ways of learning.

Middle School: A school for grades 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Multigrades: One-room schools with one teacher for grades 1-6 or multigrade schools with several teachers, each teaching more than one grade in one classroom.

Native language: Also referred to as Mother tongue. It is the language spoken at home by parents or caregivers.

New Hispanic Diaspora: the settlement of Hispanic families in areas of the United States where previously there has been little Hispanic presence.

Primary School: A school for grades Pre-K, K, 1, 2, and 3

Suro: Spanish word used to refer to water mixed with electrolytes.

Tanda: An association formed upon a core of participants who agree to make regular contributions to a fund which is given in whole or in part to each contributor in rotation (Gama, Medrano, & Medrano, n.d.)

Telesecundaria: A system of distance education programs for seventh to ninth grade students which broadcasts all the lessons via satellite television to rural schools.

T.I.N.: A Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) is an identification number used by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in the administration of tax laws.
Organization of the Study

This study is organized in five chapters. Chapter I includes the statement of the problem, purpose of this study, research questions, and definition of terms. Chapter II focuses on the review of the research literature related to the topic of investigation. The review of the research literature is organized in four parts. The first part, *Home-School Discontinuity* discusses the literature on home and school discrepancies. The second part, *Diasporas* gives an overview on the current research on diasporas and their characteristics. The third part, *Hispanic versus Latino*, discusses what the terms imply and how these terms are used in the United States and in other countries. Finally, the fourth part, *Ethnic Identity Formation* discusses what bonds and factors contribute to identity formation among members of an ethnic group.

Chapter III describes the research methodology, including the theoretical constructs and procedures that were used in this study. Considering that this research project examines the sociological and anthropological aspects that make up a Hispanic community and schooling experiences, the most practical methods for this project are ethnography and grounded theory which offer opportunities to grasp Hispanics’ points of view, their relation to life, their vision of their world, and their views on schooling and identity.

Chapter IV presents the results of the study and interpretations of the findings. Lastly, Chapter V provides a discussion of the findings, regarding the elements that contribute to Hispanic identity formation in this New Hispanic Diaspora, how schools accommodate the growing Hispanic population in a new Hispanic ethnic community in
New Jersey, and what strategies Hispanic families and schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora adopt to mitigate home-school discontinuity.
Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical foundation and rationale for the present study on home school discontinuity, diasporas, and Hispanic identity. The review of the research literature related to the topic of investigation is organized in four parts.

1. *Home-School Discontinuity* refers to the discrepancies that exist between home and school, and the conflict children face in the classroom when teachers expect different behavior without understanding their home background and their native competencies fostered by it. Home-school discontinuity includes the mismatch theory, ecological view, and cultural disparities such as language and ethnic identity that children experience at school.

2. *Diaspora* gives us a view on the current research on diaspora, its common features, the emerging Hispanic diaspora phenomenon and implications of this new phenomenon in Education.

3. *Hispanic versus Latino* gives us a view on what the terms imply and how these terms are used in the United States and in other countries.

4. *Hispanic Ethnic Identity* is subdivided in three parts: (a) *Bonds that Contribute to Identity Formation* can be shared interests which unite Hispanics and create solidarity; shared institutions which are created to pursue common interests; and shared culture which is transmitted through myths and stories. (b) *Contextual Factors that Contribute to Identity Formation* refer to six critical construction sites where identity is construed:
politics, labor markets, residential space, social institutions, culture, and daily experiences describe aspects that are firmly embedded in relationships and institutions and which begin as people’s conceptions and ideas of themselves and others. These conceptions and ideas can be divided into categories of ascription, schemes and status attributions. (c) Group Factors that Contribute to Identity Formation refer to six group assets or characteristics that have implications for identity construction: preexisting identities, population size, internal differentiation, social capital, human capital, symbolic repertories.

Home-School Discontinuity

Discontinuity in the enculturation process is described as the incongruence that exists between what has been learned at home and what school teaches. The problem rises in more culturally pluralistic settings where children whose home culture is radically different from that of the social mainstream, which is the segment of the population generally responsible for the social and educational policies affecting these children (Macias, 1987).

Home-School Discontinuity refers to the discrepancies that exist between home and school that minority children experience at school. These discontinuities between the new, structured school environment and their prior experiences within their families and community have a negative impact on these students’ schooling experience. For instance, Macias (1987) points out that these differences, which often contain cultural elements not
typically recognized by school personnel, contribute to the chronic school problems such as poor school adjustment, achievement, and retention.

Furthermore, erosion of the home-school relationship undermines teaching and learning, particularly in schools serving groups with gaps between their own social experiences and mainstream expectations. For example, children respond to socialization within their home and community and face conflict in the classroom when teachers expect different behavior without understanding their home background and the native competencies fostered by it.

The study of discontinuity in the educational process suggests a combination of theories that appropriately define the various dimensions of the problem. For instance, Delgado-Gaitan's (1987) study in Los Portales unites the mismatch theory with Ogbu's (1978) cultural-ecological theory.

In Delgado-Gaitan's paper (1987), the mismatch theory specifies differences in culture as the source of interaction conflict such as culturally patterned socialization practices between the home, community, and the classroom. However, we must recognize that other important factors may be in operation. Such factors as social class and immigrant status of families are accounted for in the cultural ecological theory. They help explain discontinuities between recent immigrants to the United States and members of the majority Anglo mainstream culture.

The ecological view attempts to explain, for instance, why some immigrant groups do well in school while others do not. Ogbu (1983, as cited in Foster 2004) maintains that there are three types of minorities: voluntary, involuntary, and autonomous. Voluntary minorities are those who
“chose to immigrate to a host country, view the host societies’ institutions, including schools, in terms of opportunity. They take an instrumental approach to schooling and view the schools in terms of what they can gain from them. They likewise view teachers as experts in specific areas and as the source of knowledge they need. Even if they face discrimination, they do not internalize the mistreatment, but rather remain focused on the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge and skills. They are also willing to learn, accept and adapt to the cultural norms of the majority group. They see no threat to their own sense of identity as a result of adopting new behaviors. In fact, they expect to learn new ways as necessary for their success in the host country. In Ogbu’s conception, voluntary minorities are steady academic achievers” (Foster, 2004, p.4).

Involuntary minorities were brought into the United States society through slavery, through colonization, or forced enslavement.

“Because of long periods of discrimination by the dominant society and its institutions, involuntary minorities have developed responses and behaviors that emphasize their distrust of and opposition to the dominant society and its institutions, including schools. In addition, they maintain alternative self-affirming norms and values that maintain boundaries between them and the majority group norms and values that undermine academics. Further, involuntary minorities’ actions and attitudes reflect the fact that they come to school with distinctive cultural and language patterns that distinguish them from the majority cultural behaviors. In fact, they will go so far as to defend their ‘alternative’
behaviors, even though the behaviors—having been disapproved by the school—facilitate academic failure” (Foster, 2004, p.4).

In addition, Ogbu claims that these variables and others create barriers for involuntary minorities and keep them in a position of subordination. Ogbu (1987, as cited in Bolima, n.d.) points out that involuntary minorities develop a “why try” attitude and may be less successful academically than voluntary immigrants. “Also, some involuntary minority groups do not want to give up their cultural identity to “act white” in order to fit into the dominant Euro-American system” (Ogbu, 1987, as cited in Bolima, n.d., para. 11).

“Autonomous minorities are those who may possess ethnic, religious, linguistic, or cultural identity, but are not “subordinated” in the social, economic or political system” (Bolima, n.d., para. 10) They “may have a distinctive racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic or cultural identity that is guaranteed by national constitution or by tradition. They may be victims of prejudice, but are not subordinated groups in a system of rigid stratification” (Ogbu, 1983, as cited in Foster 2004, p.5). According to Ogbu minority groups in the United States in this category include Jews, Amish, and Mormons (Foster, 2004).

Jose Macias’ (1987) paper on Papago teachers and students “describes cultural discontinuities experienced by Papago preschool children and examines the responses of their Papago teachers in helping them cope with the contradictions of their first school experience” (p.364). Macias (1987) also says that “for many children of ethnic minority origin, the transition from home to school in early childhood appears to be a critical period of discontinuity. The way in which cultural disparities -between what has been
learned at home and what school teaches- are dealt with determines to some degree the efficacy of schooling” (p.364)

Reese and Gallimore (2000) state that there are not only continuities and discontinuities between homes and schools when they come into contact, but also over time, as each adapts to the other. Furthermore, findings of their research indicate that changes in home literacy practices, such as reading aloud to children in the preschool years, carried out in response to school expectations, were associated with parent’s own schooling and literacy experiences in their countries of origin.

Research shows that cultural disparities between home and school such as linguistic and cultural differences between students and teachers can be the cause of poor schooling, conflict, and student failure for minority groups. For this reason, it is imperative that we examine more closely the function of language and ethnic identity along with other discontinuities that immigrant children manifest in the classroom.

These disparities raise many complex issues such as the need to consider the negative impact of change, social stratification, conflict, and distrust on home-school relationship. It is important to consider all the issues in order to approach students in a culturally respectful manner; a manner that teachers can utilize to facilitate the learning of students from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Knowledge on home-school discontinuity can help school administrators set goals for parental education, improve parental involvement, and find ways to address the differences that exist between home and school. This knowledge can also help administrators develop strategies to bring parents closer to school and encourage them to become involved in the education of their children.
Hamayan and Freeman (2007) point out how notions of parental involvement vary significantly among families and across cultures. For instance, parents who come from different cultures do not always consider parental involvement important for the success of their children. However, American schools expect parents to keep track of the multitude of classroom and school activities, to respond to numerous queries that are sent home, and to help with homework.

For educated parents who are familiar with how American schools function, the task is easier than for parents who do not speak English proficiently, who are not familiar with the way the school works, or who may feel uncomfortable or inadequate in an unfamiliar culture. In order for parents to become involved and supportive of their children's education, they must not only understand the educational policies, programs, and practices available to their children at school, but they must also feel welcome in the school. Linking the home and the school provides continuity between their home and school lives (Hamayan & Freeman, 2007).

Diasporas

For the Greeks, from whose language the word originated, diaspora meant the dispersal of population through colonization. For Jews, Africans, Armenians, and other peoples the word acquired a more sinister and brutal meaning. Diaspora meant a collective trauma, banishment into exile and a heart-aching longing to return home. During the early modern period, trade and labor diasporas dominated the mercantilist and early capitalist worlds. Today the term has changed again, often implying a positive and
ongoing relationship between migrants' homelands and their places of work and settlement (Cohen, 1997).

Cohen (1997) sees a common element in all forms of diaspora; these are people who live outside their "natal (or imagined natal) territories" and recognize that their traditional homelands are reflected deeply in the languages they speak, religions they adopt, and the cultures they produce. Beginning with the Jewish experience as the original diaspora, Cohen argues that while it is important to take this into consideration, it is also important to go beyond it.

Cohen, (1997) states that there are nine common features of a diaspora, which serve to demarcate the scope of his inquiry.

Table 1

*Common Features of a Diaspora (Cohen, 1997, p. 26)*

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically to two or more foreign regions;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>An idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The development of a return movement that gains collective approbation;</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>a sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.</td>
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As such Cohen (1997) generates a typology to classify diasporas according to their prevalent nature: “victim” diasporas, such as the Armenians; “labor,” such as Indian contract workers; “trade,” such as Lebanese merchants in West Africa; “imperial,” such as British population movements to overseas dominions; and “cultural,” such as Caribbeans living abroad. Each of these categories underline a particular cause of migration usually associated with particular groups of people. So, for example, the Africans, through their experience of slavery, have been noted to be victims of extremely aggressive transmigrational policies, or in the case of Indians, they are seen to be part of labor diasporas because of their involvement with the colonial system of indentured labor. The author acknowledges that these categories are not mutually exclusive, and at any given moment one diasporic group could fall into different categories.

Sheffer (2003) also points out that the concept of diaspora is a long standing phenomenon whose roots are in antiquity, some during the Middle Ages, and some in modern times. Essentials aspects of this phenomenon are the unending cultural social economic struggles and especially the political struggles of these dispersed ethnic groups, permanently residing in host countries away from their homelands. Diasporans reside in host countries away from their homelands but maintain their distinctive identities and connections with their homelands and other dispersed groups from the same nations (Sheffer, 2003).

Wortham, Murrillo, and Hamman (2002) indicate that Hispanic diasporas are a new demographic phenomenon. These new Hispanic diasporas place pressures on host communities, both to develop conceptualizations of Hispanic newcomers and to provide needed services. These pressures are particularly felt in schools. For instance, in some
new Hispanic diasporas the percentage of Hispanic students in local public schools has risen from 0 to 30 or even 50 percent in less than a decade.

The coordination of institutions, existing power relations, and socio-demographic trends are initiating movements that, up to a few years ago, were unimaginable. In other words, small to midsize towns in the United States are beginning to resemble the border towns of the Southwest.

The impact that Hispanics have had in places that were mostly “White” is enormous. For instance in DeQueen, Arkansas the Hispanic population has exploded in the last few years. They have filled all jobs and they have brought wives, children, and extended families. Similar situations have taken place in distant states and regions as Maine, Utah, Oregon, Florida, Minnesota, Nebraska, Tennessee, Iowa, Carolinas, and Georgia (Wortham, Murillo, & Hamman, 2002).

The dynamics in the formation of new diasporas are more or less constant. The migration to a particular town or city is always motivated by job availability. First, a group of immigrants (males) go to a place to find jobs. Once they have found one, they send messages to their compadres, usually from the same town or region, who immediately start to migrate to that particular place. A second group mostly made up of women, children and younger men follows them as part of the family reunification process.

Hispanic diasporas transform the processes of educational policy formation and implementation, processes through which host communities and newcomer Hispanics struggle to define themselves and to meet the educational needs and opportunities brought by new Hispanic students. Most schools in the New Hispanic diaspora are unsure
about what to do with Hispanic children, and their emergent responses are alternately cruel, uninformed, and contradictory (Wortham, Murillo, & Hamman, 2002).

The schools, churches, banks, and the local establishments have been the object of redefinition. “The local debates over the characteristics and functions of the police, the role of local businesses, and the presence of Spanish-language insertions in the main local newspaper reflect the controversial crossroads in which the city and county school districts find themselves” (Wortham, Murillo, & Hamman, 2002, p.102). This redefinition of institutional roles and responsibilities has many faces, but one of the most important is that all of these institutions have become mediators in the process of incorporations of Hispanic immigrants into the local society.

Many migratory dynamics have brought challenges for educational policy making. “It is not merely negotiating the process of Spanish-speaking children in the classrooms, the changing relations in the schools, and the troubles of the teachers facing novel forms of cultural diversity that matter. Rather, the new demography brings crucial challenges for how curriculum and instruction are and should be defined” (Wortham, Murillo, & Hamman, 2002, p.202).

Hispanic versus Latino:

When using either name, Hispanic or Latino, it is important to consider what they entail. The complexity of Hispanic/Latino identity is also highlighted by the fact that Hispanics/Latinos do not feel identified with the term that has been imposed to them.
To begin with, the modern use of the term Hispanic originated by the need of the U.S. government to count its ever increasing number of Spanish speaking people. The U.S. government realized that these Spanish speaking people did not have any unifying physical characteristics such as color of skin, texture of hair, shape of eyes, and so forth. As such, these Spanish speakers could not be categorized as members of a single race or religion.

Indeed, Hispanics are a composite of different races that have been intermingled for centuries. In other words, many of the people who are called Hispanics belong to different races. For instance, in Argentina there are a significant number of Italians, in Chile, it is possible to find Germans, in Paraguay Asians, and so forth. “There is no single discernable race in Latin America but, rather, a veritable mélange of races and racial mixtures” (Gracia, 2000, p.12).

Similarly, the term “Latino/a” is widely used to refer to persons of Latin American descent, regardless of their ancestry. Thus, the children of persons of Polish-Jewish descent born in Latin America, who immigrate to the United States, and their children, are considered Latinos/as. African Cubans and their children who live here are also considered Latinos. All descendants of pre-Columbian populations from Latin America who were part of the Spanish Colonial Empire are also considered Latinos/as.

According to Abalos, D. (2007) the term “Hispanic is often considered a safe term to identify a people from Latin America origin since it was officially blessed by the Census Bureau in 1970. By the 1980 Census, ‘Hispanic’ became a fixture in official government forms for applications for school, employment, and general assistance” (p.73).
Gracia, (2000) points out that the United States government used the terms Hispanic/ Latino as an attempt to count its Spanish speaking citizens and as a new category other than White, Black, Native American, or Asian. Thus, the term Hispanic was included on all government forms and applications requiring such information. This practice, however, has lead to some additional confusion, since the other categories White and Black, refer to race, while Hispanic was intended to refer to a cultural or ethnic group.

Moreover, it is in the United States that the terms Latino and Hispanic are often misapplied and confused. The terms mean different things to different people. Both Hispanic and Latino carry contradictory meanings: positive when linked to culture (understood in terms of ways of life or as concrete cultural/artistic productions) by, for example, minority leaders, educators, and politicians. Sometimes the label may have negative connotations when placed in the context of what the mass media and the average person associate with them: drug abuse, low income, high incidence of AIDS, high fertility, school dropouts, criminal behavior, high rate of poverty, high proportion of families headed by women, large numbers of welfare recipients, among others (Gracia, 2000).

The problem also arises because there are people who reject any name which unites them with other groups of Hispanics. The term Hispanic alone has no clear connotation; that is a clear set of properties shared by the things it names. For instance, there is not a single set of characteristics that are shared by all Hispanics such as territorially, linguistically, culturally, racially, genetically, or pertaining to a class. Moreover, the term Hispanic applies to Spaniards, and thus can be used to refer to Latin
Americans only secondarily or derivatively. This connotation “perpetuates a relation of dominator-dominated between Spaniards in particular and Iberians in general, on the one hand, and Latin-Americans and Latinos/as on the other” (Gracia, 2000, p.16).

The term Latino is similar to the objections to the term Hispanic. The only difference is that Latino does not include Iberian countries in the designation. Because of this, what the term implies is too narrow to be of use. Nonetheless, if the term Latino is meant to mean of Latin origin, as opposed to Anglo-Saxon, then Iberians have as much right to the name as do Latin-Americans and American Latinos. Matters have been aggravated because of bureaucratic efforts on the part of U.S. government agencies since the 1970s to impose the term Hispanics or Latinos without proper acknowledgement and respect for the legitimate differences of various groups lumped together under the term.

For example, a Latino or Hispanic may be an immigrant or someone born in the United States; may be fair-skinned or dark-skinned; may be a professional or a day laborer; may speak Spanish, English, be bilingual, or not speak Spanish at all; may be religious or not. Although the terms Hispanic or Latino are unifying terms meant to include all people who share a common Latin American or Spanish ancestry, at the same time the terms denote the great diversity that exists among Hispanics with regards to race, class, country of origin, accent, cultural distinctiveness, educational level, immigration status, and reasons for coming to the United States.

Some philosophers argue that being a Hispanic or Latino does not depend on a culture because it fails to demark what Hispanic/Latin culture is and what is not. It is difficult to pinpoint a particular Hispanic/Latino culture since there are so many Latin American countries that have different cultural practices, traditions, and traits. Some
Anglo-Americans may talk about Hispanics who share the Spanish culture. However, they do not take a minute to define what Spanish culture consists of, or if the Catalan and Basque cultures are also included, or the Mexican, Aztec, Mayan, Mexican American, and Puerto Rican should also be taken into consideration.

Apart from not having a common culture, not all Hispanics/Latinos speak Spanish as their first language. For instance, there are some Bolivians who speak Quechua, Mexicans who speak Nahuatl, or Paraguayans who speak Guaraní, and there are even lots of different varieties of Spanish accents, vocabulary, and syntax in the Spanish Language. The Linguistic aspect is not something that can characterize all Hispanics or Latinos.

Nevertheless, the Spanish language becomes the only characteristic that can be used to identify Hispanics. The linguistic background that the majority of Hispanics share in the Spanish Language can be considered a powerful unifying force (Fox, 1996). According to the definition provided by Dictionary.com, the terms Hispanic and Latino can be used interchangeably to refer to people from Latin America who live in the United States, but only Hispanic and not Latino can be used to refer to people from Spain.

Ethnic Identity Formation:

Ethnic identity formation is related to ethnic self identification. This term refers to the sense of oneself as a member of an ethnic group, possessing attributes common to that group. According to Bernal and Knight (1993), ethnic identity is an important domain of the self-concept similar to people’s central social identities. They define ethnic identity as
a set of self-ideas about one’s own ethnic group membership, which includes knowledge, feelings, and preferences about one’s ethnicity.

The construction of ethnic identity is a complex and multifaceted process. “It relies heavily on oral history and personal testimony highlighting the experience of individual and small groups” (Benmayor & Skotnes, 2005, p. 3). Similarly, Cornell and Hartmann (1998) propose a constructionist approach that focuses on the way ethnic and racial identities are built, rebuilt, and sometimes dismantled over time. This approach places interactions between circumstances and groups as they create and shape their own identities. Ethnic groups are active agents that make and remake their own identities endlessly. At the same time, group members are bonded together by different factors which consist of different kinds of bonds that hold group members together.

Bonds that Contribute to Identity Formation

Ethnic or racial group members know a boundary exists and see themselves as occupying one side of that boundary. Their awareness as members of a group different from the rest is what influences their actions and bonds them as a group. “Although the bonds of awareness alone are weak, there are other bonds that may unite group members to one another and create a more substantial and potent solidarity. Three such bonds are particularly important: shared interests, shared institutions, and shared culture” (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, p.86).

Shared interests. Some ethnic and racial identities are rooted largely in shared political, economic, or status interests. In many cases, what makes ethnicity important to group members is the interests that it serves, whether the pursuit of jobs, resistance to
public policies that are seen as damaging, the protection of rights and privileges from the
claims of other groups, or something else. To say that these identities are rooted in shared
interests suggests that ethnic groups see that they have common issues at stake and this
perception is fundamental to group identity and solidarity (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998).

*Shared institutions.* Groups whose members have common interests often
organize in various ways to pursue those interests. They create more or less exclusive
institutions which are sets of social relations organized specifically to solve the problems
group members face or to achieve their objectives. Such institutions may include
everything from extended families to credit association and to political parties. These
group members are bound together in part by their dependence on and common
participation in these institutions (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998). Those institutions not
only help group members solve life problems but also embed their group identity in
organized sets of social relations.

*Shared culture.* Group members may also be bound to one another by their
participation in a common culture. By this we refer to a set of more or less shared
understanding and interpretations of the world around them that include ideas about what
is important and what is real, strategic, and stylistic guides to action. Such ideas and
guides may be embedded in myths and stories, expressed openly in ritual activity, or
communicated implicitly in extended process of socialization, learned through shared
experience, or sustained in other ways. They may not only provide conceptual
interpretations of the world at large and guides to action in that world, but also specify
and exalt the identity of the group. What links group members to one another in such
cases is the perception that to a large degree they think alike, or at least view aspects of
their own lives and certain critical features of the world similarly (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998).

Each of these – interests, institutions, and culture- offers a different potential basis of group attachments. Interests are the least dependable of the three, being most dependent on outside factors. Bonds of interest may be strong, but they are also fickle. Conditions change, and suddenly the shared interests that bound people together are not there anymore. Institutions tend to be a somewhat stronger foundation for group identity because they embed that identity in sets of social relations over which the group exercise some control (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998). Their strength comes also from the fact that they not only offer a reason to act but also facilitate action. Culture tends to be stronger still because it involves a conceptual scheme for making sense of the world (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998).

Hispanics/ Latinos in the United States share interests, institutions, and culture that erase separate national backgrounds, create a new identity, and make them be part of the same ethnic community. Thus, Chicanos, Cubans, Dominicans, Colombians, Puerto Ricans, and so forth, share commonalities that make them become close and transform them in members of the same community (Fox, 1996). This connectedness among Hispanics/Latinos is possible thanks to the media such as newspapers, television, magazines, and the internet. For instance, Benedict Anderson (1991) explains that the role of print language in imagining a community is of great importance; particularly in a society to which the reader may or may not belong, but can recognize, because it helps to create an imagined community where fellow members do not know each other but know of each other’s existence. The power of Imagined Communities ultimately lies in its
applied resonances. The force of the argument of an "imagined community" implicates each of us in compelling notions of identity and belonging to a community and always knowing that we are connected to other people like us (Anderson, 1991).

What is more, as Ana Veciana-Suarez (as cited in Fox, 1996) explains, "What Spanish-Language media do well is to serve as liaison and window between the different groups that make up Hispanic United States. In sum, the Hispanic media contribute to the construction of the Hispanic nation in at least three ways: by establishing the imagery of the imagined community, by providing a livelihood for an important group of professionals as Hispanics" (p.65), and possibly in limited ways, by mobilizing listeners or readers to take joint action. And the Spanish media also contribute in a fourth way, by helping develop the Hispanic nation's continent wide dialect peculiarly adapted to its North American environment (Fox, 1996).

Fox (1996) says that the Hispanic community is something that is being made right here in the United States. "It is not an ethnic identity that Spanish-speaking people bring with them when they arrive but something they create in response to conditions here in this country and is shaped by U.S. institutions ranging from the structure of the telecommunications industry to the practices of art galleries and museums" (Fox, 1996, p.239). "It is the creation of a solidarity group based on partly invented and partly real ethnic distinctions as a way to confront perceived injustice or simply to get ahead" (Fox, 1996, p.239).

This idea of communities and solidarity can further be supported by Flores & Benmayor (1997) who say that "communities become essential foci for solidarity and for the struggle to claim and expand existing rights" (pp.60, 61). Flores and Benmayor
(1997) go on to say that Hispanics’ cultural citizenship consist on a shared culture that brings them together in the cause for social justice and in the fight against discrimination and prejudices. They usually become the victim of police oppression, of labor exploitation, xenophobia, cultural arrogance and poor education. “Latino identity is in part shaped by discrimination and by collective efforts to achieve social gains and recognition for Latinos and their culture” (Flores & Benmayor, 1997, p.58).

Cultural citizenship offers Latinos the possibility of legitimizing demands made in their struggle to enfranchise themselves to achieve legal, political, and economic rights and opportunities. In this sense, cultural citizenship refers to the right to be different in terms of race, ethnicity, or native language with respect to the norms of the dominant national community, without compromising one’s right to belong and participate in the nation’s democratic processes (Rosaldo & Flores, 1997 as cited in Flores & Benmayor, 1997).

In other words, Latino cultural citizenship is part of the Latino identity and involves the claiming of membership in America, and the remaking of America anew. It “refers to the right to be different (in terms of race, ethnicity, or native language) with respect to the norms of the dominant national community, without compromising one’s right to belong, in the sense of participating in the nation-state’s democratic process” (Flores & Benmayor, 1997, p.58).

Cultural citizenship is a concept that helps comprehend the relationship between cultural practices and demands for cultural rights and new citizenship movements. Latinos are not only entering society, they are reshaping it, remolding it in their own image. The world that they are seeking to create is neither a replication of the old
countries nor assimilation into the host society; rather, it is a renegotiation of what it means to be a citizen with a distinct Latino infusion into the defining fabric of the United States.

At the same time they become empowered to fight against the long American tradition to discriminate newcomers based on their race, ethnicity, language, and culture. For example, discussions of race in the United States tend to be cast in terms of White or Black extremes. The dichotomy eclipses the complexities of the Latino experience, which consist of a historical fusion of mixing of racial and ethnic groups, from indigenous native groups to African, European, and Asian.

However, their national identities are shaped as they enter the United States. Latinos unite as they see commonality of history and interests. Being Hispanic is to connect the present with the past. Hispanic shared history and what they have in common is what make their identity take shape (Gracia, J. 2000).

*Contextual Factors that Contribute to Identity Formation*

According to Cornell and Hartman (2000), there are six critical construction sites that contribute to identity formation: politics, labor markets, residential space, social institutions, culture, and daily experiences. Each of these sites is an arena in which identity construction occurs. It is a place where social actors make claims, define one another, jockey for position, eliminate or initiate competition, exercise or pursue power, and engage in a wide array of other activities that variously encourage or discourage, create, or transform, and reproduce or ignore identities. Empirically, these arenas or sites are difficult to separate from one another. For one thing, identity construction seldom
occurs in only one such site; on the contrary, it usually involves processes occurring simultaneously in many parts of the social order. In addition these sites are often linked to one another (Cornell & Hartman, 2000).

*Politics.* All intergroup relations can be described in terms of power which is the differential ability of human groups to influence the decisions and relationships that have consequences for their lives. That ability is itself a product of both environmental and group factors such as the opportunities and constraints groups face and of the resources that they carry with them. These circumstances are diverse, but they include such things as citizenship, the franchise, entitlements of various kinds, policy provisions, the rights that groups or individuals have, and the vulnerabilities they face. In every situation, political factors have potentially high impacts on identities. They sharpen and reinforce ethnic and racial boundaries, giving increased significance to the identities they define (Cornell & Hartman, 2000).

*Labor markets.* They are another common site of ethnic and racial identity construction. Work is a central and essentially universal human activity that is organized in nearly all societies into a variety of categories: industries, occupations, types of labor, and so forth. Every society’s division of labor offers a ready-made categorical scheme. As persons are distributed into the categories that the division of labor offers, group identity construction is one eminently possible outcome. By the same token, collective identities offer potential bases for the distribution of persons into categories, a process that reinforces those identities by giving them an organizational dimension in the workplace (Cornell & Hartman, 2000).
Residential space. Just as they cannot always choose where they work, people are not always free to choose where to live. As with jobs, the discriminatory actions of others may limit residential freedom of choice. For example, redlining is the practice by financial institutions in some American cities of denying loans to African Americans so as to keep them from buying houses in certain neighborhoods. Prices obviously limit choice, effectively closing portions of the housing market to group members with limited incomes. A labor market that concentrates available jobs in certain geographical areas may thereby limit the range of choices for those who need, for one reason or another, to live close to the workplace. Even where there is a substantially open housing market, residential concentrations may occur simply as a result of the choices people make such as choosing to live near friends, relatives, or others who are familiar or of similar background. Whatever the logic of the concentrations they always have impacts on ethnic boundaries (Cornell & Hartman, 2000).

Social institutions: Institutions of significance include schools, churches, social service organizations, and sources of financial credit, retail services, and all of the other formally organized mechanisms by which the members of a society solve the various problems of daily living. Social change may disrupt access to such institutions. Some migrant populations, for example, leave many familiar institutions behind and may lack the language skills, familiarity, or information necessary to take advantage of institutions in the receiving society; worse, they may be barred systematically from those institutions. Other migrants, in contrast, may find the institutions of the receiving society both familiar and accessible (Cornell & Hartman, 2000). Obviously, this has potentially significant effects on ethnic or racial identities. Other institution which influences identity
formation is ethnic intermarriage. For the individual children of intermarriage the
determination of ethnic identity becomes a question and a decision in a way that does not
exist for the children of an ethnically homogeneous marriage (Lieberson & Waters, 1988
as cited in Cornell & Hartman, 2000).

*Culture.* Interpretations, ideas, and understandings are part of culture, and culture
is an identity construction site of uncommon importance. Three of these ideas are
particularly significant in identity construction: categories of ascription, group
classifications, and status attributions.

Categories of ascription are the broad bases used by the culture at large to
conceptualize and talk about groups. For instance, the dominant culture may
conceptualize Hispanics in racial terms, or refer to them as “foreigners”, “aliens,” or
migrants. A culture of ethnicity or race does not necessarily compel organization on
ethnic or racial lines but it certainly facilitates it.

Classification schemes are new classification systems that Hispanics encounter
when moving from one society to another and that are different from the one they have
shared or been accustomed to. For instance Black Dominicans or Black Brazilians may
find themselves often classified as Blacks or African-American. This may have little
effect on the self-concepts of the immigrants themselves who had grown up in
Dominican Republic or Brazil and formed their identities there, but it will have a telling
effect on their children – the second generation- who will grow up, go to school, and
begin to launch adult lives amid the classificatory messages and racial tensions of the
United States and who will begin to think of themselves as African-Americans and act
accordingly. (Cornell & Hartman, 2000)
Status attributions are closely related to the classification that populations encounter, but it depends on them whether these classification are considered attractive or unattractive. Those who are assigned the identity may not concede the value attached to it and may in fact not only reject it but also assert their own very different understanding. (Cornell & Hartman, 2000).

*Daily experiences.* They are the many informal interactions of daily living through which identities are signified, underlined, asserted, and reinforced. These interactions “range from disinterested behavior, such as the unthinking use of racial or ethnic stereotypes that have become part of common parlance, to overt discrimination” (Cornell & Hartman, 2000, p.184). Interpersonal interactions are not the only aspects of daily experience in which identities are construed. Particular conceptions of ethnic and racial identities often are sustained in popular culture, advertising, and media. Daily experiences constitute a critical site in which identities are delineated, defined, and positioned. Subtle, unconscious, and innocent phenomena such as words, names, advertisements, and body language send out messages telling people who and what they are, and who and what they are not (Cornell & Hartman, 2000).

*Group Factors That Contribute to Identity Formation.*

The human populations that encounter new situations typically have characteristics of their own that contribute to their identity construction process. They do not enter construction sites empty-handed or empty-headed. On the contrary, they bring established identities, existing internal and external relationships, resources, practices, and characteristics of various kinds.
According to Cornell and Hartman (2000), it is possible to identify six group assets or characteristics that have implications for identity construction: preexisting identities, population size, internal differentiation, social capital, human capital, symbolic repertories.

1. *Preexisting identities:* All human beings are not only connected with other human beings in various ways, but also see themselves as members of groups, as occupiers of categories, as variously similar to and different from other people. Consequently, the construction of any particular collective identity is a process through which that identity joins other consciously held identities, or replaces, overshadows, disrupts, or otherwise alters them (Cornell & Hartman, 2000).

2. *Population size:* The larger the population, the greater the chances that relationships of various kinds such as marriage, community services, and cooperative business ventures can occur within the boundary of the group. In addition, the larger the population, the more likely outsiders will have frequent contacts with this population. As a consequence, increased contact can lead to increased antipathy on the part of outsiders who see in large numbers a threat to their own position of power or control or to specific resources (Cornell & Hartman, 2000).

3. *Internal differentiation:* All groups obviously contain differences among their members, sometimes profound ones. Certain dimensions of that internal differentiation, like sex ratios, generational differences, and class, have important consequences for identity construction (Cornell & Hartman, 2000).

4. *Social capital:* It refers to the relationships among persons. The relationships that constitute social capital can be turned into other things, such as cooperation in
solving individual or community problems, or collective action in pursuit of common
interests. Social capital is a resource, something individuals and groups can use in trying
to accomplish their objectives. Its status as a resource is what makes social capital
important in identity construction. Those who can solve life problems by recourse to
existing relationships within their own ethnicity or racial group have less reason to cross
the boundary between groups in search of solutions. Those who cannot solve such
problems within the boundaries of the group, on the other hand, must turn elsewhere to
deal with those problems. Working within group boundaries tends to reinforce group
identity.

5. Human capital: It refers to certain kinds of assets or resources available to
groups and individuals. Human capital refers to the knowledge and abilities people
acquire through formal and informal education, training, and experience. Depending on
whether a person has low or high human capital, choices such as crossing the ethnic
boundary in both residential and occupational arenas can be made easy or difficult.

6. Symbolic repertoires: The construction of ethnic and racial identities involves a
particular way of looking at the world. Symbolic repertoires refer to the array of
collective representations—the symbolic resources, that groups have at their disposal
through which they can communicate the meaning of their identity. Symbolic repertoires
can be stories, a set of beliefs, history, a way of being, rituals, cultural practices, and the
like. A person’s identity is defined not only as an individual but also “within the bounds
of a national identity as well, one that was constructed by symbolic acts like festivals or
commemorations” (Benmayor & Skotnes, 2005, p.13).
Conclusion

This chapter presented existing research on Home-School Discontinuity, Diasporas, and Ethnic Identity Formation as well as a philosophical approach regarding the controversy of using the terms Hispanic or Latino.

To begin with, discontinuity in the enculturation process is described as an "abrupt transition from one mode of being and behaving to another" (Spindler, 1974, as cited in Macias, 1987, p.386) and is accompanied by marked changes in social role assignment and expectations (Macias, 1987). The problem rises in more culturally pluralistic settings where children whose home culture is radically different from that of the social mainstream, the segment of the population generally responsible for the social and educational policies affecting these children (Macias, 1987).

Minority children experience discontinuities between the new school environment and their prior experiences within their families and community. Thus, they face conflict in the classroom when teachers expect different behavior without understanding their home background and competencies fostered by it. These differences often contain cultural elements such as home language and ethnic identity that because they are not typically recognized by school personnel, contribute to chronic school problems such as poor school adjustment, achievement and retention (Macias, 1987).

Hispanic ethnic identity is very difficult to grasp. The research literature shows that there is not a single identifiable property that characterizes Hispanic identity. The majority of the research demonstrates that Hispanic identity is not based on a homogeneous conception of who and what they are, or based on race, language, culture
or class, but it is based on diversity, respect for their diversity, and acknowledgement of their past. The constructionist approach to ethnicity and race focuses not only on the factors promoting ethnic and racial identities but also on the kind of bonds such as shared interests, shared institutions and shared culture that those factors create. Identity construction involves, among other things, the establishment and elaboration of very different links among persons. Furthermore, the literature reviewed on identity formation focuses on two factors. Identity construction is driven both by contextual factors (the situations in which groups find themselves under conditions of social change) and by group factors (the resources and attributes they bring with them to those situation).

Finally, the studies reviewed in this chapter show that it is necessary: (a) to understand the elements that characterize Hispanic identity; (b) to study in more depth the implications and kinds of shared culture that Hispanics may have in common; (c) to identify what other characteristics and elements contribute to Hispanic identity formation; (d) to understand home-school discontinuity in order to approach students in a culturally respectful manner; and (e) to understand how all these issues may affect Hispanic students' education.
Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter III describes the research methodology, including the theoretical constructs and procedures that are used in this study to find out how schools accommodate the growing Hispanic school population in a New Hispanic diaspora in New Jersey, what strategies Hispanic families adopt to mitigate home-school discontinuity, what elements contribute to Hispanic identity formation, and what role ethnic identity plays in the schooling of Hispanic children. Considering that this study examines the sociological and anthropological aspects that make up a Hispanic community and Hispanic students’ schooling experiences, ethnography and grounded theory were used as the preferred research methods because they offer opportunities to grasp Hispanics participants’ points of view, their relation to life, their vision of their world and their views on schooling and identity.

Ethnography

The use of a qualitative research design such as ethnography allows the researcher to use conversation and interviews to gather themes and information. Because the researcher does not have a predetermined theory and does not know for certain what the Hispanic schooling experiences are or what elements contribute to Hispanic identity formation, it is not possible to develop and instrument, such as a structured questionnaire,
that quantify relationships between variables derived from the data in quantitative methods.

For this reason ethnography is the most appropriate research method for this study. Ethnography consists of a body of knowledge that includes research techniques, ethnographic theory, and hundreds of cultural descriptions. It seeks to build a systematic understanding of all human cultures from the perspective of those who have learned them. Ethnography is based on the assumption that knowledge of all cultures is valuable (Spradley, 1979).

The research design for this qualitative study on Hispanic schooling experiences and Hispanic identity will be based on an ethnographic methodology through interviews or conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants. The interviewer elicits the perceptions from the informants through research design, which consists of ethnographic field strategies. The researcher examines the phenomenon as perceived by the participants, and represents these observations as accounts. The interviewees give the information, and the interviewer gets the reasons from the interview’s exchange. The researcher then summarizes the findings after doing an analysis of the data from listening to an transcribing the informants’ taped discourse (Spradley, 1979).

Informants are encouraged by the ethnographer to speak in their own language or dialect. The ethnographer hopes to learn from their informants who are a source of information; literally they become teachers for the ethnographer. An ethnographer seeks out ordinary people with ordinary knowledge and builds on their common experience. Slowly, through a series of interviews, by repeated explanations, and through the use of
special questions, ordinary people become excellent informants. Everyone in the course of their daily activities has acquired knowledge that appears specialized to others (Spradley, 1979, p.25).

The essential core of ethnography is this concern with the meaning of actions and events to the people we seek to understand. Some of these meanings are directly expressed in language; many are taken for granted and communicated only indirectly through word and action. But in every society people make constant use of these complex meaning systems to organize their behavior, to understand themselves and others, and to make sense out of the world in which they live. These systems of meaning constitute their culture; and ethnography always implies a theory of culture (Spradley, 1979, p.5).

Much social science research has been directed toward the task of testing formal theories. One alternative to formal theories, and a strategy that reduces the ethnocentrism, is to develop theories grounded in empirical data of cultural description. Glaser and Strauss have called this grounded theory. Ethnography offers an excellent strategy for discovering grounded theory (Spradley, 1979).

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory was initially developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The phrase *grounded theory* refers to theory that is developed inductively from a corpus of data. This contrasts with theory derived deductively from grand theory, without the help of data, and which could therefore turn out to fit no data at all.
The purpose of grounded theory is to develop theory about phenomena, and such theory needs to be grounded or rooted inductively from the data. The basic idea of the grounded theory approach is to read and re-read a textual database, such as a corpus of field notes, and “discover” or label variables, called categories, concepts and properties, and their interrelationships. The ability to perceive variables and relationships is termed “theoretical sensitivity” and is affected by a number of things including one’s reading of the literature and one’s use of techniques designed to enhance sensitivity (Borgatti, n.d).

Of course, the data do not have to be literally textual. They could be observations of behavior, such as interactions and events in a certain situation or scene. Often they are in the form of field notes, which are like diary entries. Open coding is the part of the analysis concerned with identifying, naming, categorizing, and describing phenomena found in the text. Essentially, each line, sentence, paragraph, and so forth is read in search of the answer to the repeated questions: “What is this about? What is being referenced here?”

These labels refer to things which are the nouns and verbs of a conceptual world. Part of the analytic process is to identify the more general categories that these things are instances of, such as institutions, work activities, social relations, social outcomes, and so forth.

The process of naming or labeling things, categories, and properties is known as coding. Coding can be done very formally and systematically or quite informally. In grounded theory, it is normally done quite informally. Maintaining an inventory of codes with their descriptions (i.e., creating a codebook) is useful, along with pointers to text that
contain them. In addition, as codes are developed, it is useful to write memos known as
code notes that discuss the codes. These memos become fodder for later development
into reports. Moreover, Strauss and Corbin (1990 as cited in Borgatti, n.d.) “consider that
paying attention to processes is vital. They are concerned with describing and coding
everything that is dynamic - changing, moving, or occurring over time - in the research
setting” (para.25). In data analysis, the researcher constantly compares incidents,
categories, and constructs to determine similarities and differences and to develop a
theory that accounts for behavioral variation. Both observation and interviewing are
commonly used for data collection.

Data Collection

The primary focus of the data collection is to find out what kinds of schooling
experiences Hispanics have, and what elements contribute to Hispanic identity.
Ethnographic interviewing will allow the researcher to understand and have access to the
informants’ descriptions and points of view about how they see the world around them,
about their school-related experiences, and about what factors contribute to Hispanic
identity formation.

Spradley’s (1979) ethnographic research design was followed in order to carry
out this research study. Spradley clearly defined a set of steps that begin with the
definition of the problem, the formulation of hypotheses, and the making of operational
definitions. The research steps begin with a series of ethnographic interviews through
which the researcher gathers data, next, the researcher analyzes this data, then, draws conclusions, and finally reports the findings.

Ethnographic interviews consist of a friendly conversation in which the interviewees answer a set of open-ended questions that are not predetermined. According to Spradley, (1979) it is possible to find three kinds of distinct questions: descriptive questions, structural questions, and contrast questions, all of which were used in this study to gather data pertaining this research study.

*Descriptive questions* use language to construe settings, and aim to elicit a large sample of utterances in the informant's native language. They are intended to encourage an informant to talk about a particular cultural scene. There are five different kinds of descriptive questions: (a) grand tour questions ask the informant to describe space, time, events, people, activities and objects through the typical, specific, or task-related grand tour questions, (b) mini-tour questions ask the informant to describe a much smaller unit of experience than do through the grand tour questions; (c) example questions ask the informant to describe the most interesting stories of actual happenings; (d) experience questions ask the informant about personal experiences; and (e) native language questions ask the informant to use the terms and phrases most commonly used in the cultural scene.

Then, the researcher analyzes the data collected before the next interview. This analysis enables the researcher to discover questions to ask in future interviews by making a domain analysis which are a larger unit of cultural knowledge. In analyzing domains the researcher looks for those cultural symbols, which are included in the larger categories, or domains. This domain analysis is followed by structural questions.
Structural questions allow the researcher to discover information about a folk domain and to elicit from an informant such items as cover terms and included terms. Structural questions also test the ethnographic hypotheses that have emerged from domain analysis and give a framework for further questioning. Structural questions include five different kinds of questions: (a) verification questions, by which the informants confirm or disconfirm hypothesis about a term through domain verification, included term verification, semantic relationship verification, and native language verification questions; (b) cover-term questions, asked whenever there is a cover term; (c) included term questions, asked when there are two or more terms for the cover term; (d) substitution frame questions ask the informant to substitute other meaningful terms in a normal statement; and (e) card sorting structural questions help to elicit, verify, and discuss a domain through the use of cards.

Structural questions all function to explore the organization of an informant’s cultural knowledge. They lead the ethnographer to discover and verify the presence of folk domains, cover terms for these domains, and the included terms. By using structural questions, the ethnographer does not need to impose analytic categories to organize the data from interviews or participant observation. Ethnography is more than finding out what people know; it also involves discovering how people have organized that knowledge.

Then, the researcher introduces contrast questions which enable the researcher to discover the relations of meaning that the informants employ to distinguish the objects and events in their world. In other words, contrast questions are used to discover the meanings of, and the relationships among, the terms that the informants have already
mentioned. The contrast questions include seven kinds of questions: (a) contrast verification questions are formulated only after discovering some difference between two folk terms, and are meant to confirm differences and similarities among large groups of folk terms; (b) directed contrast questions begin with a known characteristic of one folk term in a contrast set and ask if any if any other terms in the set contrasts on that characteristic; (c) dyadic contrast questions which the ethnographer asks without having any differences to suggest to the informant; (d) triadic contrast questions ask the informant three folk terms and has to identify two terms as like and one as different; (e) contrast set sorting questions make use of all the terms in a contrast set at the same time (f) 20 questions game in which the ethnographer tells the informant a single contrast set and the informant has to guess what folk term the ethnographer is thinking of by asking questions; and (g) rating questions by which the informants make contrasts based on a rating criteria in that way revealing the values placed on sets of symbols.

Once numerous contrasts for a number of contrast sets have been discovered, the researcher is ready to organize this information and more systematically identify the components of meaning for folk terms. This will be accomplished through making a componential analysis.

*Componential analysis* is the systematic search for the attributes (components of meaning) associated with cultural symbols. Whenever an ethnographer discovers contrasts among the members of a category, these contrasts are best thought of as the attributes or components of meaning for any term. Componential analysis aims to discovering the psychological reality of the informant’s world, and its goal is to map this reality as accurately as possible.
The ethnographer must keep in mind that research proceeds on two levels at the same time. The ethnographer takes into account both an overview of the cultural scene and statements that convey a sense of the whole. The ethnographer conveys a sense of the whole by identifying all the different domains in a culture. Although a simple listing of all domains is a necessary part of ethnography, it is not sufficient. It is important to go beyond such an inventory to discover the conceptual themes that members of a society use to connect these domains. Cultural themes are elements in the cognitive maps which make up a culture. Themes are larger units of thought. They consist of a number of symbols linked into meaningful relationships and give us a holistic view of a culture or cultural scene.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to find out how school districts accommodate the growing Hispanic school population in a New Hispanic Diaspora in New Jersey and what strategies schools and Hispanic families adopt to mitigate home-school discontinuity, as well as social, economic, and language barriers. This study also attempts to find out what elements contribute to the formation of Hispanic identity in this New Hispanic Diaspora and what role ethnic identity plays in the schooling of Hispanic children.

Since there is not a pre-determined theory that the researcher wishes to prove, the most appropriate methodology for this study is ethnography and grounded theory. On one hand, ethnography allows the researcher to examine what the world that shapes Hispanic
identity looks like, what Hispanics learned to see, think, and act like, and in what ways Hispanics are different from other groups.

Ethnography is a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system (Creswell, 1998). Using such a methodology, the researcher examines the group's observable and learned patterns of behavior, customs, and ways of life (Harris, 1968). Thus, the researcher focuses on the meanings of behavior, language, and interactions of the culture-sharing group. The goal of ethnography is to learn about a culture from the people who actually live in that culture. The essential data collection methods of participant observation and in-depth interviewing permit the researcher to learn about the meanings that informants attach to their knowledge, behaviors, and activities. The context (social, political, and economic) of the culture assumes an important part of an ethnographic study.

On the other hand, grounded theory allows the researcher to build a theory that emerges from, or is "grounded" in the data. The intent of grounded theory is to generate or discover a theory; an abstract analytical schema of a philosophy that relates to a particular situation. This situation could be one in which individuals interact, take actions, or engage in a process in response to a phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). The purpose of a grounded theory approach to qualitative research is to discover social-psychological processes. Distinct features of grounded theory include theoretical sampling and the constant comparative method. Theoretical sampling refers to sampling decisions made throughout the entire research process in which participants are selected based on their knowledge of the topic and based on emerging study findings. In data analysis, the researcher constantly compares incidents, categories, and constructs to
determine similarities and differences and to develop a theory that accounts for behavioral variation. Both observation and interviewing are commonly used for data collection.

The purpose of qualitative research is to describe, explore, and explain phenomena being studied, and “ethnography offers an excellent strategy for discovering grounded theory” (Spradley, 1979, p.11). Both kinds of qualitative research are extremely useful because they provide the researcher with a wide variety of answers to questions related to Hispanic experiences, schooling, and identity.
Chapter IV
RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to find out what elements contribute to the formation of Hispanic identity among residents of a New Hispanic Diaspora in New Jersey. This study also tries to identify how both local schools and Hispanic families mitigate home-school discontinuity as well as social, economic, and language barriers. On the one hand, the study focuses on Hispanic parents’ shared experiences and on the impact of these experiences on their children’s academic achievement. On the other hand, this ethnographic study attempts to unveil how schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora accommodate their resources to satisfy the needs of the growing Hispanic school population.

This study further examines the experiences of first generation Hispanics who live and work in the school district area of this New Hispanic Diaspora and who have children that attend public schools in the area. The participants are parents who came from Mexico, Costa Rica, and El Salvador, and who have been living in this community for three or more years.

Ethnographic interviews were the preferred data collection technique. A total of 11 parents were interviewed during the spring of 2006 and the fall of 2007. Table 2 presents some relevant information pertaining to the participants and their children who attend the schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora. Table 2 provides a profile of the interviewed participants, informants’ gender, and nationality, number of children attending schools in this Hispanic Diaspora, and children’s birthplace and age.
### Table 2

**Taxonomy of Informants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>No. of Children</th>
<th>Child’s place of birth</th>
<th>Child’s age when coming to the U.S.</th>
<th>Child’s current age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Costa Rica U.S.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 months old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mexico Mexico U.S.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mexico Mexico U.S. U.S.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12 years old</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>9 years old</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5 months old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Salvador U.S. U.S. U.S.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20 years old</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16 years old</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Salvador U.S. U.S. U.S.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24 years old</td>
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<td>20 years old</td>
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<td>16 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mexico Mexico U.S.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11 years old</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mexico Mexico U.S.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants are immigrants from different countries, who may or may not be documented American residents. To protect their identity and their keep confidentiality,
their real names were not used in this study. Instead, pseudonyms were used as a measure to maintain their identities protected from any potential risks as it was stated in the informed consent agreement stipulated by the Institutional Review Board (Appendix C).

Informants were interviewed about four times each, for 1 hour each time. The data gathered revealed the informants’ cultural experiences unique to their roles in this New Hispanic Diaspora. As Spindler (1987) explains, the ethnographic interview process allows the researcher “to collect and elicit participants’ native views of reality and the native ascription of meaning to events, intentions, and consequences” (p.4). As the interview process progressed, informants’ cultural dimensions of meaning shed light on participants’ views of reality and revealed tacit cultural knowledge pertaining to the participants, their children, and the schools their children attend.

This ethnographic study attempts to find answers to the following set of research questions, which provided guidance and direction to the study:

1. What kinds of experiences contribute to the formation of Hispanic identity in this New Hispanic Diaspora in New Jersey?

2. What kinds of schooling experiences do participants bring from their home countries? And how do these experiences influence their children’s educational experiences?

3. What kinds of accommodations do schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora provide to Hispanic children and parents to help them overcome cultural, linguistic and social barriers?

4. How do families and schools mitigate home-school discontinuity?
5. How does students’ ethnic identity change as a result of social interaction in this school community? Is there a new identity emerging as a result of schooling in this New Hispanic Diaspora?

This study examines domains which were organized into cultural themes and interpreted through the voices of the participants as they articulated their own experiences in their own words.

This chapter provides a detailed account of the research findings. First, the chapter explores the elements that contribute to the formation of Hispanic identity in this Hispanic community. Second, it examines how informants’ shared identity is shaped by their community and their school setting, and by the experiences on schooling they had in their home countries. Third, it investigates how school discontinuity can be reinforced or lessened by families and schools depending on their willingness to change and adapt to new situations. Fourth, it looks at how schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora accommodate their resources to satisfy the needs of the growing Hispanic school population. Finally, the chapter unveils the role of schools and home in the development of Hispanic children’s identity.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1

What kinds of experiences contribute to the formation of Hispanic identity in this New Hispanic Diaspora in New Jersey?
Hispanic identity is much more complex than the ascribed ethnicity given by the dominant majority who think of it on terms of language, race, culture, or class. It is the constant process of negotiation between the conditions of an ascribed identity, and it is the result of their own direct experiences, that is, the socio-political and cultural histories of their own communities (Cornell & Hartmann, 1997). It is also based on their responses to such pressing issues such as work, housing, politics, education, discrimination, and all kinds of biases based on language, race, and ethnicity still operating in the United States (Cornell & Hartmann, 1997).

Hispanics are bonded together not by race, language, culture, or class but by their awareness of bonds and shared experiences that create a more substantial and potential solidarity among them. The list of experiences that contribute to the formation of Hispanic identity expressed by informants can be long; however some were recurrently highlighted by the informants throughout the interviews. For instance, recurring shared experiences include a series of common experiences that informants went through when coming to the United States, when dealing with ethnic, racial, or language biases; and when living and working in the United States.

Other experiences refer to issues related to discrimination, rights in the workplace; children’s rights at school, health services, cultural differences, language barriers, and learning and using English. These experiences delineate, define, and position informants’ views on whom and what they are. Moreover, in these experiences participants enact their assumptions and convey messages about which identities are important to them, and what those identities mean.
It is worth mentioning that participants’ identities are subject to constant change as they encounter different situations, people, and places. It is not the creation of a moment or a passing phase in the cultural life of the participants. It is a product of their specific relationships in their particular community, evolving over time; and it is the result of specific events, their interpretations and justifications (Cornell & Hartmann, 1997).

For example, as informants made their way to the United States, they encountered other people like them with similar dreams, expectations, and histories. Informants and their new acquaintances lived similar life experiences in their home countries and in the United States. In their interaction, they learned from each other, noticed their shared experiences, and reflected on their life journey. These shared experiences constitute collections of concepts and understandings that contribute to the formation of their ethnic identity as they share stories, interact with other Hispanics, learn from one another, and help each other.

It is important to keep in mind that the experiences listed here are situations under which identity construction occurs, and they capture a moment in an ongoing, changing, and dynamic process. Table 3 presents a taxonomy of the kinds of shared experiences narrated by the participants throughout the interviews. Among the most recurrent shared experiences informants highlighted their coming to the United States, the reasons for which they left their homelands; their experiences living in the New Hispanic Diaspora; their experiences as Hispanics, and social networks and socialization practices that they encountered in the United States. They also made reference to shared experiences pertaining to their work experience in the United States, their relation with other ethnic
groups, and the reasons for which they returned momentarily to their home countries.

Each of these shared experiences among Hispanics is discussed below in an effort to provide a more comprehensive and detailed analysis of the data.

Table 3

*Taxonomy of Kinds of Shared Experiences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared Experiences</th>
<th>Coming to the U.S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation for coming to the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Living in this New Hispanic Diaspora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socializing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language barrier</td>
<td>Learning and using English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict with other ethnic/Racial groups</td>
<td>Conflict with other Hispanics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conflict with Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conflict with African-Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Differences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Hispanic/ Latino</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning momentarily to home countries</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Coming to the U.S.*

When participants came to the United States, they met strangers who had to cope with the same situations they encountered, who wanted to pursue the same objectives, and interpreted the world around them in the same way. By interacting with other people, participants re-constructed their identities, renewed their ideas of themselves, and re-interpreted the world around them in new ways.

For instance, all the informants found out that coming to the United States was not an easy journey at all. As they entered the United States in search of better work
opportunities and to improve their lives, the majority of the informants had to go through personal and financial hardships. It was an ordeal they all endured in their quest for a better life in “the land of opportunities.”

For most of them, coming to the United States implied borrowing money from relatives and friends, walking during nighttime without taking a rest, escaping high tech surveillance, bumping into prickly cactuses, spending days and weeks under the scorching desert sun, and risking their lives in the hands of those who led the way to America. Only one of the informants was fortunate enough to obtain a tourist visa that allowed her to travel by plane and enter the country without problems.

Informant 7 eloquently describes the process most immigrants go through when they decide to set off for America. “The first thing a person does is to go to El Paso City in Mexico, find a hotel, and get in touch with the person that is going to help them cross the border between Mexico and the U.S.” This person is referred to by informants as a “coyote.” It generally takes about 15 to 30 days altogether to get from El Paso to Arizona or from Tijuana to California, and from there, to their final destination:

Primero llega a un hotel y usted se comunica con la persona que la va a pasar y ahí usted queda de acuerdo en el precio y en qué lugar se van a encontrar... Es un largo proceso. Primero en El Paso, yo tuve suerte y cruce en unas cuantas horas porque tenía a mis hijos conmigo y ellos me dieron una ruta más corta. Después esperamos en una casa en Arizona por seis días hasta que nos vinieron a buscar... y luego tres días más viajando en tren desde Arizona hasta New York. (Informant 7)
First, you arrive at a hotel and you get in touch with the person that is going to make you cross the border. Then, you agree on the price and place where you are going to meet. It is a long process. First, in El Paso, I was lucky and I crossed the border in a few hours because I had my children with me, and they gave me a shortcut. Then, we waited for six days in a house in Arizona till somebody came to pick us up. Then, we spent three more days traveling by train from Arizona to New York. (Informant 7)

Informant 1 from Mexico says that when she and her husband decided to come to the United States, they visited their cousins that lived in the border and stayed with them for a few days. While they were there, her uncle recommended a coyote, a person who would smuggle them into the United States, across the Mexican border, and who they met in a hotel to go over the details. The following day, they went to the meeting place, and they saw that there were about 60 people who were also coming. The coyote had told them to bring only water and bread, but he never mentioned how long the trip was going to be. They walked for 4 nights. At one point they ran out of water but they kept walking. Informant 1 recalls,

\textit{Una noche nos topamos con algo que parecía ser un río, pero no podíamos ver claramente porque estaba de noche. Estábamos tan sedientos, que lo mismo bebimos el agua. No nos importaba nada.} (Informant 1)
One night, we found something that seemed like a river, but we could not see clearly because it was night time. We were so thirsty that we drank the water all the same. We did not care. (Informant 1)

Informant 1 also mentioned that when they started walking, they never imagined the journey was going to be so long. At night everyone would be very close to each other because they did not want to get lost, and during the day they would rest under the trees or larger desert bushes.

On the sixth day, they got to a small house in California, where they were able to take a shower and get ready to come to New York. Their relatives were all the time checking on them and asking the coyotes’ contacts for their location. As soon as they crossed and got safely on the other side, they called their relatives and told them to send the money that would pay the coyote. Most informants paid from 2,000 dollars to 3,000 dollars per person just to cross into the United States.

Most of the informants agreed that coming to the United States meant a lot of courage, effort and perseverance. Regarding this, informant 6 said,

La gente no se da cuenta del peligro de la situación cuando deciden cruzar, tal vez es Dios que les da fuerza porque el sabe de nuestras necesidades y nos ayuda. (Informant 6)
People do not realize about the danger of the situation when they decide to cross. Maybe it is God that gives them strength because He knows their needs and that is why He helps them. (Informant 6)

The informants also suggest that people are sometimes cheated in the border. Informant 6 says that 7 years ago she went to the border with her brother because they wanted to come to the United States. Her husband was already in the United States and had been working and saving money to bring them over to America. When they got to the border, they realized that it was not as easy as friends and family said it was going to be. First of all, they had a hard time finding someone to help them cross the border. There were a lot of coyotes offering their services to them, and it was hard to decide to whom they should trust their lives.

During their stay at the border, Informant 6 called her husband from a local pharmacy and told him that they were trying to find a coyote not realizing that somebody had overheard their conversation. A couple of days later, she called her husband again and found out that somebody had called him the day before and told him that his wife and brother were already in the United States and that he needed to wire $1,000 immediately. Her husband did not think that he was being scammed so he sent the money. Informant 6 recounts,

Alguien en la farmacia debe haber escuchado cuando hablábamos en el teléfono y después lo llamaron a él. Por esa razón, las cosas han cambiado.
Ahora, los coyotes no reciben el dinero hasta que los familiares ven o escuchan a la persona por el teléfono. (Informant 6)

Somebody in the pharmacy must have heard us talking on the phone and then they called him. For that reason things have changed. Now, coyotes do not receive payment until relatives see or talk with the person on the phone.

(Informant 6)

Most informants bravely crossed a dangerous stretch of desert in search of a better life. For some of them, it took several attempts to make it across. According to Informant 6, “people get caught or stopped the first time, and they are sent back, but try to enter through a different location, and then they succeed.” That was the case for informant 4 who tried to cross the border twice before finally making it through to the United States. He says that the first time he was caught was because he jumped the border fence and started to run. It was then that an immigration officer saw him, arrested him, and sent him back to the Mexican side. The second time he tried to cross, he remembers that he had jumped the fence, walked for an hour in the desert, and stopped to wait for a coyote who was supposed to come and pick him up. Again, immigration officers saw him and asked him what he was doing there. Unable to give a convincing explanation, he was arrested and sent back to the other side of the border.

Informant 4 says that the third time he tried to cross the border he was successful, but it was an arduous trip. He and several other men crossed the border line through the desert. They walked during the whole night till a car picked them up. Then, they traveled
by car 6 more hours. After that, they had to walk for the remainder of the journey, about four more days, without food or water.

Informant 5 says that most people carry water, sardines, and “suero” which is water mixed with electrolytes. They hire a coyote to whom they pay about $2,000 per child and about $2,500 per adult. Crossing the desert is very dangerous and many people not always make it because they get caught by border agent patrols, get robbed by bandits, get separated from the group, are left behind, or perish on the way.

The groups of people crossing the border are diverse in their composition. The majority are men, but there are always a few women, children, and elders. Informant 3, a Mexican woman, was pregnant when she crossed the border. She remembers that they would walk across the desert in the dark, and would rest during the day because temperatures would rise up to 110 degrees in the desert. Because she was pregnant, everyone paid special attention and was helpful to her at all times. She would always go first in line. If the coyotes had water or a soda, they would offer some to her. If they had to cross under a fence, they would hold the fence up for her and help her cross. She remembers that after walking for 10 days, her sneakers were completely destroyed, but as soon as they arrived in San Diego, California, the coyote bought her a pair of new sneakers. She is grateful to God and those who showed solidarity, consideration, and empathy to her during her journey to America.

Other informants made reference to how their muscles became cramped from the number of hours they had to walk or run. The only thing that kept them going was the camaraderie and solidarity of the group. Regarding this, Informant 3 narrates,
Todos caminamos cansados y doloridos por el viaje, pero nos dábamos ánimos unos a otros... Uno sufre mucho porque es puro caminar. Tuvimos que subir un cerro... y hace calor, y uno empieza a alucinar... y las piernas nos tiemblan y cuando uno camina no se da cuenta si camina sobre espinas, cactus, o plantas. Uno solo camina esperando que todo acabe pronto. (Informant 3)

*We walked and walked. We were tired and in pain because of the trip, but we would support and tell each other encouraging words. We suffered a lot because we had to walk so much. We had to climb a hill. It was hot and we started hallucinating. Our legs started trembling and we got cramps. When you walk you do not realize if you walk on thorns, cacti, or plants. You just walk hoping it will end soon.* (Informant 3)

*Motivation for Coming to the U.S.*

As participants encountered new situations and people, they reshaped their identities and their perceptions of who they were, what they wanted to be, and where they wanted to be. To better understand this process, it seems necessary to explore the motives that participants had for coming to the United States. It was those reasons that kept them strong and persevering in their desire to reach the United States. Even though all the participants had unique and different reasons for coming to the United States, they all shared a common goal: “to obtain economic security and better educational opportunities for their children.”
Indeed, the quest for better job opportunities was at the center of informants' decision to come to the United States. They were driven away from their countries of origin because the local economies were too poor to support them. Some came to the United States with the goal of earning some money and then returning to their home countries. Others came embracing the idea of the American dream and the hope to build new and financially successful lives for themselves, even if that meant taking jobs for which they are significantly overqualified. Whatever the motivation was, the goal for these immigrants was to find steady work in the United States which they believed would allow them to provide for their children and immediate family.

Their life stories revealed how most of the informants were born into poverty in their home countries. Their families were part of the rural working class that usually struggles to make ends meet. Informants' fathers were seasonal laborers or masons. Their mothers would help their husbands by staying at home and by taking care of the children, or by selling food in the streets. Whether in the countryside or in towns, all the informants began working early in their childhood in order to contribute to their below-subsistence family income. Therefore, all the informants knew that they did not want the same fate for their children.

For most of the informants, their journey to the United States was not a pleasant one, however the thought of the many opportunities they would encounter in the United States helped them persevere and overcome the difficulties. Their aspirations for a better future, their refusal to repeat the story of their parents, and their will to provide their children with better opportunities became the driving force that guided their actions and reshaped their perception of the world.
For instance, Informant 6 says that the main reason for which she and her family came to the United States was economic, especially because it was very hard to make ends meet when they were in Mexico. Although her husband had a job as a mason, what he made was not enough to support the family. Regarding this she comments,

_Mas que todo por la economía pues en México todo está difícil. Si uno quiere comprar algo es muy difícil porque todo está muy caro... Mi esposo allá trabajaba muy temprano y se iba a hacer bloques, que es un trabajo muy pesado y pues no pagan mucho... Los niños iban a la escuela y a veces es como que no alcanzaba el dinero para darles lo que ellos necesitaban para la escuela, y tanto para la casa. No alcanzaba para nada._ (Informant 6)

_The main reason we left Mexico was the economy. In Mexico things are not easy. If someone wants to buy something, it is very difficult because things are very expensive... My husband used to go to work very early. He used to make bricks, which was hard work and they did not pay a lot. My children would go to school. Sometimes, we did not have enough to buy food let alone to buy the things that our children needed for school. Money was never enough._ (Informant 6)

Informant 3 says that she was 16 years old when she and her mother came to the United States. The main reason they came here was because her mother was tired of the constant daily struggle to provide for her family. She wanted to come to the United States to fulfill the American dream, to have a house, and a car.
Pues imagínese, mi mamá estaba cansada de quemarse las manos todos los días en el comal que usaba para hacer tortillas, y ella quería venirse a los EEUU. Pero mi papá... no quería venir con nosotras... Y mi mamá estaba cansada de salir todos los días a vender tortillas para pagar las cuentas o comprar cosas básicas, y como siempre todo el mundo habla del sueño americano. Mi mamá quería ser parte de este sueño. Ella quería tener su casa y su auto. La gente se imagina que la vida aquí es bonita, porque uno allá no tiene nada. (Informant 3)

Imagine, my mom was tired of burning her hands every day in the clay dish she used for making tortillas, and she wanted to come to the United States. But my father did not want to come with us... My mom was tired of making and selling tortillas everyday to pay the bills or buy basic staples. Everyone talks about the American dream. My mother wanted to be part of that dream. She wanted to have a house and a car. People imagine that life is beautiful here, because you do not have anything in Mexico. (Informant 3)

Informants 2, 3, 4, and 6 began working when they were children. Girls were typically called upon to alleviate immediate needs on the domestic front. This meant becoming responsible for household chores, child care, sewing, or being hired out as child domestics. Boys were allowed to continue their basic education as preparation for future employment, or they were hired as apprentices. For example, Informant 2 did not
finish school because she started working when she was 11 years old because her family was very poor. She says that it is very common for children in Costa Rica to learn how to iron, cook, and do the laundry at an early age.

*I was 11 years old when my mom found a job for me, and I started working, and since then I have not stopped. I was working at that age. I cleaned a lady's house, and I helped her because she was sick, and she paid me 8 dollars per month. It wasn't a lot of money but at least I could help my parents.* (Informant 2)

Informant 3 also remembers that she started working when she was 12 years old because she felt sorry for her parents who worked so hard to provide for her and her siblings.

*Mis padres si se molestaron al principio cuando yo les dije que no iba a seguir estudiando y luego ellos dijeron que no me iban a obligar, y no iban a invertir en libros para que después yo decidiera botarlos. Entonces yo solo...*
estudié hasta los 12 años. Yo sentía que tenía que ayudar a mis padres.

(Informant 3)

My parents got upset at the beginning when I told them that I wasn’t going to keep studying. They said that they were not going to make me do something I did not want to do. They were not going to pay for books that I was going to throw away later. I studied till I was 12 years old. I felt that I had to help my parents. (Informant 3)

In general, all the informants reported that they had high expectations and excitement when they knew they would come to the United States because they were sure that they would find lots of opportunities for financial advancement and a promising future for their children. Whatever the reason was, moving to the United States invoked a sense of happiness for all of them. It meant an opportunity to escape from the social, political, and economic reality of their countries.

For example, Informant 8 from El Salvador stated that by 1979 the leftist guerrilla warfare had broken out in the cities and the countryside, launching what became a civil war. A cycle of violence took hold as rightist vigilante death squads killed thousands of people. At that time, Informant 8’s husband was working as a teacher. He would go to work on Monday and come back on Friday. Every time he left, she would be praying for his life. One day, her aunt who saw how distressed and unhappy she was, asked her if she wanted to immigrate to the United States. This aunt gave her enough money to pay for a coyote to help her cross the desert. She recalls that it was a difficult decision to leave her
husband and her four year old son in El Salvador, but she knew that it was the only way that she and her family would have an opportunity for a better life. In reference to this, she tells,

*Bueno, allá me case verdad. El era profesor. Entonces como en esa época había, estaba la guerra, el se iba los lunes y llegaba los viernes, y yo me quedaba con mi hijo pidiendo a Dios que llegara el viernes...mataban a mucha gente porque los tildaban de guerrilleros. Entonces por esa razón fue que una tía me dijo que si yo me quería venir porque veía que yo sufría mucho, entonces cuando me tía me dijo inmediatamente le dije que si y deje a mi esposo y a mi hijo de 4 años en El Salvador cuando decidí venir a este país. (Informant 8)*

*Well, I got married there. He was a teacher. At that time there were guerillas, and he would go to work on Monday and come back on Friday. I would stay with my son, praying to God for his life. The military used to kill a lot of people who they thought were in the guerrillas. My aunt saw my suffering and she asked me if I wanted to come to the United States. I immediately accepted. I left my husband and my 4-year-old son in El Salvador, and I came to this country. (Informant 8)*

Informant 8 also recalls that crossing the desert was a terrible ordeal and that as soon as she arrived she started working in a factory and saving money to bring her husband. A few months later, she was able to save enough money to bring him over.
However, their 4-year-old son had to stay in El Salvador because he was too young, and they did not want to risk his life in the desert.

The research findings indicate that for the majority of the informants, migration to the United States was motivated by the need and desire of jobs and economic advancement. All of them know how difficult the journey to the United States is, and they would not mind going through it again in order to secure a better future for themselves and their children.

_Living in a New Hispanic Diaspora_

Participants construct their identity by selecting values, beliefs, and concepts that define them. For instance, the interviews reveal that participants believe that living in the United States is not easy at all, however all of them are ready to make sacrifices and to work hard to overcome the hardships. Going to a MacDonald’s or buying new shoes is something they cannot often afford. However, they think that they might be poor according to American standards but they feel rich compared to what poverty means back in their home countries. Informant 3 refers to this as follows,

_Uno no tiene el privilegio ni de irse a comer un McDonald’s… Y así sea que yo tenga que comer frijoles todos los días para no comprar carne lo voy a hacer. La idea es ahorrar y progresar._ (Informant 3)
I cannot even treat myself with a MacDonald's... and even if I have to eat beans everyday to save on meat, I am going to do it. The idea is to save and make progress. (Informant 3)

Informants noted that when they arrive in the United States, they do not bring anything with them, not even a suitcase, only the clothes they are wearing, since they cannot carry any personal items through the desert, rivers, hills, or mountains. On this note, Informant 3 comments,

Además llegamos aquí sin nada ni siquiera con maletas, no traemos nada.
Ni ropa, más que la que tenemos puesta, no se puede cargar maletas por el desierto, pantano, cerros, o lo que sea, y si las trajéramos estoy segura que la tiraríamos de tan pesadas o cansados que nosotros estaríamos (Informant 3).

We get here without anything. We bring nothing. Not even clothes, only the ones we are wearing because you cannot carry suitcases in the desert, in the swamps, in the mountains or whatever it is. If we happened to bring suitcases, we would throw them away anyway because we would be too tired to carry them (Informant 3).

Table 4 is a componential analysis of the kinds of Hispanic residents that live in this New Hispanic Diaspora. All the participants, except Informants 8 and 9 who are home owners, rent a house or an apartment. Informants 1, 3, and 5 live with their families
in a small one bedroom apartment respectively. They have transformed the living room into a second bedroom to make it more comfortable for their children. They have to rent a one bedroom apartment because they cannot afford to pay higher rent in a bigger place. Informants 2, 4, 6, and 7 live in a three bedroom apartment. However, they share the rent with other relatives or very close friends who live in the same apartment.

Table 4

Componential Analysis: Kinds of Residents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTRAST SET</th>
<th>Owns a house?</th>
<th>Rents?</th>
<th>Shares rent with other people?</th>
<th># of bedrooms</th>
<th># of adults</th>
<th># of children</th>
<th>Lives in the East side?</th>
<th>Lives in the West side?</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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Informant 7 noted that sometimes landlords take advantage of Hispanics and charge high rents because they know that many Hispanic families live in the same house.

For instance, Informant 10 lives in a three bedroom apartment, but she and her family occupy only one bedroom because she shares the apartment with other adults. She explained that she, her husband, her 3-year-old daughter, and her 10-year-old twins share one bedroom because the second bedroom is used by her cousin, his wife, and their baby;
and the third bedroom is occupied by her brother-in-law. The five adults divide the rent and expenses among each other; otherwise they would not be able to afford it.

After paying rent and utilities, informant 10 has very little money left for clothing and other necessities since her husband is the only one who has a full time job. She said that she has no choice. She has to share the apartment otherwise she will have to seek for more affordable rent in less desirable towns. Indeed, most participants observed that they do not wish to leave this New Hispanic Diaspora because it has certain advantages that they like, such as Hispanic local businesses, a train station, people who share their culture and language, and supermarkets that cater their needs and sell ethnic foods and products from their home countries. Informant 7 who has been asked to vacate her apartment is looking for a place to live in this community, even though she knows that going somewhere else will mean more affordable rent. Regarding this, she comments,

_Mis amigos me están ayudando a buscar un lugar. El apartamento en el que vivo es de tres cuartos y pagaba $1,300, mis primos viven en uno de los cuartos y nos dan $500 para la renta y servicios... Pero ahora hay un nuevo dueño y el dice que es muy barato... Pero nosotros vivimos hace muchos años allí. El nuevo dueño ahora quiere 2,300 dólares por la renta pero nosotros no lo podemos pagar así que nos tenemos que mudar. Pero yo quiero buscar algo en esta ciudad porque me gusta. Conozco la comunidad. Tengo amigos. Hay buenas escuelas, tiendas hispanas, y una estación de tren es un buen lugar para vivir y trabajar._ (Informant 7)
My friends are helping me to find a place. The apartment where I live has three bedrooms, and I pay $1,300. My cousins live in one of the bedrooms and they give us $500 for the rent and utilities. Now, there is a new owner, and he wants to increase the rent, but we have lived there for many years. The new owner wants $2,300 for the rent but we cannot afford it, so we will have to move. I want to find something in this city. I like it here. I know the community. I have friends. There are good schools, Hispanic stores, and a train station. It’s a good place to live and work. (Informant 7)

Hispanics who live in this community face higher rents than ever before, in many cases far beyond what they can afford. For instance, informant 9 thinks that prices are high in this community because there are not many options, and “competition to get good places is fierce”. There are some areas in this town that had houses in bad conditions and Hispanics started renting those places and renovating them in exchange for a break in the rent price. However, by doing this, they contributed to a rent increase for those who are looking for a place to rent.

Informant 3 remembers that when she came to this community eleven years ago, the neighborhood was mainly composed by African Americans, who had houses that were not appealing to the eye. Most houses were run down and in need of repair. However, in the last years, she has noticed a significant change in the neighborhood. She comments that now there are lots of Hispanics who take care of the houses, their front gardens and their back yards. She also says that when her family started renting, the
house was in a bad condition, but her husband installed new floors, fixed the bathrooms, and painted it in exchange for a rent break. Regarding this, Informant 3 comments,

\[
\text{Cuando yo llegué había pocas familias Hispánicas, lo que veía más eran los Afro Americanos... No era muy lindo el lugar. Muchos de ellos no cuidaban las casas. Había muy poquitos blancos americanos o hispanos... ahora es diferente... tú ves flores afuera, en los jardines... y cuando vinimos esta casa no tenía nada. Nosotros arreglamos todo, la pintamos, pusimos piso, y siempre le estamos haciendo arreglos. Al dueño le gusta porque los arreglos aumentan el precio de la propiedad. (Informant 3)}
\]

\[
\text{When I arrived here, there were a few Hispanic families and a lot of Afro Americans. The neighborhood wasn’t picturesque. Most of them did not take care of their houses. There were a few White Americans or Hispanics. Now, it is different. You see flowers outside, in the gardens. When we came here this house was not in good shape. We fixed everything. We painted it. We put in new floors, and we are always adding new things. Our landlord likes it because we are making his property go up in value. (Informant 3)}
\]

When Informant 7 was asked why she thought rent prices have gone up so much, she also said that it was because everyone wants to live in this community. “This town has a great demand because of its closeness to the beach, and because of the transportation options it offers.” Whites live in the East side, and Hispanics and African
Americans live in the west side of town. The East side of this town is very affluent and house prices have gone up. Thus, rent increases are a result of the competition to get places in this town, including the west side, leaving Hispanics with the only option of sharing rent in order to be able to afford housing.

Social Networks

Human beings are connected to one another, sometimes out of necessity, sometimes by choice, and sometimes by circumstance. Identity formation takes place when individuals come together and gain a consciousness of themselves as members of a group, as people who are brought together by solidarity and diverse interactions. For example, the role of the network or familial and social connections that informants have already established in the United States plays an important role in their lives. It is often a family member living in the United States that provides housing, financial support, and the information, needed to become rooted in the society. This network serves to increase the immigrant’s sense of belonging to the common culture of the United States, and to provide a support system through which immigrants can maintain some cultural identity with their country of origin.

Informant 3 says that most immigrants come to the United States with a place to stay. They live in a relative’s house for a few months until they are able to find a place of their own. They make sacrifices at the beginning. They live in austerity and in crowded conditions, but they do not resent that because they believe that the sacrifice they make will help them achieve their goals.
Llegamos a la casa de algún familiar y vivimos apretados al principio, no por gusto sino por necesidad hasta que por fin hemos juntado algo para poder salirnos. Vivimos con sacrificio y salimos adelante, porque la idea es progresar y mejorar. (Informant 3)

We arrive at a relative’s house, and we live there very uncomfortable at the beginning, but not because we like it, but out of necessity, until we finally save enough to be able to go somewhere else. We live in austerity, because the idea is to make progress and improve ourselves. (Informant 3)

Coming empty handed is not a problem because in most cases they know that their spouse, relatives, or friends will provide them with a place to stay, and help them find a job. These informants belong to a social network that supports them and provide them with the information they need to find a job, send their children to school, rent a place, or go to a hospital in case of sickness.

For instance, informant 5 recalls that his cousin who was already living in the United States came to Mexico on a visit. His cousin realized that they were not doing very well and encouraged him to come and work in the United States. He also warned him that at the beginning it was going to be very difficult because he did not speak English, and because he would need to work hard to make it through. Regarding this, Informant 5 remembers,
Ese año que decidí venir, yo recibí la visita de un...primo que ya tenía 3 años aquí en los EEUU, y él fue el que me invito, me metió la idea de venir aquí, Y el dijo- trabajo hay, solo que vas a tener que trabajar en lo que haya.

Y así vine a su casa... y por medio de amigos... de gente que él conocía encontré un trabajo. (Informant 5)

That year when I decided to come, my cousin who had been living in the United States for 3 years came to visit us, and it was him who invited and encouraged me to come here. He would tell me: “there are jobs, but you will have to work in whatever you find”...And that is how I came to his house... and thanks to friends, people he knew, I found a job. (Informant 5)

As informant 5, all the participants relied on social networks made up of individuals who are willing to share their experiences, backgrounds, and skills in order to build and strengthen their community. In other words, these community members learn from one another in their quest to attain their common goal while developing and enhancing their own respective skill sets, which add value to their individual lives and the larger communities where they live and work.

Those social networks not only allow newcomers to learn the norms or shared values of their new community, but they also grant newcomers the trust to become members of this community. These social interactions provide them with tangible and intangible resources and relationships that enhance their opportunities through collective action and cooperation. For example, informant 4 said that he is part of a group of people
that play a game called Tanda which means “taking turns.” The main objective of this
game is to help players to save up money. This group is formed by 10 friends or relatives
who have a steady job. Each person in the group receives a number from 1 to 10 and they
have to put 200 dollars in a box every week. They take turns to take the 2,000 dollars
with them every week according to the number they got. For instance, the person who
received number one would take the money the first week. The second week, the money
could go to whoever received number two. This sequence is followed until everyone has
had a chance to take the money with them. In this way they know that in 10 weeks they
will have 2000 dollars to send home or to invest in whatever they want. Informants
explained that the game is a way to support each other financially. They have access to a
lump sum of money and they pay it back every week without interest.

Cada persona tiene un número y se les da el dinero según el número que
tienen...durante las 10 semanas. Y así ellos juntan el dinero, y lo mandan a
México, terminan sus casas... o pagan sus deudas..., y ellos confían en nosotros,
es solo de palabra, no hay ningún contrato o nada... Y a una persona si le toca el
número 8, por ejemplo pero están en el número 5, lo mismo se le da el dinero y se
la ayuda para que no tenga que pedir el dinero y estar pagando intereses.
Informe 4)

Each person has a number and receives the money according to the
number they have. It's for 10 weeks. So each week, for a period of 10 weeks, a
member gets the money. He can send it to Mexico, he can pay debts, or he can
save it. We all trust each other. There is no contract or anything. If a person needs the money, but he or she has number 8 but we are in week number 5, we give the money to that person all the same. We help each other so that we do not have to borrow money and pay interests. (Informant 4)

Socializing

Participants stated that living amongst their country folk or other Hispanics, provided them with ample opportunities for socializing and solidarity. Although not all of them are able to frequently visit each other, they make efforts to maintain relations alive by keeping in touch on the phone, by attending church on Sunday, or by participating in special celebrations such as birthday parties, baptism ceremonies, and weddings.

For some of the informants, church is a center for social and family interaction. Church becomes a place for spiritual renewal, and a place where informants can interact with fellow co-ethnics who share the same beliefs, expectations, and aspirations. For instance, celebrating Virgin of Guadalupe’s Day is very important for informant 4 and his family. Therefore, they organize and participate in different fundraising events to collect money to hold the celebration on December 12th. Regarding this, Informant 4 says,

\[ Yo \text{ siempre he tratado de participar en los eventos que organiza la iglesia, y siempre estamos haciendo eventos para ayudar en la iglesia. Nosotros organizamos una kermés para reunir fondos para hacer la celebración del 12 de Diciembre, hacemos juegos, comida, y recaudamos dinero. } \]

(Informant 4)
I am very involved at church. We are always organizing events to help the church. We organize a kermis to collect money to celebrate December 12th. We have games, food, and we collect money. (Informant 4)

Thanks to this celebration, and the positive relations that take place at church, a stable church choir was formed by a group of Hispanics. The choir is composed by 17 members that get together every Saturday at informant 4s’ house to practice, talk about their problems, and help each other through solidarity and cooperation.

Ellos están aquí por las mismas razones que yo, quieren progresar y no hay ninguna malicia de su parte, y entre ellos se dan aliento... En este grupo se da una amistad, un apoyo y un aliento para seguir adelante para no ir por lugares que no deben. (Informant 4)

They are here for the same reasons I have. They want to make progress. They are good people, and we encourage each other.... In this group we give each other friendship, support, and encouragement to keep going and to choose the right path in life. (Informant 4)

For informant 2, the Hispanic church in this community has played an important role for helping her meet and interact with people from other countries. She also mentioned that there is not much communication among family members during the week because everyone is tired. Sometimes, her husband has to go out to work again, or
her children are sleeping or busy with school work or friends. She finds that going to
church has helped them consolidate as a family. On this note, Informant 2 recounts,

Vamos los cuatro, vamos todos, mi esposo, mis dos hijos y yo. La iglesia
es la única forma que yo siento que nos une como familia. La vida aquí es muy
agitada, todo se hace a las apuradas, y es como que falta el tiempo para estar con
la familia. Cuando vamos a la iglesia vamos todos juntos, y conversamos acerca
de las cosas buenas y les enseñamos a nuestros hijos por el camino que deben ir.

(Informant 2)

The four of us go to church, my husband, my two children, and me. I think
church unites us as a family. We are always in a rush, everything is done in a
rush, and we do not have time to spend with the family. When we go to church, we
go all together, and we talk about good things and we teach our children the path
they have to follow. (Informant 2)

Socializing practices also included attending school events and initiatives. In fact,
school plays a very important socializing role among the parents in this New Hispanic
Diaspora. School not only transmits social knowledge, but it also allows the informants to
meet and interact with different people within the school community. School becomes an
opportunity to participate in activities, to socialize with school stakeholders, and to learn
about the American school system. Informant 2 says,
Casi siempre trato de ir a la escuela cuando hay eventos. A mi hija le gusta ir porque allí ve a sus amigas y se divierte. A mí me gusta ir porque converso con su maestra y con otros padres. (Informant 2)

I always try to attend school events. My daughter likes going to these events because she sees her school friends and she always has fun. I like to go because it gives me the opportunity to talk with my daughter’s teacher and with other parents. (Informant 2)

Working in the New Hispanic Diaspora or in its Surroundings

The participants have different kinds of jobs such as cleaning houses, working in a bagel shop, plumbing, working in a deli, baby sitting, working as a chef, or working in a fast food establishment. All these occupations do not pay much and for that reason most of the informants and their spouses have to work extra hours to make ends meet. The men who were interviewed in this study worked extended hours to earn more money and provide for their families, whereas the women would come back home to take care of the children and do house chores.

Most informants concurred that one of the reasons for which they decided to live in this community was the proximity to wealthy neighborhoods. The Hispanic population usually does the gardening, cleaning, and babysitting of most of these wealthy towns. The availability of jobs as gardeners, construction workers, baby sitters, or housekeepers is what made most of the participants settle down in this community. Regarding this, Informant 3 explains,
Bueno, porque aquí se necesita para la construcción, la jardinería, hay casas grandes y lujosas y contratan a los hispanos para limpiar y cuidar las casas y mantener los jardines. Muchos trabajan de jardinería, cortando el pasto, pintando. (Informant 3)

Well, here, they need people for construction and gardening. There are big and luxurious houses, and they hire Hispanics to clean and take care of their properties and gardens. Many Hispanics work in gardening, lawn mowing, and painting. (Informant 3)

Informants stated that the job opportunities that exist in this New Hispanic Diaspora have made the Latino population grow. At the same time, the large numbers of Hispanics has contributed to the local economy. For instance, the Latino population has created a great demand for authentic Latino products. Spanish-speaking businesses have multiplied in order to supply the demand of a growing Hispanic market. Informant 2 says,

Es como un círculo, nosotros crecemos y hacemos crecer a los negocios. Hay restaurantes hispanos que no estaban aquí hace 10 años, y ahora los supermercados traen comida de nuestros países, y las tiendas contratan a personas que hablan español porque quieren atraer a los clientes hispanos.

(Informant 2)
It is like a circle, we grow and we make businesses grow. There are Hispanic restaurants that weren't here 10 years ago, the supermarkets bring products from our countries, and the local businesses hire Spanish speaking people because they want to attract the Hispanic clientele. (Informant 2)

Hispanics contribute to the growth of American businesses in different ways. They are not only very committed and hard working but they also attract other Hispanics as customers. Informant 2, who works in a bagel shop operated by English speaking owners, says that she believes that sales have doubled thanks to her and her husband because they are able to assist Spanish speaking customers. Informant 2 recounts the following experience that takes place every day at this bagel shop,

Los mexicanos van a comprar el café y nosotros los atendemos. Y a veces cuando nos ven en un lado de la caja todos se ponen de ese lado a esperar que nosotros los atendamos. Y el señor está a los gritos diciendo en inglés a quien mas puede ayudar pero todos miran para otro lado y esperan que nosotros les vendamos. Ellos quieren que nosotros los atendamos, porque a veces piden y les dan otra cosa... pero eso no pasa con nosotros porque nosotros los entendemos. (Informant 2)

Mexicans come to buy coffee and we assist them. When they see us on one side at a cash register, everyone lines up on that side waiting for us to assist them. And the owner is asking them in English if he can help somebody else, and
everyone is looking at the other side waiting for us to sell them what they want.

They want us because sometimes they ask for something and they get something else ... but that does not happen with us because we understand them. (Informant 2)

When the informants were asked if they felt that they were taking job opportunities away from Americans, they said that they did not believe that it was true. On the contrary, they emphasized that they just do the jobs no one else wants to do. In reference to this, Informant 8 says,

Nosotros hacemos trabajos que nadie quiere hacer porque no están bien pagados. Por lo contrario, lo que hacemos es crear más trabajos porque nosotros compramos cosas, salimos, y gastamos, y el dinero que ganamos vuelve a ellos porque compramos cosas. (Informant 8)

We do jobs that nobody else wants to do because they are low paid jobs.

On the contrary, we help create more jobs because we buy things, we go out, and we spend, and the money we earn goes back to the local economy. (Informant 8)

Informants further explained did not think that they took job opportunities away from American citizens. They thought that people hired them because they had proven employers that they are hard working, honest, kind, trustworthy, and reliable. Regarding this, Informant 2 comments,
Nosotros sabemos corresponder a la confianza que ellos nos han dado. Yo veo a la americana que trabaja ahí con nosotros, a ella no le gusta atender a los clientes. Cuando llega gente, ella trata de irse para atrás, y como que le da pereza atender. Nosotros estamos corriendo, atendiendo a la gente, tratando de que no se vaya a ir nadie, y atendiendo a todos lo mejor que se pueda. Un día llegó una señora y dijo que de todos los años que ella ha ido a esa tienda nunca nadie le dijo buenos días o la trato tan amablemente como ahora.” (Informant 2)

We know how to correspond to their trust. I see the American girl that works in the bagel store. She does not like to assist the customers, and when people enter the store, she tries to walk away. She seems she does not want to assist them, but we ran towards them, making sure nobody leaves, and assisting everyone the best we can. One day, a lady walked in and said that in all the years she had been shopping in that store, she had never been greeted with a good morning, and that she had never been treated as kindly as she was now.

(Informant 2)

Paying Taxes. Most of the informants interviewed said that they do pay taxes contrary to what most people believe. Five out of the 11 participants in this study admitted that they make tax contributions by paying state and Federal taxes through their Tax Identification Number (TIN), which is an identification number used by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). A TIN is a tax processing number only available for certain nonresident and
resident aliens, their spouses, and dependents who cannot get a social security number (SSN). TINs are issued regardless of immigration status (Internal Revenue Service, 2007). Informants also noted that they also pay taxes indirectly every time they go out and buy things, when they pay the rent, and when they pay their mortgage. Informant 5 referred to this as follows,

_Cuando vas a comprar algo, tu no puedes decir, yo no tengo documentos así que no me cobren las taxes, lo mismo pago en todas las cosas que compre, y cuando pago la renta. Mucha gente no sabe eso. También tengo un número de identificación que es el TIN y con ese número me hacen descuentos para el gobierno federal._ (Informant 5)

_When you go to a store, you cannot say, I do not have documents so I will not pay taxes. I pay them all the same when I buy things, when I pay my rent. Many people do not know that. I also have a Tax Identification Number (TIN) and with that number I pay taxes to the federal government._ (Informant 5)

Throughout the interviews the following information emerged: there are two kinds of undocumented immigrants, those who pay federal taxes, and those who do not. The ones that pay federal taxes do so because they work for companies such as fast food establishments, restaurants, and banks that require them to have a TIN; or because they want to stay in the United States permanently and want to comply with the law. Those who do not have a TIN are those immigrants that work on their own, gardening, lawn
mowing, cleaning houses, baby sitting, or as maids and their employers are individuals who do not require them to pay taxes. Table 5 is a componential analysis of the kinds of workers that participated in this study.

Table 5

Componential Analysis: Kinds of Workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTRAST SET</th>
<th>DIMENSIONS OF CONTRAST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Works for a food company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 3</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 4</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 6</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 8</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 10</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 11</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Informants also clarified that TINs help undocumented immigrants prove the number of years they have been in the United States in case any future guest worker program or amnesty provisions are passed by immigration agencies. For instance, informant 8 from El Salvador had paid her federal taxes from the moment she arrived and when amnesty for Salvadorans was granted, thanks to her tax returns, she was able to prove for how long she and her family had been living in this country. She also says that having paid taxes all this time has helped her build up her credit, obtain a credit card, and purchase her own house.
Informant 4 shared that his green card was denied because his employer had failed to declare his earnings to the Federal government. Now, he is waiting for his lawyer to straighten up his situation. He has been waiting for several years, and the more time that passes by, the more disillusioned he feels. He keeps paying his taxes all the same with the hope that one day he will be able to take advantage of a new law, amnesty, or favorable decision on his case by the United States immigration agencies.

Another example is Informant 7 who works in a fast food establishment and pays her taxes duly. She wonders what will happen to that money if she does not become a legal resident or a citizen. She knows that she may not get any benefits for her tax contributions; however she pays her taxes just in case she needs proof of payment in the future to adjust her legal status.

Yo hago mis taxes. Empecé a pagar hace mucho. Pongo mis cuatro dependientes pero igual me quitan dinero. Entonces no se a donde va ese dinero. Mucha gente cree que porque somos ilegales no pagamos los impuestos. Pero como nos pagan en cheque, los descuentos están ahí claritos. Dice Federal taxes, pero nosotros no tenemos seguro social, así que ese dinero va para el gobierno federal. (Informant 7)

I pay my taxes. I started paying them a long time ago. I declared my four dependants, but all the same they deduct me a lot of money. I do not know where all that money goes. But since they pay me with a check, you can see very clearly how much money is deducted. It says Federal taxes, but we do not have a social
security number so the money goes straight to the Federal government.

(Informant 7)

Transportation. Most of the participants have chosen to live in this community because of the many transportation options that the town offers to them. For instance, the town has a train station, regular bus services, and taxi companies that allow them to travel in groups making it very affordable for them. Another option to go to work is riding a private van that picks up all the people that need to get to work. This is the case of Informant 3’s husband who does not have a driving license but goes to work thanks to a van that comes to pick him up every morning at 6:00 am.

Some of the informants said that before accepting a job, they always take into consideration the transportation options they have in order to get there. Most of the informants do not have driving license because of their undocumented status. However, 5 informants reported having a driving license. They own a car and drive it to work. They were able to get driving licenses in neighboring states which are more lenient when issuing driving licenses to immigrants. Table 6 is a componental analysis of how informants go to work.

Informant 2 feels that she is very lucky because the owner of the shop where she works has an apartment which is above the shop and lets her rent that apartment. She says,

La ubicación es muy buena. ¡Vivo arriba de donde trabajo, cerca de la estación del tren y del autobús! (Informant 2)
The location is great. I live above my workplace, near the train station and bus stop! (Informant 2)

Table 6

Componential Analysis: Paradigm for Ways of going to work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTRAST SET</th>
<th>DIMENSIONS OF CONTRAST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lives close to work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 3</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 6</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 7</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 8</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, informant 7 has to rely on her bike or the bus to go to work. Unfortunately buses are not as frequent as she would like, so she has to get up very early in order not to miss the bus and be on time for work. She refers to this as follows,

Prefiero ir en bicicleta. El problema es que en invierno nieva y es difícil ir en bicicleta y tengo que tomar el autobús. Pero los autobuses no pasan seguido y
tienen diferentes horarios los fines de semana. A veces, si los autobuses están tarde o temprano y yo lo perdi, tengo que pagar un taxi, y es caro porque me cuesta lo que gano en 2 horas de trabajo. (Informant 7)

*I prefer to ride my bike. The problem is that during the winter months, it is very difficult to ride a bike, so you have to take the bus. But buses do not run regularly, and they have different schedules on weekends. Sometimes, if buses are late or we miss the bus, we have to pay a taxi, and that is very expensive because paying the taxi driver would be equivalent to working for 2 hours.*

Informant 2 and her husband work for the same person and their boss bought a pickup truck which he lets them drive. Informant 2 adds,

*Voy a trabajar con mi esposo porque los dos trabajamos para la misma persona. Yo cuido a los niños y mi esposo se encarga de limpiar y cuidar los jardines.* (Informant 2)

*I go to work with my husband because we both work for the same person. I baby sit the children and my husband takes care of the gardens.* (Informant 2)

*Language Barrier*

All the informants feel that their inability to communicate in English is one of the main obstacles for succeeding economically and finding better paid jobs. In fact, most
informants believe that they have been able to find better and easier jobs because they were able to improve their English communication skills.

Informant 6 recalls that when she came to this country she started cleaning offices at night because she did not speak English, and because at night she did not have to interact with people. However, she thought that this kind of job was exhausting because she did not sleep well, and she had to take care of her children during the day. Later on, when she was able to speak a little English she started working in a house as a cleaning lady. She could understand simple commands but not everything. Informant 6 recounts that at the beginning, her limited English proficiency was a great obstacle. She commented that she always had to work harder and for less money than other workers who did similar jobs but were more fluent in English. To this effect, she comments,

\[ \text{Como yo no sabía inglés, no podía cuidar a los niños, y entonces había otra señora que se encargaba de los niños y yo tenía que hacer el trabajo de limpieza. Y ella los cuidaba y yo veía lo mal que hacia su trabajo y a ella le pagan mejor que a mí. Y yo pensaba algún día voy a tener ese trabajo... y así lo hice. (Informant 6)} \]

\[ \text{Since I did not speak English, I could not take care of the children, so there was another lady who took care of the children while she did nothing, and I had to do the cleaning. She only had to take care of the children and I saw how badly she did her job, but she still earned more money than me. I used to think, one day, I am going to have that job... And I did. (Informant 6)} \]
The impact of the language barrier varies depending upon the social context. An embarrassing misunderstanding could damage the relationship or generate a few laughs and contribute to the bonding process. For instance, Informant 3 remembers a time when she blushed in embarrassment because she made an innocent mistake for not knowing the numbers in English. She remembers that it was her turn to be at the cash register and a customer had to pay for what he had bought. When this customer asked how much he owed, she replied "$70.70." The man looked puzzled at the amount noted on the front of the cash register and jokingly said, "It is very expensive here" and then paid the $7.70 that he owed. Informant 3 says that since then, she has learned how to say the numbers in English because she is aware that another misunderstanding like that could result in a lost sale.

Learning and Using English

All the informants agree that knowledge of English is a very important asset for getting better paid jobs. They also realize that language is a vital tool for achieving one's goals and finding better job opportunities. For that reason, all the informants want to learn English and improve their English reading, writing, and speaking skills.

All the informants have the inner motivation and desire to learn English; for example, 7 out of the 11 informants can communicate in English, but do not write it. The rest of the informants can understand it but have difficulty in putting their thoughts across. Table 7 illustrates participants' knowledge of English, which is a composite of
self-reported ability to understand, speak, read, and write the language. Participants’ English command ranges from little knowledge to full fluency.

Table 7

Componential Analysis: Participants’ English Proficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informants</th>
<th>Understands English</th>
<th>Speaks English</th>
<th>Reads English</th>
<th>Writes English</th>
<th>Finished high school/ or pursued further studies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informant 1</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Informant 2</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Informant 3</td>
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<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 6</td>
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<td>Informant 11</td>
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Those who were able to learn to speak English stated that they did so thanks to their self-motivation, determination, and perseverance. For instance, informant 6 says that she started studying English every day on her own. She read books or newspaper articles, and she looked up the words she did not understand in a dictionary. She kept a notebook where she copied the new words she learned and later she asked her English class teacher how to pronounce the words. She attended ESL adult classes twice a week. All that effort and self motivation helped her improve her English skills. When she talks about her achievement she feels happy and proud because she was able to make progress and find a better job.
The same is true of Informant 10 who also believes that learning English allowed her husband to earn more money and improve their life style. She says,

*La única forma de superarse es saber inglés... Por ejemplo hubo veces en que los patrones le dieron mejores posibilidades o le pagaron más a mi esposo, o lo pusieron de chef porque sabía inglés.* (Informant 1)

*The only way to make progress is to speak English. For instance, many times, my husband received a raise or was promoted as a chef because he knew English.* (Informant 1)

Informants also reported that they are faced with obstacles that prevent them from learning English faster. For instance, most informants have two jobs, they take care of their children, they do not have time to study, and they are unable to take classes regularly.

Informant 2 is aware of the importance of learning English, however she cannot speak it. She just knows some basic words and phrases she needs at work. She says that she wishes she could attend English classes at school, but she has to work because her family needs the money, and she is aware that learning English requires a great effort, time, and commitment she is not able to devote.

The fact that the schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora provide ESL lessons to school parents is a great advantage that will allow parents to help their children with the homework, and to have better communication with English speaking people. When
parents are attending English classes their children are with a baby sitter in another classroom doing fun activities. Parents also feel that when they are learning at school, they set a positive example for their children because they show them that they are also learners and school is important to succeed. Informant 2 refers to this as follows,

Una gran ventaja es que las clases de inglés son gratuitas, y las personas que enseñan los cursos son maestras de la escuela que hablan español e inglés, y saben mucho, están bien preparadas. Cuando mi hija me ve estudiar inglés, ella ve que para me estudiar es importante. (Informant 2)

It is a great advantage that English classes are free and that the people that teach the courses are teachers who speak English and Spanish, and they know a lot, they are well prepared. When my daughter sees me studying English at school, she sees that I value education. (Informant 2)

Language difficulties or not speaking English fluently interfere in the different daily activities these informants carry out such as communicating with a salesperson at a store, or socializing with their English speaking neighbors. For instance, Informant 10 feels that not speaking English makes her everyday activities, such as going to the supermarket or post office, very difficult and time consuming because she has to think what she wants to say, and she always makes a lot of mistakes. This informant says that although she knows that she does not speak English very well she always makes an effort
and tries to communicate with her neighbor or other people because she knows it is the only way she will learn more and become fluent in English.

_Yo siempre trato de hablar con los americanos, no me da vergüenza, porque yo sé que es la única forma en la que yo voy a aprender y voy a poder hablar mejor, y mi esposo aprendió inglés porque está todo el día hablando con su jefe...practicando es la única forma._ (Informant 10)

_I always try to talk with Americans. I am not shy. Using the language is the only way to learn (English) and become fluent. My husband learned English because he is all day talking with his boss... practicing is the only way._ (Informant 10)

Another interesting point that emerged from the interviews is the fact that having attained high degrees of education in their native language aided informants’ acquisition of and reading ability in the second language. Indeed, first language literacy development is strongly related to successful second language learning, and academic achievement, because the literacy skills developed in the native language transfer to the second language (Rivera, 1999).

An example of how language and literacy background influence learning a second language is clearly stated by Informant 8 from El Salvador. She noted that she only finished primary school, but her husband from the same country obtained a degree as a teacher of psychology. Although she has been in the United States for 20 years and has
already become an American citizen she has not learned to speak English fluently, let alone read or write. Meanwhile, her husband has achieved good command of the English language easily and in a short period of time. She says that learning English has always been very challenging and difficult for her, and she has always felt frustrated about that, but her husband was able to learn it without any difficulties.

Yo creo que no pude aprender Inglés porque yo no completé mis estudios en El Salvador, pero solo termine la escuela primaria, mientras que mi esposo tiene un título de profesor de psicología y el aprendió inglés rápido. Pienso que sus estudios lo ayudan mucho. (Informant 8)

I think that I am not able to learn English because I did not complete my studies in El Salvador. I only finished primary school, whereas my husband has a degree as a teacher of psychology and he picked up English faster. I think that his former education has helped him a lot. (Informant 8)

Cultural Differences

All the participants were molded by the culture in which they grew up and by the customs, traditions, and lifestyles of the people of their own country. They became used to the celebrations, style of dress, the types of food, and the cultural norms of their upbringing environment. When they moved from their home country to the United States they noticed many cultural differences that made their cultural adjustment difficult at first.
Informants noted that one of the major differences, and one of the most difficult to overcome, was putting their family second and work first. Most female informants were used to being stay home mothers who took care of the children and house chores. However, when they came to the U.S., some of the female informants had to start working and fulfilling dual roles at work and at home. Those female informants found it very hard to balance work and home. For example, Informant 1 tells,

*Todo es diferente. En mi país, las mujeres son más de casa, y el hombre es el que trabaja. A veces las mujeres trabajan también, pero solo medio tiempo, porque ellas son las que están más pendientes de los niños. Pero en los Estados Unidos, las mujeres tienen que trabajar largas horas...y a veces no están al pendiente de sus hijos porque los dejan con otras personas, y no saben lo que están haciendo, y están cansadas cuando llegan a la casa, y ya no tienen tanta comunicación entre ellas y sus hijos. Y no saben con quién están, o si están con malas compañías, y no se dan cuenta de lo que están haciendo. (Informant 1)*

*Everything is different here. In my country, women are the ones who stay at home, and men are the ones who work. Sometimes, women work, too, but it is only part time because they are the ones who take care of the children. But in the United States, women have to work long hours, and sometimes they are not able to take care of their children because they have to work. Then when they come back home they are tired and there is not enough communication between them*
and their children. Besides, they do not know who their children are with or what their children could be doing. (Informant 1)

Male informants also noticed that spending quality time with their families is something that they miss. Informant 5 says that, although he used to work all day in Mexico, he would always come home for lunch and spend some time with his children before going back to work. Informant 5 says that in the United States, he has to leave home very early in the morning and return home late in the evening. He feels that he does not spend as much time with his family as he used to do back in his country.

Male participants also noted that back in their countries they were used to working and supporting their families. However, that changed when they came to the United States. Informant 5 shares his views on this as follows,

En México, el hombre es el que trabaja, la mujer se queda en casa con su mamá, o la suegra, y limpian, cocinan, cuidan a los niños. No trabajan porque se supone que el hombre tiene que mantenerlas, o porque no hay trabajo. Los hombres pueden trabajar en muchas cosas como albañilería o carpintería, pero las mujeres no. Cuando nosotros vinimos a este país, yo creía que iba a ser igual, y yo no quería que mi mujer busque trabajo, pero después me di cuenta que estaba equivocado, con dos hijos y ya un tercero que viene en camino, me di cuenta que necesitamos el dinero, y mi esposa quería trabajar, así que acepte y ella ahora trabaja en Burger King. (Informant 5)
In Mexico, men work, and women stay at home with their mother or mother-in-law. They cook, clean, and take care of the children. They do not work because men are supposed to support them, or because there are no jobs. Men can work in many different things, like masonry or carpentry, but women cannot. When we came to this country, I thought that it was going to be the same, and I did not want my wife to look for a job, but then I realized that I was wrong, with two children and a third one on its way, I realized that we needed the money. My wife wanted to work, so now, she works in Burger King. (Informant 5)

Another cultural difference that informants noticed is the openness that they can observe in the United States in terms of how people dress; express their beliefs, styles, and sexuality. These behaviors contrast with what they were used to seeing back in their home countries where people do not talk or express themselves openly. Regarding this, Informant 1 observes,

La gente, pues son como que no le importa mucho como andan, los jóvenes andan con sus pelos así parados, o pintados de colores fuertes, y la gente lo ve como normal, y se ven como otras cosas más abiertas como a la homosexualidad, y las lesbianas, y en nuestro país no se lo ve tanto, o no sé, será porque no se lo habla, aquí como que se ven más cosas. (Informant 1)

People in the United States do not care how they dress, youngsters wear their hair in spikes or dye it in strident colors, and people think that is normal.
You also see other things such as homosexuality, but in our country you do not see that, or nobody talks about that. (Informant 1)

When talking about dress codes, Informant 10 says that she is always trying to teach her children how to dress appropriately, especially when they go to school because she wants them to be clean and neat. For that reason, she never lets them buy clothes without her approval, and she does not let them choose what to wear despite the fact that her twins are 11 years old, and could easily do so. She noted that things were easier in Mexico because children would wear a uniform to school, and they did not have other options. However, in the United States, she always finds herself arguing with her sons regarding clothes and how to wear them. They want to wear backward baseball caps, loose-cut pants, and large t-shirts, of which she disapproves. In reference to this, Informant 10 commented,

_**El problema es que ahora esta esa moda el Hip Hop, y mis hijos me dicen que quieren vestirse como sus compañeros, que sus amigos se visten de tal forma y que ellos no se visten así. Yo les digo que esa forma no está bien... mostrando los calzones, y con toda la ropa grande. Yo soy la que les compre la ropa a mis hijos... se ponen lo que yo les digo.** (Informant 10)

_The problem is that now Hip Hop clothes is the trend, and my children tell me that they want to dress like their classmates and friends. And I tell them I do not like that. It is not right that they wear oversized clothes and show their_
underwear. I am the one who buys my children's ... they wear what I say.

(Informant 10)

All the informants recalled that their home country food was something they missed terribly when they just arrived. For instance, informant 2 found that food did not taste the same although she tried to cook the same meals she used to cook in Costa Rica. She also said that when she just came, she would go to the supermarket and would be lost and confused, not only because she did not know what the labels said, but also because she found so many options that she would be unsure about what to pick. Regarding this she says,

_Siempre estaba adivinando que tipo de comida era, y más de una vez compré algo que después lo tenía que tirar porque sabía horrible._ (Informant 2)

_I was always guessing what it was and more than once I bought something that I had to throw away because it tasted horrible._ (Informant 2)

When Informant 11 first arrived to the United States, she found it hard to get used to American food. Being a single mother meant that she had to start working full time, so she did not have time for cooking. First, she tried buying frozen food as most Americans do, but that option did not work for her because her children disliked it and she would always end up cooking late at night. She also found that frozen food was very expensive in the long run. She says that it is difficult to find the extra time to cook at home but at
the same time she cannot afford take out like most Americans because with that money she could buy staples for 3 days. Informant 11 misses Mexico where she had the time to cook everyday and where fresh fruits and vegetables were very cheap.

It is worth mentioning that the arrival of immigrants into places where co-ethnic networks already exist diminishes the impact of a foreign culture because immigrants have fewer difficulties in satisfying immediate living needs, such as housing, places to shop, and schools for their children. For instance, most informants in this study think that one of the advantage about living in this ethnic community is that there are many Hispanic stores where Hispanics can buy the ingredients they need to cook their favorite traditional dishes. Informant 4 adds that whenever they cannot find the necessary ingredients their relatives who live in Mexico send them certain food products that are not available in the United States.

Regarding differences in cultural upbringing, participants reported that back in their home countries, it is a natural thing to discipline their children with physical punishment. However, they are aware that this practice is frowned upon in the United States and many times misinterpreted as child abuse. Informant 10 says that her husband sometimes spanks their children when they misbehave. She mentioned that her son once was so upset with them that he threatened to call the police. On this note, she explains,

_Mi hijo Miguel es el más rebelde, y su papa le da palizas de vez en cuando. Yo le digo a el que no le pegue, que le puede dejar marcas y que la maestra va a mandar a la policía. Una vez, mi hijo se comportó muy mal, y mi esposo se enojó mucho. Recuerdo que mi hijo nos amenazó con que iba a llamar_
a la policia, y yo le dije, que si llamaba a la policia, a mi no me interesaba, al contrario, se lo iban a llevar a otra casa con otros padres, y si eso es lo que él quería que lo haga. Y aprendió a no decirlo de nuevo. A veces les digo que los voy a mandar a México si se portan tan mal, que demasiado sacrificio hacemos por ellos y ellos no aprenden a comportarse. Ellos tienen miedo y dicen que no, a México no queremos volver. (Informant 10)

My son Miguel is the most rebellious, and his dad spanks him from time to time. I tell him not to beat him because he can leave marks on him, and that Miguel’s teacher is going to call the police. Once, my son misbehaved, and my husband was very upset. I remember that my son threatened us with calling the police, and I said that I did not care if he called the police. I told him that if he called the police, they were going to take him away to live with foster parents. If that is what he wanted, to live with other parents, then he could do it. So he learned not to say that again. (Informant 10)

Another cultural difference that participants noted was related to the freedom that American youngsters are given. Informant 3 feels that the permissiveness of parents in the United States can be something negative if it is not done with moderation. Regarding this she says,

Bueno una de las diferencias más marcadas que yo he notado es la libertad en la juventud. Allá eso no se ve, tal vez un poquito en la ciudad, pero
principalmente en el campo, eso no se ve. Las personas, los jóvenes son más como lo que dice su papa o su mama. Mi mamá siempre decía, una cosa es libertad y otra cosa libertinaje. Los jóvenes aquí hacen lo que quieren, se van a vivir solos, con el novio o la novia. (Informant 2)

One of the most salient differences that I have noticed is the freedom that youngsters have. You do not see that in Costa Rica, maybe in the city, but not in the countryside. Youngsters do what their parents tell them to do. My mother always said, one thing is freedom (libertad) and another thing is libertinism (libertinaje). Youngsters here do whatever they want. They move out and live alone with a boyfriend or girlfriend. (Informant 2)

Informants also feel that life in their home countries is more relaxed and slow paced. All the informants say that in their countries children are allowed to go out and play alone in the streets or wander in the neighborhood without supervision. If parents have to go to the store they can leave their children at home or send their children to the store to buy drinks, fruits, vegetables, or other kinds of staples. They cannot do that in the United States because shops are far away and it might be dangerous to send them alone. Moreover, they feel that children in their countries have the freedom to run and play outside which they do not have here because most of them live in apartments and they do not have enough space. Informant 5 refers to this as follows,
Y allá los niños son libres, son felices, corren, juegan afuera, andan a caballo. Ellos no están todos los días encerrados mirando televisión... bueno allá la vida era más fácil... Allí siento que se disfruta la vida. (Informant 5)

Back in our countries, children are free. They are happy. They run and play outside and they ride horses. They are not inside watching T.V. all day...well; I feel that life was easier there. I feel that you enjoy life there.

(Informant 5)

All the informants believe that life was somewhat simpler in their home countries, whereas in the United States everything seems to be more complicated. Participants noted that back in their countries they did not have to worry about paying the rent, monthly utility bills, or paying for food. They did not have the means to afford material things due to the scarcity of jobs; however, at the same time they always seemed to find a way to satisfy their basic needs by sharing property with relatives, and growing their own fruits and vegetables at home. Informant 11 refers to this as follows,

En los Estados Unidos hay muchas cosas que tu o tus hijos quieren tener, y todo cuesta dinero. Cuantas más cosas tiene uno, más dinero tiene que gastar.

En México, nosotros no teníamos gas natural, comprábamos cilindros de gas, y si no teníamos dinero no los comprábamos, cocinábamos en hornos de barro, o con carbón en el piso. Eso no lo podemos hacer aquí porque los bomberos nos caerían en un instante. No teníamos que pagar renta porque allá es muy común
tener un gran lote de terreno y compartirlo entre la familia y ahí construimos nuestras casitas humildes. No nos quejábamos porque no conocíamos otras cosas mejores, pero cuando uno llega a los Estados Unidos uno ve otras cosas que quieres comprar o tener y a uno le empieza a gustar estar aquí, y después uno no se quiere ir... (Informant 11)

In the United States there are lots of things that you or your children want to have, and everything costs money. The more things you have, the more money you have to spend. In Mexico, we did not have natural gas. We bought gas cylinders and if we did not have money to buy them, we cooked in mud ovens or in charcoal grills on the floor. We cannot do that here, the firefighters will come instantly... We did not have to pay rent either because it is common to have a big parcel of land that is shared among family members and that is where we build our humble homes. We did not complain because we did not know any better, but then, when you come to the United States, you can afford nice things, and you like living here, you do not want to leave... (Informant 11)

While informants enjoyed the simpler life in their countries, they also acknowledged that they enjoy the benefits and commodities of modern life. They said that running water, electricity, heating, and air conditioning are many times given for granted in the United States, but back in their home countries these are luxuries that not everyone has access to. Informant 3 says that the first time she came to the United States; she was thrilled that she had running hot water and could take long showers because in
Mexico she had to heat up water in pots in order to take a bath. Regarding this, she comments,

\[ \text{La primera vez que llegué a los Estados Unidos yo era joven, y lo que más me gustó fue que tenía agua caliente y podía bañarme por horas. A mí eso me encanto, porque en México nosotros no teníamos agua caliente. La teníamos que calentar en ollas. (Informante 3)} \]

\[ \text{The first time that I arrived in the United States, I was young, and what I liked the most was that I had hot running water, and I could shower for hours. I loved that, because we did not have hot water in Mexico. We had to heat up water in pots. (Informante 3)} \]

Besides, some informants mentioned that if people do not have jobs in their home countries, they always try to find a way to earn some money. For instance, women can cook and sell tortillas, tamales, and Mexican pastries. Men can cut wood to sell to carpenters. However, this is not possible in the United States. Informante 11 recalls that when she came to the United States for the first time, she did not have any money on her because she had spent it all paying the coyote and she did not have a job either, desperate she decided to make tamales and sell them door to door. She says that she was so silly to think that Americans would just buy tamales from a stranger. She remembers that the police stopped her and told her to go home otherwise she was going to be arrested. In reference to this, she recalls,
En los Estados Unidos eso es diferente, uno no puede improvisar para ganar dinero, uno necesita un trabajo. Ahora que recién me alivie, no se que voy a hacer porque no puedo volver a limpiar casas por unos meses, así que estoy pensando en cuidar niños en mi casa. (Informant 11)

In the United States, it is different. You cannot improvise if you want money. You need a job. Now that I just had my baby, I do not know what I am going to do, because I cannot clean houses for a few months, I am thinking about babysitting in my house. (Informant 11)

Conflict with Other Ethnic/Racial Groups

The data reveals that participants in this study identified different types of interactions with other racial and ethnic groups coexisting within their community. Those interactions often seemed to be materialized in the form of conflicts. For reasons of clarity and organization those interactions/conflicts will be analyzed separately into three different sub-categories: Conflict with other Hispanics, Conflict with Whites, and Conflict with African-Americans.

Conflict with other Hispanics. The data reveals a great deal of heterogeneity among Hispanics. For example, inside the broader category of Hispanic there are subgroups depending on the country where Hispanics come from. Despite these differences, and although it may seem contradictory, participants still consider themselves Hispanics who
belong to one group. The complexity lies on the fact that Hispanics see themselves a part of a broader group, but at the same time they are aware of the differences that exist among themselves. This internal differentiation has important consequences for identity construction among Hispanics, especially when these differences perspire as conflicts.

Some Informants have noticed a feeling of ethnocentrism that leads Hispanics to differentiate among them depending on their country of origin. For instance, Informant 1 notices that there are Latinos who discriminate other Latinos, especially if they do not belong to the same country. She says that sometimes Latinos think that the cultural traditions and values they bring from their countries are better or superior to all others. This is usually coupled with a generalized dislike and even contempt for people who have other cultural traditions.

*Bueno, somos latinos todos pero... entre los mismos latinos hay cierta discriminación.* (Informant 1)

*Well, we are all Latinos, but among Latinos there is discrimination.*

(INformant 1)

Informant 1 has experienced this cultural clash among Latinos in her workplace where she met a Mexican person who disliked Salvadorians. Coupled with ethnocentrism, informants revealed stereotypes about other Hispanics who are not their co-nationals or compatriots. According to Informant 5, who is a Mexican, there are distinct differences within the Hispanic community when it comes to aspirations,
behaviors, and habits. These are very much shaped by the experiences they bring from
their countries of origin. Regarding this informant 5 notices differences among Hispanics
depending on where they come from.

_Veo diferencias. Yo he visto que los sudamericanos...traen las ganas de
superarse, no sé si es porque vienen de más lejos, o porque les cuesta más,
vienen con la idea de quedarse y de no regresar a su país, y lo primero que
hacen es...estudiar... y...aprender el idioma ...consiguen mejor trabajo, mejor
salario. En cambio nosotros los mexicanos cruzamos y ya estamos aquí...
Muchos vienen con la idea de que vienen a trabajar un año...ahorro ... y ya
estoy. Entonces me voy a México de nuevo, pero allá se nos acaban los ahorros,
y vuelvo de nuevo aquí, pego otro brinco y ya estoy aquí, porque estamos
cerca... Y no hacemos el esfuerzo por prepararnos, porque pensamos que
vamos a estar un año, o dos años y ya nos vamos a regresar, pero por supuesto
nos vamos y después se nos acabo el dinero y ya nos regresamos y así estamos
todo el tiempo. Por eso no nos quedamos aquí. Y eso es lo que paso conmigo...
_Informant 5_

_I see differences. I have seen that South Americans... want to better
themselves. I do not know if it is because they come from farther away countries,
or because it is harder for them to come here, but they come with the idea of
staying for good, and not returning to their home countries. The first thing they
do is to study... and they learn English... and then they find better jobs with
better salaries. On the contrary, Mexicans just cross the border, and we are
here. Many come with the idea of working for a year, saving money and leaving... But in Mexico our savings do not last, and then we are here again. We jump the border and we are here...we are close...And we do not study because we think that we are going to be here only momentarily. Then we go back to our home country but soon we come back, and that is what we do all the time. That is what happened to me. (Informant 5)

The conflicts among Hispanics are also evident in the perceptions that informants have about Puerto Ricans. Informant 3 says that she understands that Puerto Ricans are also considered Hispanics or Latinos, but she believes that Puerto Ricans do not have the same needs and experiences that other Hispanics have. Similarly, Informant 7 believes that although Puerto Ricans are considered Hispanics, they do not empathize with Hispanics because they have an American Passport and do not have borders to cross. They leave and come back to their country whenever they please, and they enjoy all the social benefits that the United States offers to them.

Puerto Rico es muy diferente, son latinos sí, pero ellos tienen la dicha de haber nacido con un pasaporte americano, es el único país latino que no tiene fronteras, Puerto Rico...tienen diferentes necesidades... Los mismos beneficios que tienen en su país los tienen aquí. Hablamos el mismo idioma, pero ellos tienen pasaporte en mano, y en eso nos hacen totalmente diferente. Además la gente de Puerto Rico discrimina mucho al hispano. (Informant 7)
Puerto Rico is very different. They are Latinos, but they have the good fortune of having an American passport. It is the only Latino country that does not have borders. Puerto Ricans have different needs... Here, they have the same benefits that they have in their country. We speak the same language, but they have an American passport at hand, and that is what makes us different. Moreover, people from Puerto Rico discriminate a lot against Hispanics. (Informant 7)

Informant 5 also thinks that Puerto Ricans, although they are Hispanics, do not relate to other Hispanics and that they tend to identify themselves as Americans and not as Hispanics because that is what separates them from the rest of the Hispanics.

Los puertorriqueños se sienten americanos y nos ven a los latinos como gente sin educación. Ellos se sienten diferentes, que son mejores que nosotros. (Informant 5)

Puerto Ricans feel that they are Americans and they see Latinos as people without education. They feel they are different, superior to us. (Informant 5)

Moreover, Informant 7 made reference to some stereotypes that exist about Puerto Ricans. She alludes to Puerto Ricans as preferring welfare to employment, and being lazy, and violent-prone because they befriend African-Americans. Both Puerto Ricans and African-Americans are perceived as people who discriminate against Mexicans and
other Hispanics. Informant 7 recalled some incidents in which both, African-Americans and Puerto Ricans have attacked, robbed, and injured Mexicans and other Hispanics in her neighborhood. In referente to this, she comments,

_ Los puertorriqueños se juntan mucho con los Africano Americanos y no nos quieren... discriminan mucho, y a muchachos los han dejado ya casi muertos, los mandan al hospital, les quitan su dinero, y los lastiman... A los puertorriqueños no les gusta trabajar y hay muchos contacto entre ellos (Puertorriqueños y Africano Americanos)... (Informant 7) 

_Puerto Ricans befriend African-Americans and they do not like us... They discriminate us a lot, and they have almost killed young Hispanics, they have sent Hispanics to the hospital. They rob us, they hurt us... Puerto Ricans do not like working and that is why there is so much rapport between them (Puerto Ricans and African-Americans) (Informant 7) 

Informant 9, who is from El Salvador and now an American citizen, openly expressed his dislike for undocumented immigrants, especially Mexicans who in his view take advantage of the system. He said that some Hispanics lie about how much money they make because they want to receive free services such as free lunches at school or free health care. He thinks that it is not fair that he has to pay high taxes to help support the school system, when undocumented Hispanics, who lie about how much money they earn, are taking away resources from people who may really need the help.
On the other hand, Informant 7 from Mexico stated that some people from El Salvador come to the United States and form gangs who attack other Hispanics. She also noted that, these gangs are detrimental to the image they project in the eyes of Americans who associate these violent and dangerous gangs to all Hispanics and not necessarily to Salvadorians. Regarding this point, informant 7 observes,

_En que gente de otros países, como de El Salvador, vienen a formar pandillas que no es bueno para la gente latina, porque somos latinos y nos discriminan a todos no solo a ellos de ese país que forman las pandillas...Nosotros no somos de pandillas, solo los del Salvador._ (Informant 7)

_People from other countries, such as from El Salvador, come to the United States and form gangs, and that is not a good thing for Latinos because we are all Latinos. Now people then discriminate against all the Latinos because they think we are all gang members. We are not gang members; it is only those from El Salvador._ (Informant 7)

*Conflict with Whites.* Informant 7 mentioned that most Americans are nice and polite; however, there are some who openly disdain Hispanics. According to her, many times she has been in situations where Americans have treated her with an air of superiority and have made comments thinking that she would not understand because of her limited English skills. She recalls,
Bueno, los americanos en general no todos nos ven con los mismos ojos. Hay algunas personas blancas que son muy buenas personas y muy amables, pero también hay otras personas que en la tienda lo ven a uno como si fuera inferior. Como si dijeran este no es tu país, estas en mi país... A mí me ha tocado, a veces piensan que uno no entiende, y que no sabe lo que ellos dicen y conversan entre ellos... (Informant 7)

Well, Americans in general do not see us in the same way. There are some Whites, who are very nice and polite, but there are others who you meet in the stores and look at you as if you were inferior. As if they were saying, this is not your country, this is my country... I have experienced that. Sometimes they talk among themselves and think that one does not understand... (Informant 7)

Informant 2 also says that she has heard racist and discriminatory remarks about immigrants in her workplace. She remembers one day, when she was helping customers a man came in and commented that Mexicans who crossed the border illegally should be shot. Informant 2 felt very uncomfortable and frustrated because she was not able to respond and say what she felt about the comment.

Informants also reported that they feel that many Americans view Hispanics as criminals because they are undocumented. However, all the informants say that although they are not legal residents they always obey the law very carefully because they do not want to make any mistakes as they know that if they are arrested, the punishment would be deportation.
Informant 3 also stated that sometimes police officers stop Hispanics just because of their appearance. For example, she pointed to the fact that she was stopped with no apparent reason by a police officer who wanted to see her driver's license and car insurance when she was driving to work. She adds that whenever she goes out she does not want to call the attention in any way because she wants nobody to notice her. On this note, she recounts,

*Si vamos a manejar porque necesitamos trabajar... y ese es el caso de todos los mexicanos, pero porque ya me vieron cara de hispano ya se van sobre mí y a pedirme licencia. Uno tiene que andar con mucho cuidado como para pasar desapercibido, y que no te tengan en cuenta.* (Informant 3)

*We drive because we need to work... and that is the case of Mexicans, but because they saw my Hispanic face, they stopped me to ask for my driver's license. You have to be very careful, so nobody notices you.* (Informant 3)

Informants reported that the conflict between Hispanics and Whites was very evident some years ago. At the time, there was a much stronger opposition and resistance to accept Hispanics as part of this community. Informants mentioned that Whites made numerous attempts to displace them out of the community. Informant 3 recalls a time when Whites mobilized to issue regulations to expel Hispanics and deny them the possibility of renting apartments and houses within the community. The rationale was that residents did not want Hispanics living in their neighborhoods because they said
Hispanics were drunkards, did not keep their yards clean, and shared their houses with too many people.

_Y hace cinco años empezó esta información, hasta en la iglesia nos lo dijeron que los residentes (de este pueblo) nos querían sacar a los hispanos... porque eran unos borrachos y había muchas peleas... y porque estábamos invadiendo... el centro y... dábamos mala apariencia a la comunidad, porque teníamos la yarda muy fea llena de basura._ (Informant 3)

_Five years ago, we were told in church that residents of this town wanted to get rid of Hispanics because we were drunkards and there were too many fights... and because we were invading downtown...and giving a bad image to the community because we had dirty backyards full of garbage... (Informant 3)_

Two of the interviewed informants feel that their bosses treat them in a condescending way that makes them feel inferior and not worthy of respect. Informant 8 narrates how she has always been treated with contempt by the American woman she works for. “I feel she treats me as a slave,” says informant 8 who has to report to her boss whenever she “rings her bell.” She says that she has to put up with that behavior because she needs the money and is afraid that her boss will let her go if she stands up for herself.

Informant 11 mentions that her boss is always judging her behavior and has called her “stupid” or other insulting words when she did something she did not approve.
However, informant 11 says that she let her boss know that she did not like to be treated in that way and that she would quit if she continued to do that.

It is worth mentioning that the rest of the informants have good opinions of the “White Americans” they work for. They regard their American bosses as generous, good hearted, and very considerate. Informants concluded that most Whites they know are nice and polite people and those who hurt them are often strangers they see in the streets.

Conflict with African-Americans. Participants’ identity is rooted in particular events and experiences, relationships, and processes. It is shaped, changed, and influenced by competition and conflict that exist between different groups. This is the case of Hispanics and African-Americans, who are often perceived by each other as competing for territory and jobs.

Informants noted perceived high levels of conflict with African-Americans. Informants have expressed in their narratives that they have been discriminated, or treated disrespectfully and with disdain by African-Americans. Moreover, in their descriptions, informants have pointed out how their Hispanic acquaintances, friends, or relatives have been the target of violent attacks committed against them by African-Americans.

“At least Whites hurt us with their words and not with their fists” says informant 7 as he explains that African Americans have hurt Latinos in this New Hispanic Diaspora with baseball bats and knives. The tension between African-Americans and Latinos is evident through the narrative of all the informants. Some participants pointed out the fact that African-Americans attack Hispanics because they expect Hispanics to be carrying
cash or valuables, because they are more vulnerable, or simply because they are not welcome in their neighborhoods.

Informant 7 adds that some African-Americans who assault Hispanics carry weapons. She says, “Sometimes, Blacks wait for Hispanics who are returning home after work late at night. They hide in the shadows of the streets. They attack and rob Hispanics so they can buy cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs.” Informant 7 also comments,

Porque somos latinos, y nos ven más débiles... nos ven con desconfianza, y porque venimos a hacer dinero, y nosotros les tenemos temor, vemos a un moreno, y nosotros nos ponemos a temblar, porque a veces si salimos tarde después de las diez de la noche... y no nos quieren, ... discriminan mucho, y a amigos los han dejado ya casi muertos, los mandan al hospital, les quitan su dinero, y los lastiman (Informant 7).

Because we are Latinos, Blacks think we are weak... They mistrust us because we come to work and make a living. We are afraid of them, when we see a Black man, we start shaking... They do not like us... They discriminate against us... and they have almost killed friends. They have sent them to the hospital, or they have taken their money and hurt them... (Informant 7)

Informant 7 also mentions that one African-American and one Puerto Rican broke into her house when she was not there and stole money she had to pay the rent. Her neighbor, who lives downstairs, saw them and immediately called the police. By the time
the police arrived, it was too late because the bandits had already fled. Informant 7 says that African-Americans target Hispanics because they know that they keep their money in their houses since they do not have bank accounts. Besides, African-Americans take advantage of the fact that Hispanics are usually scared to contact the police because of their immigrant status.

In addition, Informant 11’s husband was attacked by a group of African-American men without apparent reason when he was coming from work. “They had a baseball bat and hit my husband’s head with it,” remembers informant 11 with tears in her eyes. Her husband was left unconscious and had to be taken to the hospital. After several hours in the surgery room, the doctor said that they had to wait and see if he was going to survive because the trauma to his brain was severe. Fortunately, he recovered after a few months but lost vision of his left eye. Informant 11 further comments,

Unos negritos... y el perdió un ojo, porque lo golpearon aquí, en este costado de la cabeza, ellos iban derechos a liquidarlo, y la policía dijo que le pegaron con un bate... lo llevaron de emergencia al hospital, para que lo operaran, y el doctor que lo atendió dijo que si él no se moría, había posibilidades de que el quedé loco... (Informant 10)

Black men attacked him and he lost one eye. They hit him here, on this side of his head. They wanted to kill him, and the police said that they hit him with a baseball bat... The police took him to the emergency room to be operated on,
and the doctor said that if he did not die, it was possible that he was going to be retarded... Thanks God he recovered well. (Informant 10)

Sometimes rivalry between Hispanics and Blacks percolates at school. Informant 11 says that she has cried many times when her son has come from school with torn clothes or bleeding lips because he had been attacked by African-American or Puerto Rican students. Many times, she has called the police or talked with the school principal in order to solve these conflicts. Once, two African-Americans boys started beating up her son outside her building as soon as he got off the school bus. She was so desperate that she called the police in order to break up the fight.

_Dos niños Africanos-Americanos golpearon a mi niño, y fue por una niña hispana que lo defendió, y por eso yo me entere que lo estaban golpeando, y yo llame a la policía, y lloré... (Informant 11)_

_Two African-American boys were beating up my son, and I found out because a Hispanic girl defended him and told me that they were beating him up, and I called the police, and I cried... (Informant 11)_

Informant 5 mentioned that he has never had any kind of encounters with African-Americans, although many of his friends had been beaten up and attacked by African Americans. He thinks that it might be a question of appearance and image. He jokingly
comments that maybe that is the reason why he has not been attacked, because he is much taller than the average Mexican. Informant 5 says,

_Yo nunca, nunca tuve ni una discusión, a veces se me quedan viendo porque yo soy hispano, pero nunca se me acercan... tal vez más listo que el resto de los paisanos, o un poco más alto...Pero a todos mis amigos, a todos se los sonaron los morenos...con el bate, o con lo que tengan...por nada, solo porque querías pasar y así te veían y te golpean, y los otros iban a trabajar con moretones en la espalda...y yo digo ¿porque?, porque no les gustan los hispanos._

(Informant 5)

_I never had an incident with African-Americans. Sometimes, they stare at me because I am Hispanic, but they have never approached me... Maybe I look smarter or taller than my pals. The truth is that all my friends were beaten up by Blacks...with a baseball bat or whatever... without apparent reason, just because they were passing by. My pals would go to work with bruises in their backs... and I would say “why?” because they do not like Hispanics._

(Informant 5)

_Hispanic or Latino?

Most Informants did not have any preference for being called Latino or Hispanic because they believed both terms meant the same and referred to the same group of people. Informant 5 was not completely sure about which term to choose because he did not think either term was accurate, but he would identify himself with either term. He_
thinks that the term “Latino” means people from Latin America, whereas the term Hispanic refers to people who speak Spanish. However, he points out that in Latin America not everyone speaks Spanish. On this, he comments,

_Latino, porque hispanos son los que hablan español, y latino es como que abarca toda Latinoamérica, los latinos también hablan español, bueno la mayoría pero no todos... me suena más el nombre de latino que el nombre de hispano, latinos porque somos de latino-América, hispano porque hablamos español, no sé yo, con los dos me siento identificado._ (Informant 5)

_Hispanics are those that speak Spanish, but “Latino” covers all Latin America. Latinos speak Spanish, well the majority but not all... I feel that Latino is better than Hispanic because we are from Latin America, Hispanic because we speak Spanish, I do not know, I feel identified with both._ (Informant 5)

Some informants learned upon their arrival to the U.S.A. what Latino or Hispanic meant. Informant 6 says that she did not know what people meant when they used the word Latinos. Regarding this, she recounts a funny anecdote,

_Cuando yo llego aquí veo personas de muchas partes diferentes, y yo no sabía quiénes eran los latinos, alguna vez... yo escuche cuando unas personas dijeron, “¡Más Latinos!” Y yo dije “pues, ¿quién es son?”. Y ahí me dijeron los latinos son todos los que venimos de Latinoamérica. Y entonces ya dije, soy yo”_ (Informant 6)
When I came here to the United States I saw people from different countries, and I did not know who Latinos were. Once I heard somebody saying “More Latinos!” And I said “Who are they?” And they told me, “Latinos are all those who come from Latin America.” And then I said, “Then, that is me.” (Informant 6)

Informant 11 also mentions that the label of Hispanic or Latino is something that exists only in the United States because when she was in her home country. She was just Mexican and never heard the terms before. She learned about the terms in the United States. In her home country nobody would differentiate people based on race, appearance, or language spoken.

Yo soy hispana, y yo no soy bien morena ... ni tampoco blanca, soy trigueña, pero aquí eso no existe. Cuando uno estaba en México uno no pensaba en eso, porque como cada uno está en su país, todos somos Mexicanos. Pero en los Estados Unidos no importa de dónde sea uno, todos somos hispanos si hablamos el mismo idioma, que es el español. (Informant 10)

I am Hispanic, and I am not Black nor White. I am “trigueña,” but that does not exist here. When I was in Mexico, I would not think about my skin color... we were all Mexicans, but in the United States, Hispanic is somebody who speaks Spanish. (Informant 10)
There is very little in common among many of the Hispanic subgroups. Even language can drastically vary. Informant 1 notices that there are different kinds of Spanish. She says that differences in the meaning of some Spanish words give away the country where a Latino comes from,

... la forma de hablar, y que utilizan diferentes palabras para la misma cosa, y a veces tenemos que aprender como se dice lo mismo en distintos países, a pesar que todos hablemos español. Por ejemplo, a veces cuando traducen, usan más de una palabra para decir lo mismo, por si acaso la otra persona no entiende. (Informant 1)

The way of speaking, there are Hispanics who use different words for the same thing, and sometimes we have to learn how to say different things in different countries despite the fact that we all speak Spanish. For instance, sometimes when people translate, they use more than one word to say the same thing, just in case the other person does not understand. (Informant 1)

Informant 2, from Costa Rica, says that the problem of labeling everyone as Hispanic or Latino is that there is a tendency for many people to forget about the diversity, variety, and differences that exist among the different Hispanic subgroups and mistakenly assume that all Hispanics are alike. One example is to think that Hispanic food is only Mexican food, or that “Cinco the Mayo” is a holiday that every Hispanic celebrates. Yet Mexico is very different from the rest of Latin America. She says,
Yo he probado comida de otros hispanos, y no tienen tanto sabor como nuestra comida. Y aqui hay muchos restaurantes Mexicanos, pero a mi no me gusta la comida Mexicana. Muchos piensan que porque somos latinos todos comemos lo mismo. Pero no es cierto. En Costa Rica tenemos influencia de España y del Caribe. Los mexicanos tienen influencia azteca y maya principalmente. Los nicaragüenses cocinan muy parecidos a nosotros, pero no es igual. (Informant 2)

I tried other kind of Hispanic food, and it does not have the same flavors as Costa Rican food. There are lots of Mexican restaurants here, but I do not like Mexican food. Many people think that because we are Latinos we all eat the same kinds of foods, but that is not true. In Costa Rica we have a Spanish and Caribbean influence. Mexicans have an Aztec and Mayan influence. Nicaraguans cook like Costa Ricans, but it is still not the same. (Informant 2)

Returning to their Home Country

The tremendous amount of cultural differences which some of the participants faced made them vulnerable in their cultural adjustment process. They faced difficulties with some of the most elemental parts of American culture, that is, the people, the language, the places they lived in, and the differences in life styles addressed in the previous section. All these differences that they had to contend with, led them to return to their countries after living in the United States for a few years.
Six of these informants reported suffering adjustment problems especially because they missed friends, family, and their native country. They reported feeling depressed and homesick. Informant 5 says that he and his wife decided to return to Mexico when his son was born. They had been living in the United States for 4 years. They decided to go back because they thought that life was very difficult in the United States, and they missed their relatives and Mexican customs. At first, they thought that they were returning to Mexico for good. They started building a house, and they had savings to start a business there. However, once in their country, they realized that they were spending their savings rapidly. Life in Mexico was harder than what they remembered.

_Bueno, en el dos mil mi hijo nació, y ya habían pasado cuatro años que habíamos estado sin ir, y de repente dijimos, vámonos, la vida es muy difícil aquí._

_EXTRAÑábamos mucho y ya no queríamos volver más, ya tenemos dinero ahorrado, y ya habíamos empezado a hacer una casa en México... y dijimos, ahora tenemos la casa, va a ser diferente, y no aguantamos, estuvimos cuatro meses nada más, y empezamos a gastar el dinero que teníamos. Así que nos volvimos a los Estados Unidos. (Informant 5)_

_Well, in the year two thousand, my son was born, and we had been living in the United States for 4 years. All of a sudden we decided to go back. We missed Mexico very much, and we thought that we did not want to come back to the United States again. We had some savings and we had started building a house in_
Mexico. We thought that now that we had a house, it was going to be different. However, we could not stay. We stayed for 4 months in Mexico and we were spending all the money we had. Eventually we returned to the United States.

(Informant 5)

Informant 5 had two options, continue spending all his savings or pay the coyote to come back to the United States with the little money he still had left. They decided that they wanted to come back. Regarding this, he narrates,

Ya no funciono la ferretería, todavía estaba, y mi intención no era invertir más en ese negocio.... pensábamos quedarnos allá... y le faltaba un montón de cosas a la casa, y ya me di cuenta que nos faltaba dinero, no vamos a tener dinero para terminar la casa y no vamos a poder regresar. Si usamos este dinero que nos queda ya no vamos a poder volver, entonces tenemos dos opciones: gastarlo o regresarlos. Y entonces dijimos, vámonos de regreso... ya sabemos a lo que vamos, y no nos importa, queríamos volver aunque tenga que pagar doble... (Informant 5)

I had a hardware store but it wasn’t profitable anymore. I did not want to invest more money in it. We thought we wanted to stay in Mexico. The house was not finished and it still needed a few things. I realized that I was running out of money, and we weren’t going to have enough money to finish the house and to come back. If we used all our savings, we weren’t going to be able to come back
to the United States. So we had two options, spend it or come back. And my wife and I decided to come back to the United States. We knew it was going to be difficult, but we did not care. We wanted to come back even if we had to pay the coyote twice as much...

All the informants, who went back to their home countries, had saved what they thought was enough money to start a business and/or finish their houses. However, once in their homelands, they realized that life was still as difficult as always, and that they did not have a bright economic future there because wages were too low to sustain their household.

Informant 2 went back to Costa Rica after living for 2 years in the United States. She hoped that her savings would be enough to re-start her life afresh in Costa Rica. When Informant 2 and her husband were in Costa Rica, they were able to build a house and open a grocery store. However, after being in Costa Rica for two years, they felt that they were not making any progress, so they decided to rent their house, close the store, and return to the United States.

_Cuando uno llega allá, al principio la felicidad es enorme, pero después que pasa el tiempo uno se da cuenta del costo de las cosas que es enorme. El precio de las cosas es el doble. La canasta básica lo que llamamos allá, el arroz, el pan, los fideos, las verduras, la leche, todo eso siempre está subiendo de precio... Y uno va con cierta cantidad de dinero y dice, voy a vivir por este tiempo con esta cantidad de dinero pero después se hace difícil. Si uno llegara y tuviera_
un trabajo allá, tendría el dinero que lleva de aquí para emergencias, pero cuando uno llega allá no tiene trabajo y uno tiene que vivir con sus ahorros. (Informant 2)

When you go back to your country, at the beginning, you feel extremely happy, but then, as time passes by, you realize that everything is very expensive. For instance, prices of basic staples such as rice, bread, noodles, vegetables, and milk are always going up... And you have certain amount of money. You think you will be able to live with that amount of money for a period of time, but then you realize it is very difficult. If you had a job in Costa Rica, you would have the money you saved here in the United States for emergencies, but when you get there you do not have a job so you have to live on your savings. (Informant 2)

Most of the informants gave away their belongings and left with the idea of opening a business, investing their savings, and building a house in their home countries. Informant 6 and her husband returned to Mexico because they had left their children there. However, after living a year and a half in Mexico, they realized that they had better opportunities in the United States and for that reason they decided to come back. This time they brought their children with them. Informant 6 narrates,

Mi esposo ya había visto que el trabajo era más fácil aquí, no muy pesado... Al último en el 2003 decidimos venirnos todos. (Informant 6)
My husband noticed that work was easier here, he did not have to work so hard...Finally in 2003 we all decided to come back. (Informant 6)

Informants 7 and 11 were the exception in the sense that they went back to Mexico not to stay but to bring their children along with them. Both mothers did not think it was fair for their little children to be suffering from extreme poverty in Mexico while they were leading a comfortable life in the United States. Informant 11 relates,

Hace tres años yo decidí volver a México a buscar a mis dos hijos que estaban con mi mamá. Si bien yo les mandaba dinero todos los meses para que a ellos no les falte nada, y mi mamá los mandaba a la escuela, a mí no me parecía justo que ellos estén allá sin su madre, sufriendo privaciones, mientras yo vivía bien aquí. Así que ahorre dinero, y los traje conmigo. Yo quería que ellos tuvieran las mismas cosas que yo tenía. (Informant 11)

Three years ago, I decided to go back to Mexico to bring my children who were living with my mom. Although I sent them money every month, and my mom bought them everything that they needed, I did not think it was fair for them to be without their mother, living on poverty, while I was here living comfortably. I saved enough money to go back to Mexico and to bring them with me. I wanted them to have the same things that I had. (Informant 11)
For all the informants, returning to their home countries was a wonderful experience in many ways. They had a lot of expectations, they were happy to see their relatives and friends, they could enjoy their favorite foods again, and they were able to do all the things that they liked doing and that they could not do in the United States.

However, when they were in their home countries they realized that they had everything that they liked but did not have financial stability and jobs. They realized that they had become accustomed to American life standards and that they did not want their families to suffer economic hardships again. Informant 1 explains,

*Además, todo estaba muy caro. Un sueldo en México es de 500 pesos a la semana, es decir, 50 dólares, pero todo cuesta igual que aquí. Por ejemplo si uno quiere un par de tenis... salen como 1500 pesos o sea 30 dólares, y si alguien quiere zapatos tiene que ahorrar muchos meses porque no puede comer y comprar lo que quiere. Y también hay muchos ladrones. Si alguien ve que trae unos Levis o unos buenos zapatos lo dejan encerrado a uno. La vida está muy difícil allí. Tal vez por lo mismo de la situación que todo está muy caro, no hay trabajo, y como no hay trabajo los lleva a buscar otra forma para sobrevivir.*

(Informant 1)

*Besides, everything was very expensive. Let’s say a person in Mexico can earn 500 pesos weekly, that is 50 dollars, but everything is as expensive as it is in the United States. If I want to buy a pair of sneakers, they will cost approximately 1500 pesos that is 30 dollars. I will have to save for several months in order to*
buy them. The money a person makes is enough to buy food but not everything that you need. Besides, there are a lot of thieves. If somebody has a nice pair of Levi jeans or shoes, they rob you in the street and leave you naked. Life is very difficult in Mexico because everything is expensive. There are no jobs, and people try to find other ways to survive. (Informant 1)

All the informants expressed mixed feelings regarding their decision about coming back to the United States coupled with a profound sense of connection to their original home country. Informant 2 refers to this and recalls,

Extrañábamos las oportunidades económicas que tenemos aquí. Todo es diferente allá...tenemos todo menos trabajo... cuando estamos aquí, extrañamos todo lo que tenemos allá... Extrañamos la gente, amigos, familia... (Informant 2)

We missed the economic opportunities that we have here in the United States. Everything is different in Costa Rica. There, we do not have a job. When we are here in the U.S., we miss everything we have in Costa Rica. We miss people, friends, family... (Informant 2)

Finally, most informants think that when Hispanics get used to American life standards, it is hard for them to leave everything behind and come back to their home-countries. Informant 1 explains,
Yo conozco personas que dicen que se van a ir rápido y que no se van a quedar mucho tiempo. Pero pasa el tiempo y siguen quedándose aquí, porque ya se acostumbran o porque después tratan de volver a su país y no es lo que ellos pensaban que iba a ser. Después de haber salido de México y haber visto otras cosas mejores o diferentes, ya se dan cuenta que nuestro país solo es lindo porque están las personas a las que amamos. (Informant 1)

I know people that say that they are going to go back to their home countries soon and that they are not going to stay for long. However, time goes by and they are still here because they get used to living here, or because they go back to their home countries, and they do not find what they expected. When they leave Mexico and come here they see better things, different things, and they realize that our country is beautiful just because the people we love are still living there. (Informant 1)

Research Question 2

What kinds of schooling experiences do participants bring with them from their home countries? And how do these experiences influence their children's educational experiences?

Participants in this study bring a cognitive cargo about their own educational experiences that may affect how they view the education of their children. They carry with them a powerful conception of who they are, rooted in their home country
experiences and sometimes magnified by the often disconcerting transition they go through when coming to the United States.

The informants' former experiences in school and on schooling in their home countries influence the way they perceive their children's experiences at school in the United States. The analysis of the data indicates that all the participants immigrated to the United States seeking a better future and better opportunities for them and for their children.

Participants value education as an empowerment tool that can be used to achieve success in life. For that reason, they encourage their children to do their best at school. They also have hopes that their children will move on to college and will earn a degree. Participant 10, who has twins born in Mexico, eloquently describes how she dreams that her children will pursue a career. Although she knows that children who are undocumented cannot attend university, she hopes that they will get as far as they are allowed to.

_Pero uno como madre que más quisiera que los hijos tuvieran una carrera, pero aquí dicen que los niños no pueden ir a la universidad porque no tienen papeles, pero yo mismo les digo que no, que por eso van a dejar de seguir estudiando, porque tienen que seguir estudiando hasta donde les den la oportunidad.... Y mi esperanza es que ellos terminen de estudiar porque es muy importante._ (Informant 10)
As a mother, I wish my children have a career. People say that undocumented children cannot go to college, but I say that they are not going to stop studying. They have to keep studying and get as far as they are allowed to. They have to take advantage of the opportunities they have... and I hope that they can finish their studies because it is very important. (Informant 10)

All the informants believe that American education and learning English are important and valuable assets to their children and the best legacy they can bestow on their children for their future socioeconomic security. Thus, participants’ desire is that their children succeed in school so that they can enter the labor market more prepared.

Although some participants came with relatively low levels of education, they teach their children the importance of education especially because educational opportunities in their home countries were only for the rich or the elites. Informant 8 from El Salvador puts this thought candidly in her own words,

Yo les digo a mis hijos que estudien, que aprovechen que están aquí, porque allá (en mi país) no te regalan nada. Ni un lápiz siquiera... hay niños que no reciben estudios porque los papás no puede pagar los materiales para que vaya o conseguir los libros.... Y hay familias no tienen que comer, y mucho menos para comprarles los materiales a los niños para que vayan a la escuela. (Informant 8)
I tell my children to study, to take advantage of the fact that they are here because back in our country nothing is free. Not even a pencil. There are children who do not go to school because their parents cannot pay for the things they need for school like books or supplies... and there are families that do not have anything to eat, let alone to buy school supplies their children need for school.

(Informant 8)

Participants exert pressure on their children to study, do well and finish school. They remind their children about the sacrifices they make to give them the opportunity to study, get a degree, and have a prosperous future.

Participant 3 sheds tears when she remembers that she had to start working at an early age and was not able to finish her studies. She does not want the same fate for her sons and hopes they will be able to study and have a degree. She says that their only responsibility is to study and do well at school.

La educación es demasiado importante para mí. Porque yo quiero que sean algo en la vida ya que nosotros no estudiamos en nuestro país... Y yo le digo a mis hijos, nosotros aquí no los ponemos a trabajar así que su responsabilidad es estudiar... Todo padre queremos lo mejor para nuestros hijos... (Informant 3)

Education is very important for me. I did not have the opportunity to study, but I want them to be someone in life. I tell my sons that we do not send
them to work so their only responsibility is to study... we want the best for our children... (Informant 3)

Some informants think that education will help their children realize the “American Dream” by giving them the opportunity of getting ahead in life, and by allowing them to choose a career that in turn will help support themselves and their families.

Informant 7 noted that education also instills the values and skills that her children need to become better, to improve, to be respectful, to know how to behave, and to be good citizens.

En la escuela los niños aprenden lo que no se aprende en otro lado, como vestirse, como comportarse. Los niños van a la escuela a educarse, no van para ponerse peor, van para mejorar. Y a la maestra deben ir a obedecer, porque la maestra es la que los ayuda a salir adelante. (Informant 7)

At school children learn what they do not learn anywhere else. They learn how to dress properly and how to behave. Children go to school to get an education. They do not go to be worse. They go to improve, and they have to obey the teacher, because the teacher is who helps them make progress. (Informant 7)
For purposes of organization and clarification, Table 8 illustrates the different kinds of schooling experiences that participants had in their home country. After the table, an explanation of participants’ schooling experiences is presented.

Table 8

*Taxonomy of Kinds of Schooling Experiences Participants Had in their Home Countries*

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<th>Schooling Experiences Participants Had in their Home Countries</th>
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*Schooling in Home Country*

Although schools in the Informants’ home countries are funded by the federal government, going to school can be very expensive, not only because educational supplies and uniforms are not provided by the school, but also because students have to pay a small registration fee to attend most schools. Throughout the interviews, informants describe poor schools that often do not cover the middle grades (seventh to ninth grade) and high school (tenth to twelfth grade).

Some informants reported that they have not obtained a high school diploma, mainly because secondary schools are virtually nonexistent in rural areas, or because they had to start working in order to help their parents. Informants considered private primary
schools better than public ones. However, only few families can afford to send their children to private schools.

_Paying registration._ Informant 11 explained that when her children started school in Mexico, she had to pay about 30 dollars per child per school year in order for them to be accepted in the school. According to her, if parents do not pay this registration fee, children are not allowed to attend school. Contradictory as it seems, school is mandatory for children from kindergarten through ninth grade, and parents receive letters from school officials urging them to send their school-aged children to school even if they do not have the means to do so. Informant 11 says,

> En el tiempo que mis hijos estuvieron allí, era como un equivalente de $30 dólares, y eso es como 3 o 4 días de trabajo. Si uno paga la inscripción ya tiene el derecho de ir a la escuela, pero si no paga no puede ir. (Informant 11)

> When my children were in Mexico, we paid an equivalent of $30 dollars; that is what you make in 3 or 4 work days. If we pay the registration fee, our children have the right to attend school, but if we do not pay, they cannot attend. (Informant 11)

Informant 6 did not have to pay a registration fee in order to send her children to school but she remembers that she had to register them every year. She says that they
were not automatically registered for the next year regardless of being promoted or not to the next grade level.

Informant 10 recalls that when her children went to school in Mexico, it was very expensive because she not only had to pay registration but she also had to buy lots of school supplies that the teachers requested. Moreover, teachers were many times on strike trying to get better salaries. For this reason, her children missed school days regularly, and she did not feel her children were making academic progress.

She mentioned that at that time her husband was working in the United States and would send her money. This money allowed her to send her children to a private catholic school. It was more expensive but she thought that her decision benefited her children enormously. However, not all parents have the opportunity to send their children to private schools. She eloquently describes it as follows,

_Es mucho dinero lo que paga uno, además de colores, reglas, cuadernos, lápices...es una sacada de dinero, y cuando los maestros hacen paro, los niños ya no van a la escuela, y cuando mi esposo se vino para acá, yo le comente a él que no había clases y le dije -¿que hacen los niños ahora? Había un colegio de madres, y entonces ahí lo metí por 1 año, pero era caro, porque era escuela privada, pero era lo que teníamos que hacer para que los niños vayan adelantados._ (Informant 10)

_It is a lot of money that you have to pay, apart from the school supplies you have to buy. The school is always asking for money, and when teachers are_
on strike, children do not go to school. When my husband came here, I told him that schools were closed, and I asked him, "What do they do now?" There was a school ran by nuns, so I sent them there for 1 year. It was very expensive because it was a private school, but we had to do it so the children could make progress.

(Informant 10)

Buying school supplies and books. All the informants agreed on the fact that attending school was very expensive back in their home countries. They remember that when they or their children went to school, they had to spend money on other things that were school related such as school supplies and books.

Participants were very surprised by the fact that children receive free school supplies and books in the United States. They say they were not used to that in their home countries because it is parents’ responsibility to buy everything that their children will need to attend school. Teachers in their countries give them a list of school supplies and books children will need for the school year, and parents have to buy those things.

Informant 2 from Costa Rica tells about her experience,

_Y es caro ir a la escuela. No porque haya que pagar, pero porque los padres tienen que comprar los útiles, los cuadernos, lápices, libros, todo eso. Las maestras dan una lista y los padres tienen que encargarse de comprar las cosas... Y hay que comprarlos y se hace muy difícil... y yo me acuerdo como era allá y aquí... mi hija trae los lápices que le regalan en la escuela y le dan lápices_
por distintas cosas. Pero allá un lápiz tenía que durar y no sacarle tanto la punta y no escribir tan fuerte. (Informant 2)

It is very expensive to go to school. Not because you have to pay, but because parents have to buy school supplies, notebooks, pencils, books, everything. Teachers give children a school supply list and parents have to buy those things... and you have to buy them, and it is very difficult...I remember how it was in my country, and here my daughter brings pencils that they give away at school. Back in my country, a pencil had to last as much as possible and we could not sharpen it often, or press it that hard. (Informant 2)

Apart from school supplies, parents also have to buy books that their children will use for the different subjects that are taught at school such as Spanish, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and Math. Informant 5 remembers that many years ago, when he used to go to school, the government used to provide them with books; however, things have changed now, and it is parents' responsibility to make sure children have not only school supplies but also books.

Si nos daban los libros, y llegaban al comienzo de cada año los libros en cajas, de matemáticas, de español, de ciencias sociales, ciencias naturales, pero ahora ya no es así. Ahora el gobierno ya no gasta tanto en libros. Ahora los padres los tienen que comprar. (Informant 5)
They used to give us the books. At the beginning of the school year we would receive books for Mathematics, Spanish, Social Studies, Science, but now it is not like that anymore. Now, the government does not spend so much on books. Now parents have to buy them. (Informant 5)

Informant 4 also commented that when he attended middle school, he did not have money to buy the books. Therefore, he would go to the library to do his homework or research projects. The problem he had was finding time to go to the library because he had to work. Eventually, he ended up dropping out school because of the lack of books, money, and time.

Bueno, en la preparatoria, ya había que comprar libros de química, de física, y de otras materias, y los libros eran más caros, y había que estar siempre en la biblioteca, haciendo investigaciones, y era poco tiempo el que yo tenía para hacer las tareas, porque después tenía que salir y trabajar. En ese tiempo estaba en la carpintería haciendo muebles. (Informant 4)

In high school we had to buy books for chemistry, physics, and other subjects, and those books were more expensive, so we had to go to the library to do research. Besides, I did not have enough time because I had to go to work as well. I used to work in a carpenters' shop making furniture. (Informant 4)
Informant 2 stated that sometimes, even teachers discourage students from showing up to school if they are not prepared with the required books and school supplies. For that reason, most students stop attending school and start working as early as in sixth grade. In reference to this, informant 2 says,

_Había muchos que no podían, y la maestra decía, si no traen este libro mejor ni vengan, y entonces muchos no iban. Y al llegar a sexto, muchos no iban y ya eran menos. Entraban muchos pero los que se graduaban eran menos._

(Informant 6)

_There are a lot of students who could not (buy the things they requested), and the teacher would say, if you do not bring this book, you better not come to school, and then many would not attend school. And when they got to sixth grade, many students would drop out, and only a few would graduate._ (Informant 6)

Informant 8 from El Salvador noted that education in her home country is free; however schools are extremely poor and with little resources. That is the reason why parents have to buy everything from books to school supplies. Besides, parents are expected to make monetary contributions to the school by buying raffle tickets or participating in other fundraising activities. She refers to this as follows,

_La enseñanza es gratis, universidad todo, pero todos los libros, materiales, lo tienen que conseguir la mamá y el papá. Yo les digo a mis hijos que_
estudien, que aprovechen que están aquí, porque allá no te regalan nada. Ni un lápiz siquiera...hay niños que no reciben estudios porque la mama no puede pagar los materiales para que vaya o conseguir los libros (Informant 8)

Education in general is free, but all the books and school supplies have to be purchased by parents. I tell my children to study. They have to take advantage of the opportunities they have here, because over there they do not give away anything. Not even a pencil... There are children who do not receive an education because their parents cannot buy them their school supplies or books to attend school. (Informant 8)

Uniforms. All the informants said that children had to wear uniforms in order to attend schools in their home countries. For instance, Informant 11 from Mexico says that there are three different kinds of uniforms all the students must wear depending on the day of the week. Every Monday children have to wear a special uniform called "de Gala" (i.e.: for ceremonies) since on that day children pay tribute to the Mexican flag and sing the national anthem. They have a sports uniform which they wear when they have gym and they also have a casual uniform for all the other days. On this, Informant 11 comments,

La escuela es pública, se paga inscripción, ahora ya usan tres uniformes.
El día lunes es uniforme de gala porque es homenaje a la bandera, y los otros días de martes a viernes ya usan otro uniforme, y los días que tienen educación
física tienen otro uniforme... Todos van iguales, y el que no lo compra, le dan cierto tiempo y después no los dejan entrar a la escuela. (Informant 11)

_Schools are public, but you pay registration fees. Now they wear three different uniforms. On Monday, they wear a uniform for ceremonies because they honor the flag, and on gym days they wear their gym uniform. All the other days, they wear the other uniform. Everyone dresses alike, and if somebody did not buy the uniform, the school gives them a waiver for a short period of time, and then they are not allowed to attend school._ (Informant 11)

Informant 5 from Mexico says that even though uniforms might be expensive to buy, they are practical and convenient because they eliminate any argument about what to wear. Moreover, students are easily identifiable, and they always look neat and tidy. He also thinks that uniforms help remove distinctions of class and social status among students. Informant 5 tells,

_Allá, todos los niños van de uniforme...y es bonito porque no hay distinción... no importa si el papa tiene más dinero o no, todos los niños iguales vestidos... así no hay distinción, y no están comparando si este pantalón es más bonito, o aquel viene vestido mejor todo el mes, o aquel tiene más dinero_ (Informant 5)
In Mexico, all the students wear uniforms. The uniforms erase the
differences. It does not matter if parents are poor or rich, all the children dress
alike... There are not any distinctions, and children are not comparing if their
pants are nicer or better than someone else's. (Informant 5)

Informant 2 from Costa Rica and Informant 7 from Mexico also think that
uniforms are very convenient. Informant 7 says that when children are required to wear
uniforms to school, parents do not have to spend so much money on regular clothes.
Parents do not have to worry about their children wearing something different every day
and children do not have to wear their best clothes to go to school. Informant 7 says,

Es mejor usar uniforme. Porque los niños se identifican y es menos
gastos... A mí me gustan (los uniformes)...Se gasta al principio de año, pero no
se tiene que gastar en ropa todo el año. Y acá lo que uno tiene que estar gastando
es para ropa...porque los niños no quieren ir con ropa vieja...los tenis viejos... Y
no se estarían fijando si van mal vestidos, con ropa de marca, más sencilla,
porque todos son iguales, todos van del mismo color, todos el mismo uniforme.
(Informant 5)

It is better when children wear uniforms because they are identifiable and
parents spend less... I like uniforms because you spend at the beginning of the
year, but then you do not have to spend on clothes the rest of the year. Here, you
have to be spending money on clothes because children do not want to wear old
clothes or old sneakers. Back in our countries, no one knows if children are
dressed with brand names, or ordinary clothes, because everyone wears the same
color, the same color, and the same uniform. (Informant 5)

School hours and breaks. All the informants have noticed that the amount of time
that children spend in school in the United States is longer when compared to the time
children spend in schools in their home countries. Moreover, those participants who had
children in their countries and brought them over to the United States found that their
children had difficulties in adapting to a longer school day. For instance, informants from
Mexico said that school lasted only 4 hours. Children were at school from 8 to 12, and
they had a mid-morning break or “recreo” to play outside or to eat snacks which they
could buy on school premises.

Informant 11 says that school is very different in the United States and that her
son had difficulties adapting when he came from Mexico because he not only missed his
classmates and teachers but also because he was used to playing outside without much
supervision. She finds that her son finds school tightly scheduled and recreational
activities are closely monitored. Regarding this, she comments,

Porque la escuela es diferente aquí. El no estaba acostumbrado a que el
día sea tan largo. Allá solo iban 4 horas, de ocho a doce, y además tenían un
recreo en la mañana donde saltan a jugar o a conversar, o a comprar su comida.
El dice que aquí están más controlados, no son tan libres como allá. (Informant
11)
School is different here. My son wasn’t used to such a long day. In Mexico they went to school for 4 hours, from eight to twelve, and they also had a break in the morning to play outside, chat with friends, or buy some food. He says that here they are more controlled, that they are not as free as they were there back in Mexico. (Informant 11)

At the same time, some informants noted that back in their countries some children, especially those who live in rural areas do not have much time to play and do the things that children normally do. Many children have to work after school. Informant 3 remembers that she did not spend a lot of time playing during her childhood because she and her siblings had to help her mother sell food in the street. She says that she did not enjoy her childhood because she never played except during the break “recreo” she had at school. She also says that when she used to go to school she would have to get up early and walk a long distance to get to school. School for her started at 8.30 a.m. and finished at 12.30 p.m. and after that she had to go and help her mother sell tortillas and tamales until 4.30 p.m.

The way recess time is structured in participants’ home countries is very different from how it is structured in American school. For instance, Informant 6 tells that a school break lasts about half an hour and during that time children can eat their lunch, play around, or buy something.
Teníamos media hora de recreo... Y en ese momento comíamos, o comprábamos algo. Y eso si alcanzábamos, porque no vendían mucho y todos los niños querían, y era como un empujadero allí. (Informant 6)

We had a break of half an hour... at that time children would eat, or buy something if they could because there were too many children pushing and not many people selling things. (Informant 6)

Informant 11 explained that at schools in Mexico, during recess time, children shout out what they want and push each other in order to buy a snack. In the middle of the chaos generated by dozens of kids pushing and shouting to get their snack, must have been some kind of order says informant 11, because everyone always seems to get what they want.

Regarding the school day, Informant 2 from Costa Rica observed that schools in the United States have longer days compared to schools in her home country. She narrates that children attend school for a few hours in the lower grades because rural schools lack space to accommodate the large number of children attending school. As a result, schools split the morning in two sessions. She says,

El tiempo que ellos van a la escuela (en Costa Rica) es muy poquito comparado con lo que van aquí, que es todo el tiempo. Por ejemplo, ellos van allá de 7:00 a 10:00 de la mañana, después de 10:00 a 1:00. (Informant 2)
The time they spend at school there (in Costa Rica) is very little compared with the time they spend here. For instance, a group of students go to school from 7:00 to 10:00 a.m. then another group of students comes from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Informant 2)

Informants from El Salvador also noted that children in their home countries do not attend school the whole day as they do in the United States. In El Salvador schools split the day into two sessions which are taught by the same teacher. Thus, there is a morning session and an afternoon session. According to Informant 8, children are split into two sessions because there are not enough desks and classrooms for so many students. Informant 8 comments,

La única diferencia es que allá no es todo el día. Es de la 8:00 hasta las 12:00 es el primer turno, y desde las 2:00 hasta las 6:00 es el segundo turno. Hay un solo maestro para los dos turnos... Hay poquitos pupitres... no alcanza para todos. (Informant 8)

School in El Salvador is not the whole day. The first session is from 8 to 12, and the second session is from 2:00 to 6:00. There is only one teacher for the two sessions... there are few desks... which are not enough for all the students. (Informant 8)
Possible reasons for shorter school days at rural schools in participants’ home countries can be lack of classrooms, resources, and teachers. Regarding lack of teachers, informants reported that a solution to this problem is a “multigrade” system (multigrados) which refers to one teacher in charge of students in grade levels 1 to 6. These classes are generally large and consist of about 30 to 40 students. There is only one teacher per classroom who divides the class in groups according to student grade levels. Informant 11 from Mexico says,

_En mi pueblo no hay tantos maestros, ni tantos salones. Las escuelas son pequeñas. Entonces ponen a niños de diferentes grados en el mismo salón y una sola maestra se encarga de enseñarles a todos. Los separa en grupos y les enseña lo mejor que puede. A esas escuelas se las llama “multigrados.”_ (Informant 11)

_In my town there are not many teachers or classrooms. Schools are small and poor so children from different grade levels are assigned to the same classroom and to the same teacher. Students are divided in groups and teachers do the best they can. Those schools are called “multigrades.”_ (Informant 11)

Similarly, Informant 2 says that in her hometown school in Costa Rica there are only three teachers in charge of educating 100 children. She comments,
En mi pueblo debe haber como 100 niños y hay tres maestras solamente.

Una que es dedicada al Kinder y solo para eso. Y las otras dos para los otros
grados (primero a sexto grado). (Informant 2)

In my town there must be about 100 children in total, and there are only
three teachers. One is in charge of kindergarten. The other two teachers are in
charge of the other grade levels (first to sixth grade). (Informant 2)

All the informants also noted that in their home countries the homeroom teacher
is the one who teaches all the subjects. Informant 1 says that she likes schools in the
United States because children have the opportunity to take different classes such as art,
physical education, music, and computers.

En nuestros países es totalmente diferente porque en nuestros países es
una sola maestra, que enseña todo. Una sola maestra tiene que ver con un solo
grupo de 25, 30 niños y todos los días tiene que enseñarles todo...Mientras que
aqui son diferentes maestros que enseñan diferentes cosas y los niños tienen más
oportunidades de abrir más su mente, de aprender más. (Informant 1)

In our countries it is very different because there is only one teacher who
teaches everything. One teacher has to teach a group of 25 or 30 children, and
she has to teach them everything every day. Here, here there are different
teachers who teach different things and the children have more opportunities to open their minds and learn more. (Informant 1).

Another solution for scarcity of qualified teachers is Telesecundaria. According to Informants 6 and 7 from Mexico, Telesecundaria is a system of distance education programs for 7th to 9th grade students. Telesecundaria broadcasts all the lessons via satellite television to rural schools. Students attend school as they would normally do, but instead of teachers delivering the lessons, they watch lessons which are broadcasted via satellite (Torres & Fanfani, 2000). There is one adult with the students at all times who is in charge of attendance, answering questions, and administering the exams, but the subject content is delivered by a virtual teacher on television. Informant 7 comments,

_Todas las lecciones, el desarrollo de los programas (de estudio) los dan por televisión, y así estudie yo, y me gradué. Fue muy sacrificada la secundaria..._

_El desarrollo lo pasan por televisión, pero los exámenes nos los daba el maestro... teníamos dos maestros para que nos ayuden con las materias... las lecciones pasan muy rápido._ (Informant 7)

_All the lessons, the development of the curriculum is through television, and that is how I studied, and I graduated. Secondary school was very difficult... The lessons were via television, but the exams were administered by a teacher... there were two teachers who helped us with the subjects... the lessons went very fast._ (Informant 7)
Parental involvement. Participants concurred that parents have little participation in school related matters in their home countries. Informant 1 says that in Mexico parents are usually invited to a general meeting in the middle and at the end of the year. At these meetings parents sign their children’ report cards. Informant 1 also noted that parents do not have the opportunity of meeting with their children’s teacher individually as they do here. She adds,

"Lo que me gusta de aquí es que las juntas son individuales, y los maestros tienen tiempo para hablar y decirles a los padres individualmente como van. Y cada padre...puede conversar sobre cómo ayudarles (a los hijos) si es que les va mal." (Informant 1)

What I like about here is that meetings are one-to-one, and teachers take the time to talk and tell each parent how their children are doing. Teachers can talk with parents about ways to help their children if they are not doing well at school. (Informant 1)

Most participants noticed that schools in their home countries do not communicate with parents as much as they do in the United States. Participants reported that communication between school and home is very little and sometimes non-existent in their home countries; especially in rural schools. Most of the times, teachers do not contact parents if students are failing in school or have behavior problems. Failing
students simply repeat the grade and it is nobody’s fault but the students’. Informant 4 illustrates this as follows,

En México, si el niño faltaba más de un mes, no lo pasaban de grado. A los maestros no les importaba porque el niño no fue, o si había un problema familiar, o si era maltratado, y a veces hasta en la escuela era maltratado, y porque no aprendía. No trataban de ayudarlo a ver cuál es el problema psicológico que tenía. (Informant 4)

In Mexico, if children missed school for more than a month, they would just be retained. Teachers did not care why children were absent, if there was a family problem, if children were physically abused, or if they could not learn. Nobody would try to help these children and see what problem they had.

(Informant 4)

Participants noticed that school staff in their home countries believe that the ultimate responsibility of studying lies on children and whether they want to study or not. Informant 4 mentioned that it was his decision to quit school because he had to work when he was in 10th grade, and that his parents did not encourage him to continue studying. They said that it was his decision and not theirs.

Allá es como que los maestros no se meten mucho con la familia, sino que es el alumno el que quiere estudiar. (Informant 4)
In Mexico, teachers do not interact much with parents. It is children’s decision to continue studying or not. (Informant 4)

Furthermore, they reported that schools in their home country do not discuss problems with parents. Parents in participants’ home countries think that homes and schools have different responsibilities. As parents do not question teachers, teachers do not question parents either and do not give them advice on home practices and child-rearing. Informant 8 from El Salvador believes that Hispanic parents that come to the United States still think that teachers are the ones who are responsible for their children’s education. They do not realize that it should be a partnership between home and school. Parents learn about the importance of parental involvement in the United States. On this note, she comments,

Los padres no participamos en la escuela porque venimos con la idea de hacer dinero y con el pensamiento que todavía no nos hemos quitado de que el maestro es el que tiene que hacer todo en la escuela. Mientras que la educación es entre los padres y los maestros. Es una unión. Eso lo aprendemos aquí.

(Informant 8)

We, parents, do not participate at school because we come with the idea of making money and because we still think that the teacher is the one who has to do
everything at school. It is here that we learn that the education of children is a partnership between parents and teachers. (Informant 8)

Informant 3 also pointed out that although American schools try to get parents involved in the education of their children, many parents do not participate because they come with the mentality that the school has to do everything for their children.

Yo he visto en esta escuela que hay mucha información que nos llaman para involucrarnos en la escuela. Pero nosotros somos muy comoditos, nos gusta que ellos hagan todo por nuestros hijos sin nosotros no hacer nada. Los típicos mexicanos así somos, con el hecho de mandar a nuestros hijos a la escuela nosotros ya cumplimos, que se arreglen los maestros con ellos. (Informant 3)

I have noticed that in this school parents receive a lot of information, and they are always inviting us to participate in school activities. But many times we are laid back. We want the school to do everything for our children. We as Mexicans think that our responsibility is to make sure that children go to school, and teachers have to deal with them. (Informant 3)

Teaching methods in home countries. Informant 11 says that her son, who came to the United States when he was 9 years old, had difficulties adapting to school not only to the rules he encountered but also to the teaching methods of his American teachers. Schools in Mexico are more relaxed and children are used to working in groups, talking
in class, being loud, and cooperating with each other. She says that her son was always complaining that his teacher was constantly telling him to be quiet, to walk in line, and to raise his hand to participate.

*Se queja que porque para todo hay reglas, y me dice por ejemplo en la escuela, porque yo tengo que caminar para cierto lado cuando todos vienen de este lado, y yo digo cada uno tiene su lado, los que vienen y los que van, que eso es orden, y el está todo el tiempo preguntando porque.* (Informant 11)

*My son complains that there are rules for everything at school. For instance, he asks why he has to walk in line on this side when everybody walks on the other side. And I say that is orderly, and he is always asking why.* (Informant 11)

Moreover, participants reported that in their home countries schools do not have special education services or alternative schooling for children who have special education needs. Informant 9 from El Salvador says that students with learning or behavioral problems are not separated from the rest of the students. Everyone is placed in the same classroom. Regarding this, he comments,

*En mi país a los niños con problemas de aprendizaje no los apartan.*

*Están juntos todos. Yo me acuerdo que cuando yo estaba en la escuela lo que la maestra hacia era un niño que no podía aprender le daba otra tarea y los que si*
los ponía en un grupito y les daba otra tarea. Y aquí no, no pueden parar, y entonces tienen que apartarlo, y tienen (clases) homogéneos con las mismas dificultades. Aquí es diferente, tal vez porque hay más recursos, y los tienen separados. (Informant 9)

In my home country, children with learning disabilities are not separated. Everyone is together. I remember that when I was in school, the teacher divided the class in groups and gave different assignments to the different groups. Here it is not like that. Children with learning disabilities are sent to a resource room. Maybe they can do it here because they have more resources. (Informant 9).

Informant 9 also mentioned that his son, who was diagnosed with lead poisoning, was separated from his classmates and placed in a special education classroom in the United States. He did not like this practice because he thought that his son was not learning the same things as the rest of the students and fought for several years till his child was placed in a regular class, but with academic support.

Research Question 3

What kinds of accommodations/resources do schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora provide to help Hispanic children and their parents overcome cultural, linguistic and social barriers?
Participants shared in the interviews how the schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora adapted to the Latino newcomers and gradually responded to their needs and helped them overcome cultural, linguistic, and social barriers. According to informants, the schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora acknowledge and celebrate parents’ and students’ language and cultural differences. The primary school, in particular has numerous programs and activities carried out throughout the school year that help parents become involved in the education of their children.

Informant 8 says that her family has lived in the same town for about 10 years and she has noticed how the Hispanic student population has increased over the years. She also noted that the increasing Hispanic population forced schools to accommodate the needs of the new students and their families. Now, there is a Spanish speaking secretary in the primary school. This person receives newcomers and explains to them what procedures they have to follow to register their children in school. The translator answers questions, translates, and helps Hispanic families learn about the Mexican school system.

_Ahora no nos da miedo, ni vergüenza ir a preguntar cosas a la escuela porque hay una secretaria que habla español en la oficina. Además hay muchas maestras y asistentes que hablan español._ (Informant 8)

_Now, we are not afraid of going to school to ask about something. Now, there is a secretary who speaks Spanish in the office. There are also many teachers and assistants that speak Spanish._ (Informant 8)
Informant 10 remembers that when she arrived in the United States 5 years ago, she did not come to this New Hispanic Diaspora right away. However, as soon as she found out that there was somebody who spoke Spanish in the schools, she decided to move to this community. Besides, Informant 10 says that one of the reasons for which she stays in this community is the availability of teachers and personnel who speak Spanish and make them feel welcomed at all times.

Home and school language differences can challenge both parents and educators. For instance, participants in this study reported that the school sometimes sends notes and flyers that are not translated so they have to rely on their children to translate what the notices are about. The informants also reported that the language barrier prevents them from attending school functions.

Informant 7 has five children in different grade levels and in different schools across the school district and she sees many differences among the primary, middle, and high schools. She says that the primary school in this New Hispanic Diaspora provides translation services to parents. During these meetings parents wear headphones that allow them to hear a simultaneous translation of the presentation or discussion. Only those wearing the headphones can hear the translator’s voice clearly. The primary school also provides translators during parent-teacher conferences and all notices that are sent home are always in English and Spanish.

However, Informant 7 feels that she would like to participate in school related activities at the middle and high school as much as she participates at the primary school, but does not do so because she does not understand what they are saying in those meetings and feels embarrassed to ask. Moreover, she reports that the middle school does
not always send notices home in both languages, so she has to rely on her children to translate the notices for her. She feels that her children’s translation is not always accurate and sometimes the children do not know how to translate.

The analysis of the verbatim suggests a number of activities and programs that are carried out by the primary and/or middle school in an effort to assist parents and children become actually involved with school matters. Some of these programs provide parents with special training to help them improve their English communication skills or provide parents with information that will help their children to improve their study habits. All these programs and activities are geared to encourage greater parental participation.

Table 9 presents a summary of these school programs and initiatives. It is followed by a brief description of each program and the ways these programs help parents and children.

*Great Start Program*

Informants described the Great Start Program as a program that gives support to low income Spanish speaking parents of 3 year-olds or younger children. The program enables parents to offer their children the key experiences needed to develop the concepts and vocabulary necessary to be successful in school. Each meeting provides parents with teaching tips on vocabulary and language development skills. Parents also learn about techniques to use and develop language awareness and have the opportunity to see teachers model reading strategies. Participants receive free books to enlarge their home library and learn about artistic and musical activities that they can implement at home to
reinforce their children's social skills development. The meetings always include a doctor or nurse who shares information on health and nutrition for the family.

Table 9

Taxonomy of Kinds of Programs/Activities carried out by the Primary School and/or Middle School.

|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----|

Informant 1 said that she always tries to make the effort to attend Great Start meetings because their children benefit enormously by participating in the many activities offered. She also says that parents learn a lot by interacting with guest speakers such as doctors, nurses, teachers, or community leaders who are invited to present about different topics. Informant 1 describes a Great Start meeting as follows,

_Pusieron a los niños a hacer una actividad, a contar, para que vayan aprendiendo a contar, contaban burbujas de jabón...Luego cantamos una canción de las partes del cuerpo, el jockey pockey, y otra de los pollitos, y a_
bailar para que los niños se muevan. Luego adentro se les leyó una historia...se
hablo sobre el asma. Sobre los niños que tienen problemas para respirar y las
cosas que lo facilitan como el polvo y peluches. Otras veces se hablan de otros
temas, como el envenenamiento con plomo, o ayuda en los hospitales para los
niños. Casi siempre va alguien que es experto en el tema y nos habla de algún
tema de interés. También regalan libros a los niños para que los padres empiecen
a hacer su biblioteca en la casa con libros para los niños para que lean juntos.
(Informant 1)

First, children counted soap bubbles... sang a song about parts of the
body, the Hokey Pokey, and did the chicken dance, and children danced and
moved. Then, they read a story... experts talked about asthma and things that can
make that condition worse. On another occasion, they talked about lead
poisoning and the kind of help children can get at the hospital. There is always an
expert who shares information and educates the parents. They also give books to
children so parents can set up a library at home and read with their children.
(Informant 1)

Family Literacy Night

Family Literacy Night is a school wide evening event that takes place three times
a year in the primary school. Family Literacy Night not only helps promote parental
involvement in the primary school but it also promotes the development of children’s
literacy skills. Parents are made aware of what they can do to promote and develop children’s literacy and reading skills at home (Brantley, n.d.).

Informants noted that during the event, there are approximately 10 groups, 5 guided by English-speaking teachers and other 5 by Spanish-speaking teachers. During each session, teachers in charge read a story to the children while modeling parents how to point out book title, author, and illustrator; make a picture walk, predict what the book will be about, ask critical thinking questions and elicit elaborated answers from the students, and so on.

After the reading aloud, children engage in an arts and crafts activity related to the theme of the story. Meanwhile, the teacher discusses with parents the strategies and techniques observed during their reading aloud. At the end of the event, children receive a packet of activities to do at home, and parents receive a handout with reading tips. Then, everyone is invited to go to the cafeteria to select a free book for their home libraries and to enjoy refreshments. Concerning this, Informant 4 says,

La noche de Lectura es un evento en el que van los padres con los niños y comparten un cuento que leen los maestros, y ellos les enseñan a los padres cosas que pueden hacer en la casa para ayudarlos. Por ejemplo, como leerles un libro, como hablar con los niños después de la lectura. Es muy interesante, y lo hacen como un juego para los niños. A mi hijo le gusta asistir. (Informant 5)

Family Literacy Night is an event for parents and children. Teachers read a story to the children and show parents things they can do at home to help their
children with school. For example, you learn how to read a book to their children, and how to ask them questions about the book. It is very interesting, and it is fun for the children. My son likes attending that event. (Informant 5)

Before/After School Program

The Before/After School Program is a program at the primary and middle schools aimed at helping children with Reading and Math. Some children stay after school and some others come before school. Classes last about one hour and consist of students that belong to the same grade level and have similar academic difficulties.

All the informants think that the After/Before School Program is very helpful for their children, especially for those who do not receive bilingual education, and who have homework in English. Most of the informants said that they try to help their children with their homework. However, they find this task very difficult and time consuming since they have to look every word they do not know in the dictionary in order to translate the instructions.

For instance, Informant 3 says that she always has difficulties trying to help her son with his homework because it is in English. She sometimes thinks she understands the homework, however, when the teacher corrects it, and her child brings it home she realizes it was all wrong. She refers to this as follows,

Pero aunque yo quiera ayudarlo, ya hay cosas que yo no entiendo. Solo ahora en tercero hay cosas que eran difíciles y que yo no podía ayudarlo, y estaban en inglés entonces era más difícil... y él me pedia ayuda y yo le decía, a
ver léelo en voz alta a ver que entiendo, y el leía y yo nadita. Y hay veces que hay palabras que no aparecen en el diccionario. (Informant 3)

Even if I want to help my son, there are things that I do not understand. Now he is in third grade and there are things that are difficult and I cannot help him. Besides his homework is in English, so it is even more difficult for me to help. He asks me for help, and I say, read it aloud, and he reads and I do not understand anything. Sometimes there are words that are not even in the dictionary. (Informant 3)

Informants commented on the fact that their children benefit from the After/Before School program not only because they are able to do their homework but also because they learn English. Informant 2 from Costa Rica says that her daughter attends the Before School Program 4 days a week and she has noticed that her daughter has made a lot of progress in English. Regarding this, she comments,

Mi hija asiste al programa que hay antes de la escuela. Su maestra le dice que es muy importante que los niños asistan a ese programa para que puedan progresar. Y yo veo que ella ha progresado mucho. Ella ya sabe hablar en inglés y también sabe escribir en inglés y español. (Informant 3)

My daughter attends the Before School Program. Her teacher says that it is very important that the children attend this program so that they can make
progress. I can see that my daughter has made a lot of progress. She can speak, read, and write in English and Spanish. (Informant 3)

Summer School Program

The Summer School Program runs in the morning for 4 weeks in July, from Monday to Thursday, 3 hours per day in the primary and middle school. It is especially aimed at students who either have to improve academically or want to attend enrichment activities.

Informant 11 says that her son had to attend summer school in order to be promoted to seventh grade. At the end of the program he had a test which he fortunately passed. She says that her son was able to catch up with his classmates thanks to the Summer School Program. She is very thankful for that program because if she had been in Mexico she would have had to pay for makeup classes her son needed to be promoted to the next grade level.

Although the Summer School Program is not mandatory, informants expressed that they prefer to send their children to school rather than keep them at home watching television. All the Informants feel that the Summer School Program is a great opportunity for their children to improve academically, be occupied in something productive, and continue their learning while developing English skills.

English Classes for Foreign Born Parents

English classes for foreign born parents are held at the primary school but are not restricted to primary school parents. All those parents that live in the school district and
wish to learn English are welcome to attend. The classes are free and they are designed to help students’ parents brush up their English skills. Parents attend the class twice a week to work on their English speaking, writing, and reading skills. The students are split into two groups based on their English level.

The fact that teachers are bilingual makes it easy for parents to participate. Also, baby-sitting, dictionaries, and textbooks, are provided. Participants reported that they attend these classes because they want to learn English to be able to communicate with their children’s teacher and get more involved at school.

*Back to School Night*

Back to School Night at the primary and middle school is an event that allows parents to meet their children’s teachers, the principal, nurse, and other staff members, as well as other fellow parents. It usually takes place on a weekday evening within a month of the first day of school. The evening typically begins with an introduction in the auditorium or gymnasium. Then, parents separate into groups and spend the evening with their children’s teachers.

The event gives parents a glimpse of their children’s daily life at school and an opportunity to learn about the curriculum. The teachers give an overview of students’ daily routines, schedules, goals, and also discusses school homework policy, and discipline plan.
ASK 3 Pizza Night

ASK 3 Pizza Night is an event at the primary school for third grade parents and students. During this event third grade teachers have the opportunity to share information about the characteristics of the NJ ASK 3 test which assesses student achievement in language arts literacy, mathematics, and science.

Parents learn about the test and the two major types of questions students will encounter: multiple-choice and open-ended. Parents are provided with examples of these questions so they have a better idea of the type of skills children are expected to have.

Informant 10 thinks that this meeting is very informative because parents not only learn about characteristics of the test but also they get tips on how to help their children prepare for the test at home. There is a translator for Spanish speaking parents who summarizes the main points of the meeting and afterwards everyone shares pizza and refreshments.

School-Community Partnerships

The primary and middle schools have partnerships with local non-profit organizations such as YMCA, Police Department, and the Visiting Nurses Association of Central New Jersey. These organizations provide different services to students and/or families.

For example, the police department has a program at the primary and middle schools called D.A.R.E. which stands for Drug Abuse Resistance Education, and it is a highly acclaimed program that gives children the skills they need to avoid involvement in drugs, gangs, and violence. The D.A.R.E. classes are delivered by local police officers
who teach children from kindergarten through 12th grade how to resist peer pressure and live productive drug and violence-free lives.

The schools also have a partnership with the local YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association) which provides before and after school care, and summer camp activities. Parents may pay a fee or obtain full or partial scholarships for their children in order for them to take advantage of its services.

The school district’s partnership with the Visiting Nurses Association of Central Jersey provides children with free eye and dental care programs. The Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey is a voluntary, nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion, restoration, and maintenance of the health status of individuals and the community.

In conclusion, these schools help parents understand schools’ expectations and parents’ role in the education of their children. The schools make efforts to educate parents on homework expectations, classroom management, extracurricular activities, and instructional strategies. These efforts and accommodations carried out by the schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora positively influence parent and school relations. As Manning and Lee (2001) pointed working with ELL children’s parents results in improved students’ academic achievement, improved students’ behavior, and improved collaboration between parents and teachers.
Research Question 4

How do families and schools mitigate home-school discontinuity?

Home school discontinuity is a term used to refer to the gap or lack of cohesion that sometimes exists between home and school practices, and which affects school performance of minority children. As Macias (1987) points out, this discontinuity rises in more culturally pluralistic settings where children’s whose home culture is radically different from that of the social mainstream, the segment of the population generally responsible for the social and educational policies affecting these children.

In this study, informants reported experiencing different instances of home-school discontinuity mainly due to language differences, diverging views on teaching methods, unfamiliarity with the curriculum, lack of communication between teachers and parents, teachers’ lack of multicultural awareness, and lack of parental involvement.

These discontinuities between the new, structured school environment and children’s prior experiences within their families and community have a great impact on their schooling experience. A vast amount of research has pointed out that the erosion of the home-school relationship undermines teaching and learning, particularly in school settings where there is a gap between students’ social experiences and mainstream expectations.

Informants believe that it is their responsibility and the school’s responsibility to find new ways to close the gap between home and school in order to create relations that foster a successful schooling experience for culturally diverse children. Informants are aware of the barriers to educational success and they are also aware of the strategies that
most of them use to mitigate home-school discontinuity and which have helped their children to do fairly well academically. In an effort to mitigate the incongruence between home and school cultures, informants report several strategies which they consciously or unconsciously carry out.

The degree of efficacy children’s schooling is determined by the way in which cultural disparities are dealt with (Macias, 1987). “It is only fair that schools make an effort to understand their families’ culture and seek effective ways to communicate with the communities of Hispanic students” (Beykont, p. 215). To begin with, informants expressed that their limited English proficiency was a barrier for helping their children succeed at school. Most of the informants felt that they could not help their children with homework or assignments because they did not understand English.

For instance, Informant 3 says that she tries to help her child as much as she can, but everyone at home speaks Spanish. Her son is attending third grade and all his homework is in English. Although she has dictionaries and books in English and Spanish she feels that she cannot help him. The school provides an after school program where children receive help with their homework and she thinks that this program helps her son do better at school.

*Yo tengo libros que tienen ilustraciones en inglés y español, y diccionarios. Pero antes era fácil porque era Pre-K, K y primer grado, pero ahora ya en tercero es super difícil y él lo tiene que hacer solo. Y yo le digo, que me gusta que él esté tratando de hacer sus tareas. Yo pienso que él es bien capaz. Y el año que viene ya lo voy a dejar ir*
I have books and dictionaries that have illustrations in English and Spanish. However, I cannot help my son. Before, it was easier to help him when he was in Pre-K, K, and first grade. Now, he is in third grade and it is much more difficult. He has to do his homework alone. I sit with him and I tell him that I appreciate that he is trying to do his homework. I think he is very intelligent. Next year, I am going to let him attend the after school program because I feel that fourth grade is going to be more difficult and he will need help with his homework. (Informant 3)

Parents realize that one way to help their children succeed at school is to make sure that they do their homework. Informants teach their children that school comes first and that doing their homework and their school assignments is very important for doing well at school. Moreover, informants also report that they know that school is difficult for children, especially when parents cannot help their children at all.

Thus, the language Hispanic parents speak becomes a serious discontinuity between home and school. It might be, and often is, the cause of poor schooling for minority groups. Informants reported that they are aware of this and that they want to learn English in order to be able to help their children with their school assignments and to be able to communicate with their children's teachers. Parents whose English proficiency is limited find it difficult or intimidating to communicate with school staff or
to help in school activities without bilingual support from someone in the school community.

Informants in this study appreciate ESL adult classes that were provided to parents at no cost in the evenings. They made every effort to attend these classes because they felt that learning English was a way to help their children at home with school, to communicate with their children’s teachers, and also to improve their language skills to find better jobs.

Informants acknowledge the importance of English, and they want their children to learn it at school. However, they do not want their children to lose their home language. Some parents reported how difficult it was for them to communicate with their children because they felt that their children had lost their ability to express themselves in Spanish. Informant 11 says that she does not want her children to be like her cousin’s children who do not speak a word of Spanish and who always answer in English even if they are addressed in Spanish.

Informant 7 noticed the inevitable language loss that her son was experiencing, and requested that he be placed in a bilingual kindergarten. The superintendent did not honor her request alluding that her son had enough command of English to be in a monolingual classroom since he had passed English tests appropriate for his age. She is afraid that her son will lose his Spanish skills, for this reason she has decided to teach him Spanish reading at home.

Other informants also reported that they had insisted on having their children in the bilingual program, but their request was not granted on the premise that they were no spots left in the bilingual program. For instance, Informant 1 and Informant 5 requested
their sons to be placed in a bilingual first grade. However, the school principal and 
supervisor determined that the children had enough command of English to survive in a 
monolingual class.

Some informants resist language loss and try to help their children at home by 
teaching them literacy skills in Spanish or sending them back to Mexico during summer 
months. Informant 1 asked bilingual teachers to give her the names of books and 
resources in Spanish so that she could teach her children at home to read and write in 
Spanish. She also makes the effort to send her children to Mexico during the summer 
months so that they have the opportunity to learn more Spanish, and to interact with their 
grandparents and relatives. Informant 1 says that she wants her sons to be fluent in 
Spanish and for that reason she encourages them to speak Spanish at home, buys books in 
Spanish, and talks to her sons about their Mexican heritage, holidays, and customs.

Another instance of home-school discontinuity is when children use their native 
language at school and behave differently from what teachers expect. For instance, 
Informant 11 reported that her son always complains that his teacher does not understand 
him, and is always telling him that he should speak more English and less Spanish, even 
though he does not speak English fluently.

Bueno, yo conozco a mi hijo y sé que él es un poco rebelde, pero siempre
le han tocado maestras que también son necias como el ... Ella dice que el niño
debe hablar inglés porque está en un país donde todos hablan inglés, y ella tiene
razón en esa parte, pero si él no le entiende y quiere hablarle en español, ella
debiera entenderlo y enseñarle como se dice y no regañarlo....yo me di cuenta
que no era solamente con mi hijo, muchas mamas tenian quejas de ella, que llegamos a pensar que teniamos que ir a hablar con el director, porque queriamos un cambio. (Informant 11)

Well, I know my son, and I know that he is a bit unruly, but he has always had teachers who are stubborn like him. ... His teacher says that he has to speak in English because he is in a country where everyone speaks English, and she is right, but if he does not understand, and he wants to speak in Spanish, she should be more understanding and teach him how to say it in English and not tell him off... I noticed that his teacher is the same way with other children, and that many other mothers complained about her. We decided to talk with the principal because we did not like what was going on, and we wanted things to be different. (Informant 11)

Because teachers and children do not share the same communication norms and interaction patterns, and their cultural behavior is different from teachers’ expectations and mainstream children’s habits, they are very likely to be misunderstood by teachers and administrators. Regarding this, Informant 11 reports,

_Mi hijo en la escuela, el dijo, que onda, y movió el cuerpo, pero es un baile sin ningún significado para nosotros y la maestra me llamo y dijo que él había estado fuera de lugar y que había acosado sexualmente a una muchachita._

(Informant 11)
My son, at school, said, "What's up" and he shook his body, but it is a
dance step without any connotation or meaning for us in Mexico, and his teacher
called me and told me that his behavior had been inappropriate and that he had
sexually harassed a classmate. (Informant 11)

Informant 11 said that it was not her son's intention to make anyone feel
uncomfortable and she considered that her son was just acting silly. In order to avoid
misunderstandings, Informant 11 has always talked with her son about culture differences
in order to make him aware of the fact that he is in a different country, and that he has to
be more careful with what he does because sometimes he can be misinterpreted.

Informants also reported that their children have to learn to behave at home and at
school differently. It is particularly hard for those children who grew up in Mexico and
who came to the United States at an older age. Parents say that they always tell their
children how to behave in order to meet the demands of American classrooms. For
example, Informant 11 says that she is always talking with her son and reflecting on his
school experiences. Her son always has lots of questions that she tries to answer the best
way she can, so that he can easily adapt to the American ways. She comments,

Mi hijo dice: ¿Porque aquí hay tantas reglas? ¿Porque uno debe esperar
a que todos tengan su turno? ¿Porque tiene que caminar del lado del derecho y
los otros del lado izquierdo? ¿Porque debe levantar la mano para hablar? Todas
esas cosas que se le hizo extraño al principio pero ahora parece que se esta acostumbrando." (Informant 11)

My son asks questions such as: Why are there so many rules at school?, Why does he have to wait for everyone to have their turn?, Why does he have to walk on the right side in the hallway and others on the left side? Why does he have to raise his hand to talk? And all those things that were strange to him at the beginning, but now he is getting used to them. (Informant 11)

All the informants noticed that there are cultural differences regarding the behavior that is required from their children. They are aware that their children tend to be noisy and talkative but they think that most Hispanic homes are always full of noise and people. They reported that teachers require that children only speak when asked and keep quiet when doing work. However, they noted that Hispanics like to talk while they work.

Informants respect and value school enormously, they want their children to adapt to school requirements and to do their best. For example, informant 11 states that children back in Mexico play freely during recess with minimal supervision. They can run around, buy snacks, and eat if they want. However, Informant 11 noticed that in U.S. schools, children have to be quiet and orderly during lunch time and have to eat their lunch even if they dislike it.

La escuela es diferente aquí. El no estaba acostumbrado a que el día sea tan largo. Aquí están más controlados, no son tan libres como allá. Una vez me
mandaron una nota diciendo que él se había comportado mal durante el recreo, y que había ido al baño sin permiso. Bueno, como el recién había llegado de México, estaba acostumbrado a comportarse con más libertad, y aquí el pasaba por ser un problema de disciplina. (Informant 11)

School is different here. My son wasn’t used to a long school day. Here children are more controlled. They are not free. Once, the school sent me a note telling me that he had misbehaved during recess, and that he had gone to the bathroom without asking permission. Since he had just arrived from Mexico, he was used to more freedom, but here he was a discipline problem. (Informant 11)

Informant 2 recalls an instance of lack of sensitivity to children who come from other countries and who do not know English. She recalls that when her daughter arrived from Costa Rica at age 6, she had difficulties adapting to her kindergarten class, not only because she did not understand English but also because she felt rejected by her teacher who used cookies and candy as a way of praising good behavior and class participation. According to Informant 2, her child did not participate in class because she was new and had no English skills. However, her teacher did not approve her lack of participation.

El primer año de ella fue muy difícil. Yo recuerdo una ocasión en la que llego a la casa llorando porque según la maestra ella no sabía contestarle lo que le preguntaba y tenía que leer algo y no lo pudo leer, y la maestra les dio galletas...
a todos menos a ella porque no sabía leer. Si ella no sabía leer en español que era su lengua, como iba a leer en inglés que no sabía ni una palabra.

(Informant 2)

Her first year in school was very difficult. I remember one day, she came home crying because she could not answer what her teacher was asking her. She had to read something, and she could not do it. Her teacher gave all the other children a cookie, but she did not get one because she did not know how to read. She did not even know how to read in Spanish, her mother tongue, how could she be able to read in English if she did not even understand a word. (Informant 2)

This example shows lack of awareness on part of her teacher who did not pay attention to the immediate needs of the child; that is, her emotional welfare. The teacher's lack of sensitivity to a child who is adapting to a new school system and language, created a barrier between the child and school. American and Hispanic socialization styles, including teaching approaches, the nature of rewards, and characteristics of the relationship between teacher and learner differ greatly one from the other. On this note, Informant 8 makes reference to values and socialization styles that children learn at home and which are typical characteristics of Hispanic children.

Lo que yo veo aquí es que a los niños los instruyen para que sean un robot de hacer dinero... No las cualidades del ser humano... Si los padres enseñaran esas cualidades, buscarían que el ser humano fuera más cariñoso. Yo me fijo en
mi hijo que tiene 24 años, y yo no quiero que mi hijo se vaya de mi lado. Nosotros los hispanos somos más cariñosos, los acogemos más a nosotros, los protegemos... Los hispanos somos diferentes. Esa costumbre la traemos de nuestros países, de nuestros antepasados... No nos dieron estudios pero si nos dieron un valor moral del ser humano, a no ser tan competitivos. (Informant 8)

What I see here, is that children are taught to be robots to make money. They do not learn about the qualities of being more human. If parents taught those qualities they would teach their children to be kind and affectionate. I see my son who is 24 years old and I do not want him to leave my side. We, Hispanics are more affectionate, we hug them. We protect them. Hispanics are different. We bring that custom from our home countries, from our ancestors who did not give us studies, but they gave us the moral value of not being so competitive.

(Informant 8)

Tharp (1988, as cited in Eugene Garcia, 2002) argues that addressing the academic underachievement of linguistically and culturally diverse populations requires a deeper understanding of the interaction between a students’ home and school cultures.

Parents want the best for their children and hope that they will do well in school and adapt to their new environment. They believe that education is very important and that education will provide their children with the necessary tools to become an integral part of American society. As Macias (1987) points out, “the transition from home to school in early childhood appears to be a critical period of discontinuity” (p.364). This is
true for many children of ethnic minority origin who struggle to adapt to a new culture, language, and school setting.

In order to mitigate the discontinuity between home and school, teachers and administrators of schools in this ethnic community launched a Great Start program for Spanish-speaking parents. This program is based on the premise that that education begins at birth, not when a child enters school. Therefore, the goal of the program is to support low income parents to develop the concepts and vocabulary that their children will need to be successful in school.

Parents meet twice a month and each meeting provides them with strategies to help their children develop their vocabulary, language, and social skills, as well as health insights and information on topics such as nutrition, inoculations, preventive and sick baby care, and other topics related to early childhood. The Great Start Program for Hispanic parents values and acknowledges home language and culture. Parents are very appreciative when teachers communicate with them in Spanish and regard the use of Spanish in the classroom and at home as a positive educational attribute upon which children can develop further knowledge.

Parents appreciate school efforts to help them improve their children’s literacy skills. Informants noticed that teaching methods in the United States differ greatly to those of their native countries. They pointed out that in their native countries children learn to read by memorization and constant drilling. Although parents have a different view on how a child learns to read and how they can help them develop their literacy skills, they are willing to change their views and learn new methods.
Informants also made reference to school events and initiatives geared to develop children’s literacy skills. Parents talked about the Family Literacy Night events that help them learn about reading strategies that they can use to help their children at home. In reference to this program Informant 7 says,

*En la noche de lectura les regalan libros a los niños, y eso ayuda a que los niños tengan sus libros en la casa. También nos dan consejos a los padres como leerles a los niños, o como dar importancia a la lectura en la casa, y en esas reuniones es importante para poder ayudar a los niños. (Informant 7)*

*During family literacy night, children receive free books so they can have their own home libraries. Parents learn how to read to and with their children. They also learn about the importance of reading at home and how they can help their children. (Informant 7)*

Family Literacy night provides parents with literacy knowledge and skills that they can take home and use with their children. In addition to improving students’ classroom performance, the literacy workshops also promote family involvement at the school. There are incentives built into the literacy night events in an effort to involve more parents such as free books, prizes, snacks, and refreshments.

Informants’ responses reveal how flexible parents’ literacy views are, and how willing they are to change their beliefs and practices for the benefit of their children. The literacy practices and beliefs that informants brought with them from their home
countries start to change as they interact with American teachers. Parents are eager to read to their children and to follow teachers’ suggestions. This shows that families are powerful agents of adaptation. This change and adaptation response is useful and a great indicator of their children’s success and academic achievement.

In addition, informants say that they like attending school-sponsored activities because they help them improve their parenting skills, and enable them to work more confidently with their children on school assignments. Informants also seem to respond more positively to those workshops and programs delivered in their native language or with native language interpretation provided. In order to increase parents’ attendance, childcare is provided. While parents spend time with teachers, children do fun activities in the gym or school cafeteria.

A discontinuity between home and school that participants noticed had to do with disciplining practices of misbehaving children. They mentioned that a common child rearing practice for Hispanic parents is physical punishment and informants admitted that sometimes they may hit, slap, or spank their children to correct misbehavior. Participants said that they feel that teachers undermine their authority when they question children about disciplining practices at home. Parents also feel afraid to discipline their children because they are scared that children will tell their teachers at school. For instance, Informant 11 mentioned that her son threatened he would call 911 if she dared to punish him in anyway. Regarding this, she reported,

*En este país, uno siente que uno no puede regañar a sus propios hijos.*

*Tampoco golpearlos. Ellos hacen cosas equivocadas, y uno no puede llamarles la*
atención porque rápido ellos amenazan con que llaman por teléfono al 911. Los maestros tienen que aprender que nosotros traemos diferente crianza. Nosotros educamos a nuestros hijos de la misma manera que nos criaron. Mis padres me daban mis palizas, pero aprendí a respetar. Yo he visto hijos que mandan a sus padres a la cárcel. Eso no está bien. Los padres tenemos el derecho de disciplinar a nuestros hijos. (Informant 11)

In this country you feel that you cannot reprimand your own children. You cannot punish them either. They do things that are wrong, and you cannot tell them anything because they threaten that they will call 911. Teachers have to learn that we have a different upbringing and that we have different ways. We educate our children in the same way that we were brought up. My parents would beat me up but I learned about respect. I have seen children send their parents to jail. I do not think that is right. Parents have the right to discipline their children. (Informant 11)

Parents feel that their children lose respect for them when teachers advise their children to report if their parents are hard on them. Informant 11 thinks that the belief that Hispanic parents are aggressive is a misconception. She thinks that teachers and administrators should not over-generalize and contribute to the creation of stereotypes that negatively affect all Hispanics.

In order to avoid misunderstandings and mitigate home-school discontinuity among families and schools, a systematic and ongoing communication between home and
school is critical. The educational professional should respectfully explain to parents the
law regarding what is considered physical abuse according to American standards and
should inform them of the courses of action available to and expected of educators in
these situations (McIntyre & Silva, 1992).

Communication from the school in the language of the family lays the
groundwork for developing a trusting and caring relationship. It can be accomplished
both formally and informally, utilizing school events, teacher-parent conferences, home
visits, parent journals, and phone calls. Informant 2 values when her daughter’s teacher
calls her home. She thinks that one on one communication is much more effective than
flyers or notices sent home. She confesses that reading and going through all the fliers
and notices can be time consuming especially when there are so many of them in their
children’s folders.

Another way in which the communication barrier has been surpassed in this
school district is with the use of headphones that allow for simultaneous translation
during school meetings. For example, parents put headphones on and can hear the
translator who is on the side translating what the presenter is saying. In this way parents
can follow the discussions and participate when prompted. It also saves time and energy
as the flow of the presentation is not interrupted for translation. Informants also
highlighted the importance of bilingual staff at school. Informant 11 reports that parents
are more involved in the primary school than in the middle school because at the primary
school there are more bilingual personnel, and flyers are always sent in English and
Spanish.
Apart from building communication bridges as a way to connect home and school, informants also reported that they appreciated when schools celebrated Hispanic cultural relevant holidays and customs such as “Batalla de Puebla” (Cinco de Mayo), Hispanic Heritage Month, and International night.

By celebrating Hispanic relevant holidays, teachers and administrators show Hispanic children that their cultures and experiences are valued. For instance, validating students’ cultures can be done by incorporating experiences, discussions, and materials about cultural aspects of the Hispanic community in every classroom and school wide activities.

Informant 7 noted that not all teachers take into account Hispanic celebrations. She explained that mostly Hispanic teachers put emphasis on Hispanic traditions such as Cinco de Mayo, Mexican independence, and Hispanic Heritage in October. She narrates,

\[
\text{Mis hijos que tienen maestros latinos y ponen más énfasis en las culturas hispanas. Por ejemplo, recuerdan la batalla de puebla para el Cinco de Mayo, la independencia de México en Septiembre, o el mes de la hispanidad en Octubre. Les enseñan a los niños sobre las banderas de los diferentes países y sobre los países de donde vienen los niños. Algunos maestros entienden lo importante que eso es para los niños y sus padres. (Informant 7)}
\]

\[
\text{My children have teachers who are Latinos and they put more emphasis on Hispanic culture. For instance, they remember the Battle of Puebla on May 5th, Mexican independence in September, or Hispanic Heritage Month in October.}
\]
They teach children about flags of different countries, and about countries where children come from. Some teachers understand how important that is for children and their parents. (Informant 7)

When teachers and administrators celebrate diversity, children are most likely to appreciate their heritage, to be proud of who they are, and for what they have to offer to their school community. In addition, when teachers and administrators recognize students’ background and cultures, their motivation and self-esteem increase, and parents feel appreciated and welcomed because they perceive that their language and culture are welcomed throughout the school environment.

Finally, an analysis of these findings shows that while parents may already have their beliefs about certain early literacy practices influenced by traditional values and experiences, they are ready to change those beliefs and practices if that means that it will help their children succeed at school. Parents are an “untapped resource” (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990) ready to be empowered and willing to assume a stronger, better informed role in the education of their children.

Research Question 5

How does students’ ethnic identity change as a result of social interaction in this school community? Is there a new identity emerging as a result of schooling in this New Hispanic Diaspora?
Students' ethnic identities change constantly as a result of social interaction in the school community, as a result of schooling, and as a result of parents' influences. Their identities are constantly fluctuating and being redefined as they learn new things and interact with other children, teachers, and people they meet during their educational and growing experience.

Ethnic identity is a construct or set of ideas about one's own ethnic group membership. The emphasis in defining ethnic identity is on the knowledge about one's own ethnic group and on the sense of belonging to that group as member. Ethnic group membership includes a shared knowledge, understanding, values, behaviors, and feelings that are direct implications of belonging to that particular ethnic group. The formation of ethnic identity is influenced by the normative socialization process and by intergroup relations and interactions (Bernal & Knight, 1993).

According to Bernal and Knight (1993), ethnic identity develops gradually in children. Children's information about their ethnicity and ethnic group membership is acquired through social learning experiences provided by their families and communities as well as by the dominant society. As they grow older, and have greater freedom and wider opportunity for social contact, they learn increasingly complex information, and integrate past learning with present learning. Through social cognitive processes, they make social comparisons and become aware of reflected appraisals relating to their ethnicity (Bernal & Knight, 1993).

It is important to mention that ethnic identity has many facets since it can be based on culture, race, religion, language, kinship, or place of birth, and on any combination of these. In this study, participants' children were not interviewed, but
participants provided information regarding their views of their children’s self. Participants’ responses indicate how school, home, and parents’ experiences contribute to the development of their children’s ethnic identity. A sense of ethnic identity is part of experiences and emotions of an individual. In a world populated by people of many different ethnic backgrounds who often interact and conflict with each other, a child’s developing sense of ethnic group identity is an important social issue. Their parent’s identity thus becomes a somewhat influencing factor in the shaping of their own identity.

For instance, informant 5 notes that he teaches his children about Mexican culture, traditions, and celebrations. He wants his children to learn Mexican customs and to remember their roots. However, he realizes that his children are not going to be able to completely understand what these customs mean unless they experience them by themselves. In reference to this, he explains,

*Trato de enseñarles la cultura de mi país, las costumbres. Yo le digo en México el día de muertos se celebra así, en navidad, es así. Aquí solo viene Santa Claus y trae regalos, en México no, allá se hacen posadas, se rompen piñatas, se hacen fiestas, se arrulla el niño en la iglesia, y por más que yo le digo ellos no entienden mucho... les platico pero no entienden hasta que no lo vean. (Informant 5)*

*I try to teach my children the culture and the customs of my country. I tell them that in Mexico, we celebrate the Day of the Dead in this way, and Christmas in this way. Here Christmas is about Santa Claus, and he brings presents, but not in Mexico. We have Posadas, we break piñatas, we have parties, and we sing to Baby Jesus at church.*
Although I tell them all about it, they do not understand much... I talk with them, but they will not understand until one day they are able see it by themselves. (Informant 5)

Symbolic resources are ways of representing the group to itself, and at times, to others, so as to establish or reinforce the sense among group members of sharing something special such as a history, a way of being, and a particular set of beliefs that captures the essence of their ethnic identity. A common symbolic resource is ritual events. For instance, celebrations like the Posadas or the Day of the Dead are important rituals celebrated by Mexicans. Celebrations like these play a crucial role in the development and maintenance of ethnic identity. Even though participants are far away from their homelands, they make every effort to reproduce the customs and maintain the traditions in their new country.

Sometimes, participants realize that it is very difficult to transmit their knowledge of their culture and keep their traditions alive because things are simply different and not exactly the same as in Mexico. For example, Informant 5 wants his children to learn about Mexican customs and traditions. However, he realizes how hard it is for a young child to understand something without experiencing those traditions firsthand. For that reason, he decided to send his older son to visit his grandparents in Mexico during the summer months, and hopes that he will be able to do that every year. He says,

_Ahora queremos mandarlo a México para que se dé cuenta como son las cosas y que vea y aprenda._ (Informant 5)
We want to send (my older son) to Mexico, so he can see by himself how things are done there, and he will be able to see and learn. (Informant 5)

Informant 5 feels that his 7 year-old son is not learning about Mexican culture and traditions and that he shows a preference for everything that is American. He believes that if he sends his son to Mexico for a couple of months, his son will develop Mexican feelings and feel pride in his heritage, language, and people.

National symbols also can serve as a public affirmation of one's ethnic claim. Types of clothing, decals, adornments, flags, food, language, and celebrations are representations of one's ethnicity and identity development (Cornell & Hartmann, 1997). Informant 4 from Mexico says that he teaches his children about the Guadalupe Virgin and goes to church every Sunday. He teaches his children about Mexican history such as Mexican heroes, Mexican Independence, the Battle of Puebla on May 5th, and Flag Day.

Although parents teach their children about their customs, traditions, and language, their children also undergo the normative socialization and enculturation experiences of the dominant culture (Bernal & Knight, 1993). In other words, Hispanic children are not only influenced by their own cultural heritage at home but also by the dominant cultural group with which they are in contact. Children learn the conception of their identity from their parents, but the world around them sends a very different message. For instance, informant 11 says that her children already forgot how to say certain things in Spanish and about the real meaning of some Mexican celebrations. Regarding this she notes,
Aunque mis hijos no llegaron a los Estados Unidos tan chicos, ellos ya se olvidaron de las celebraciones mexicanas. Yo les hablo en español, y mi hija no me entiende. Yo le digo que esta palabra se dice así y así. Y conozco muchos padres mexicanos que están felices porque sus hijos hablan puro inglés. Yo no entiendo porque están tan orgullosos de que ya ni saben hablar su lengua materna. Sus hijos hablan inglés, los deben estar insultando y ellos no entienden ni una palabra. (Informant 11)

Even though my children did not arrive into the United States very young, they have forgotten about some Mexican celebrations. I speak to them in Spanish, and my daughter does not understand me. I tell her, this word means this, and you say it like this. I know some Mexican parents that are happy because their children speak English only. I cannot believe they are proud that their children lost their mother tongue. Their children speak in English to them and they do not understand a word. Their children might be cursing them and they do not understand a word. (Informant 11)

Although classrooms are generally depicted as fairly neutral sites of pedagogical transaction, where teachers are engaged in imparting their knowledge of language to students, we must understand the social and ideological relations within the classroom and their relation to a larger world outside. The classroom functions as a kind of microcosm of the broader social order, and everything that happens outside it, influences
what is taught in there because classrooms are not autonomous islands of learning (Pennycook, 2001).

Thus, classrooms are related to social, cultural, political, and ideological concerns, which may affect how people think because they create a consciousness produced by ideologies of the dominant class. For instance, the smallest words, textbook illustration, arrangement of seats, and choice of language may have major effects in what students learn, their self identity, and their perception of the world (Pennycook, 2001).

Schooling reproduces social relations, and maintains social, economic, cultural, and political status quo rather than upset it (Giroux, 1998). Although parents may try hard at home to teach their children about traditions, customs, and history of their heritage, children learn about traditions, customs, and history of the United States at school. On this, informant 3 explains,

Lo que hacemos en la casa es enseñarle tradiciones mexicanas, lo único americano que hace es en la escuela, entiende, como cuando ha sido el día de este señor afro americano...Martín Luther King...Como ese día el hizo algo como un libro o una historia...también hizo historias de las personas del día de acción de Gracias...Y también como los días de los presidentes, o Halloween, pero aquí en casa otras cosas. (Informant 3)

At home, we teach our son Mexican traditions, but he learns American traditions at school. He learned about this afro American man, Martin Luther King, and he also wrote stories about the pilgrims, Thanksgiving, Presidents’ Day
and Halloween. He learns all those things at school, but here at home he learns about other things. (Informant 3)

The message embedded in this statement is that children live in two worlds that sometimes can be conflicting and contradictory. At home parents reinforce their own customs and celebrations and at school children learn about American holidays and traditions. Children face a conflicting message when parents at home emphasize their own holidays and teachers do the same at school.

Indeed, schooling is a major variable in acculturation, the process by which the members of a society are taught the elements of the mainstream culture. However, this acculturation process is not simple and linear. It is a complex process by which a student does not simply lose certain ethnic characteristics and replaces them with Anglo ones, but it is an ongoing combination and recombination of original ethnic attributes with American ones (Garcia, 2002).

Erikson (1968) pointed out, that social factors also play an important role in the achievement of identity. He states that when dealing with questions of identity formation one is also dealing with a process that is “located in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture” (p.22). Participants of this communal culture are parents, teachers, friends, and media. They are carriers of collective identities at all times.

In fact, children’s ethnic identity is influenced by parental attitudes, assumptions of school teachers, and peer group cultures as they interact with different people in these two different contexts, school and home. The process of socialization leads individuals to see themselves as connected to other people. Identity formation is a process that results
from established relationships, institutions, and cultural practices. Schools are places
where students learn to socialize and where they face consistency or inconsistency
regarding the messages they receive at home.

At school, children realize how different or similar they are from other children or
teachers around them. Since children and adolescents want to be accepted and not
considered different, they try to blend with their environment. Sometimes, differences
such as accent or dress can make students feel that they do not belong. When they realize
about those differences they try to get rid of them.

Adolescents, in particular, can seem a bit more confused. They not only want to
be accepted by their families but also by their friends. This is when peer pressure comes
into play in the formation of identity. Some students give in to peer-pressure because they
want to be liked, to fit in, or because they worry that other children may make fun of
them if they do not go along with the group. Others may go along because they are
curious to try something new that others are doing. The idea that "everyone is doing it"
may influence some children to leave their better judgment, or their common sense,
behind.

For instance, informant 11 reports how hard it is for her to try to keep her son on
the right path. She is afraid that he is going to make the wrong choices. She observes that
he has changed his hairstyle, argues with her because he wants certain types of clothes,
and listens to music which according to her is vulgar and not appropriate. She is firm at
home and talks with her son about good manners, appearance, and appropriate behavior.
However, she realizes that her children will be the ones who will eventually make their
own choices. She only hopes that they make the right ones. Regarding this she says,
Y mi hijo ya lo vio, que quiere traer los cabellos todos tiesos de geles, y entonces hasta ahí lo respeto, pero si ya quiere traer tatuajes, cabellos pintados, aretes, eso ya no. Y él me dice que es libre, y yo le digo libre porque no está encarcelado, pero mientras el este conmigo y viva conmigo el no puede hacer cosas que yo no creo que lo vayan a beneficiar. (Informant 11)

My son wants to have spiky hair. I can respect him for that, but not if he wants tattoos, dyed hair, or piercing. He says that he is free, and I say that he is right because he is not in jail. But I tell him that as long as he lives with me, he will have to do the things that I say because those things are for his own good. (Informant 11)

Parents and schools are of special importance in the development of ethnic identity. Parents teach children who they are, where they come from, and how to behave. They teach them about rituals and ceremonies that are unique to their heritage. At the same time, school teaches children about traditions and celebrations that are unique to the mainstream culture, and reinforces differences and the sense of belonging to a particular group.

The community also reinforces the sense of not belonging to their ethnic group in certain situations. For instance, Hispanic children and their parents are often reminded that they do not belong to America when they have to hide from immigration officers, and when they cannot find decent jobs because they lack English skills or because they
are undocumented. Participants also feel as foreigners in America when they cannot have access to education opportunities because they do not have the means or because they are not American citizens. Instances like these, contribute to the formation of ethnic identity and salience of certain ethnic traits among Hispanic parents and children because they reinforce differences and membership to their particular ethnic group.

Children may grow up with the feeling that they do not have many options in this country because of their immigration status. Their expectations and aspirations to attend college become curtailed, and they do not see themselves as an integral part of the American society. For instance, Informant 11 says that she teaches her children about immigration officers and what they should do in an emergency. She mentioned how they live in the constant fear that immigration officers will arrest them and send them back to Mexico. She recounted how immigration officers break into houses and take with them whoever is at that address. This constant fear traumatizes children and parents because parents are afraid that one day they will not come back home and children are afraid that their parents may be taken away while they are at school. Hispanic families hide whenever they hear rumors that that immigration officers are nearby. They do not go out to buy groceries, they do not send their children to school, and they do not go to work. They make their best effort to stay off the radar until they hear it is safe to resume their daily lives.

The informants’ responses indicate that students receive contradictory messages. At school, they learn that they are equal, that they are Americans just like their peers. Every day, they pledge allegiance to the American flag and to the great country it represents. Children are told that they have to behave, study hard, pursue further
education, and obtain decent jobs. However, the world outside school sends them a completely different message. Outside school, children become aware that they are not equal to the rest of American children. They realize that their allegiance to America is not reciprocated. Children learn that at any time they could be sent back to their home countries. They realize that they might not attend college because it is expensive and because they are not citizens.

For example, Informant 8 says that her son who was born in El Salvador could not continue his studies after he graduated from high school. He was able to attend a community college for a couple of years but he was not accepted in any university because of his immigration status. Informant 8 says that her son had the desire to study and be more in life but the system stopped him. She feels sad for her son and tries to comfort herself thinking that her other children who were born in the United States will not have the same problem. Regarding this, she comments,

\[ \text{El segundo es nacido aquí, es ciudadano, el que es nacido aquí todo se le facilita aquí. Lo único que tiene que tener es deseo de estudiar. Entonces esa es la gran diferencia. El primero es nacido en el Salvador, era ilegal, no tenía papeles cuando se graduó de la High School. Me entiende. No tenía ninguna oportunidad. Tenía deseo pero no la oportunidad. Todo se quedó allí, se estanco. (Informant 8)} \]

\[ \text{My second son was born in the United States. He is a citizen, he was born here and everything is easier for him. The only thing he needs to have is the desire to study. That is the big difference. My first son was born in El Salvador.} \]
He was illegal, and he did not have his papers when he graduated from High School. He did not have any opportunity. He had the desire but not the opportunity. Everything stopped there. (Informant 8)

While informants strive to make their children aware of their ethnic heritage, they also want their children to embrace American culture and traditions. Informants are aware that their children have better opportunities in the United States than in their homelands. This belief is transmitted to their children who learn to appreciate the benefits of living in America while they still conserve a natural pride for their home countries. Children are proud of living in the United States. For these participants, education is the key for success and education is possible because schools, lunch, breakfast, and books are free. Participants overlook the differences and focus on the positive aspects of living in the United States. They think that no matter how bad things can be in the United States, they know it will always be worse in their home-countries. Therefore, they become appreciative of the services and benefits America offers them. Informant 10 illustrates this point,

_Y nosotros estamos aquí, y tenemos casa. Tenemos trabajo. No nos falta nada. Tampoco podemos quejarnos. Es poquito pero estamos mejor que en México. Eso le digo yo a mis hijos cuando ellos se quejan. Y les muestro en la televisión como hay niños en nuestro país que no tienen ni para comer. Y les digo, ves, así vivíamos nosotros allá. Ellos tienen que estar agradecidos por lo que tenemos._ (Informant 10)
We are here, and we have a place to live. We have jobs. We can afford things. We cannot complain. We do not have much, but we are better off here than in Mexico. This is what I tell my children when they complain. I show them on television what it is like to live in our countries. I show them that there are children who do not have anything, not even food to eat. I tell them that it was how we used to live. I remind them that they have to be thankful for what we have.

(Informant 10)

Language also plays an important role in the construction of ethnic identity. The use of language as a complete system of communication becomes a symbolic resource of ethnic assertion. The power of language evokes the boundary between two groups and evokes a sentiment of commonality, a key component of identity.

For instance, when Informant 8 compares her older son who was born in El Salvador and her other children who were born in the United States, she points out how different they are in terms of language preference. She notes that her older son prefers to speak in Spanish most of the time, whereas her other children prefer to speak in English.

Mis hijos menores me hablan en inglés a mí y entre ellos. A veces yo les digo que me lo digan en español. A veces hacen el esfuerzo pero otras veces no. Mi hijo mayor habla mejor el español, tal vez porque él nació en El Salvador, y vino aquí cuando el tenía trece. Mi hija más pequeña es diferente, ella no habla
español. Es más tímida. Ella entiende español, y cuando habla un poco, habla como con acento. (Informant 8)

My younger children talk to me in English and also among themselves. Sometimes, I tell them to repeat what they said in Spanish. Sometimes they make the effort to say it in Spanish, but most of the time they do not. My older son speaks better Spanish, maybe because he was born in El Salvador, and he came here when he was 13. My younger daughter is different she does not like to speak in Spanish. She is shy. She understands Spanish but when she speaks it she speaks with an accent. (Informant 8)

Contrary to the belief that Hispanic children prefer Spanish to English, some participants reported that their children do not watch Spanish television, do not speak Spanish fluently, and do not make much effort to use Spanish at home. These children are English dominant because they have greater language ability in English. For instance, Informant 1 reports that her 7-year-old child uses English to play with his younger siblings, and her younger son who has not started school is learning English thanks to his brother.

Such differences between parents and children regarding language preference are also exemplified by informant 2 who says that her daughter prefers to watch programs in English, although she knows that her mother does not understand. She says,
Mi hija quiere ver programas en inglés, y yo no quiero ver en inglés porque yo no entiendo mucho, y ella me dice que vea en inglés y yo quiero ver las noticias o la novela en el canal de español, algo que yo entienda y ella no quiere. (Informant 2)

My daughter wants to watch television in English, and I do not want to because I do not understand English. She says that I have to watch programs in English... but I want to watch the news or soap operas in the Spanish Channel, but she does not want to. (Informant 2)

Schools cannot only be key sites for the construction of community identity and inclusion, but they can also be sites that exclude Latino newcomers through practices that deny their language, heritage, and culture. As Jim Cummins (2003) explained, “to reject a child’s language in the school is to reject the child” (para. 19) because language is a central part of children’s identities. When children feel this rejection, they are much less likely to participate actively and confidently in classroom instruction.

Since language is a central part of identity formation, when teachers make students feel that their language is not accepted at school, they are also implying that students’ cultural identity is not accepted either (Cummins, 2003). Not to mention the detrimental results that it has when students are forced to shift to the second language before a critical level of competency in the first language has been achieved. When this happens, students are being denied the possibility of developing full competence in any language (Lee, 1996).
In addition, helping students conserve their mother language is very beneficial for those students “struggling with ethnic ambivalence, or negative attitudes toward their own culture. It enables them not only to explore their roots and associate more closely with fellow speakers of the language, but also to overcome feelings of alienation with a sense of pride in their community.” (Crawford, 1999, para.15)

If students can develop their first and second language simultaneously they will most likely be able to reach their intellectual potential (Ramírez & Castañeda, 1974). However, if students develop negative attitudes towards features of the dominant culture because their family background and heritage is not valued, learning may be inhibited and they may try to rebel against values, expectations, and rules of the mainstream culture. Bilingual-Bicultural education allows children to carry on their particular cultural heritage and at the same time helps students embrace the mainstream culture. By being bilingual & bicultural students make choices about their cultural identity and learn to function in two worlds.

Informant 6 eloquently narrates how school through a bilingual-bicultural program has helped her children maintain Mexican customs at home, be respectful of their parents, and read and write in English and Spanish. She refers to this as follows,

\[\text{Lo que ayuda mucho a mis hijos es que ellos reciben educación bilingüe.}\]

\[\text{ Esto es bueno porque el más chiquito aprende inglés y español al mismo tiempo.}\]

\[\text{Y puede leer en los dos idiomas. Así se nos hace más fácil mantener la}\]

\[\text{comunicación con nuestros hijos. Yo veo a otros familiares y sus hijos no les}\]

\[\text{quieren hablar en español, son rebeldes, no hacen caso. (Informant 5)}\]
What helped my children to adapt to this country is that they receive bilingual education services. This is great because my younger son learns English and Spanish at the same time. He can read and write in both languages. This allows us to maintain a good communication with our children. I see our relatives’ children. They do not want to speak in Spanish. They are rebels, and they do not do what their parents tell them. (Informant 5)

As Wallace Lambert (1974) pointed out, children who are target of social pressures to give up one aspect of their dual identity for the sake of blending into the mainstream culture are caught up in a subtractive form of biculturalism. Identities are fragile and they can, through social pressures, be easily tipped off balance.

The ultimate goal of a meaningful education should be to provide children with the possibility of becoming bicultural by embracing both, the cultural influences found at home and the cultural influences found at school. Rather than generating cultural conflicts, children will be well-adjusted students with broad perspectives who are comfortable in either culture. This is the case of an additive form of biculturalism; children are caught in the flow of two cultural streams and are happy to be part of both streams (Lambert, 1974)
Interpretation of Findings

_Hispanic/Latino Diasporic Identity_

The findings of this research study led to the conclusion that Hispanic Identity is a very complex process that is influenced by different experiences that Hispanics in this New Diaspora undergo on a daily basis. Participants bring with them a cognitive cargo which they share with other Hispanics they encounter. These shared experiences contribute to reinforce their Hispanic identity.

Many factors such as time, specific events, interpretations and justifications of those events, and the relationship with other members of the community contribute to the formation of this diasporic identity. It is important to keep in mind that each of these experiences represents one moment in an ongoing, always changing, and dynamic process of identity formation. Informants’ identity seems to evolve over time as informants encounter different situations, people, and places, and interpret specific events and experiences in this New Hispanic Diaspora.

Experiences such as coming to this country, dealing with ethnic, racial, and language biases, working and living in the United States, dealing with discrimination, fighting for their rights in the workplace, fighting for their children’s rights at school, obtaining health care, learning and using English, and interacting with other members of the community, demarcate and define informants’ ethnic identity. The formation of their ethnic identity is not only based on how they perceive themselves, but it is also based on how they perceive other people that share their same experiences. As they identify with
other Hispanics, they realize that they have in common certain customs, behaviors, traits, values, and traditions that make up the Hispanic ethnic group to which they belong.

The fact that the term Hispanic or Latino has already been imposed to this group of people also delineates their identity. All of a sudden, they are no longer identified as Mexican, Salvadoran, or Costa Rican. They are now members of a group of people known as Hispanics or Latinos. Their national origin and therefore, their national identities were somehow replaced by imposed labels that they did not understand at the beginning. However, they gradually learned to accept these terms as part of their American experience.

Although informants accepted both terms, most of them mentioned that the terms were foreign to them and they did not understand the need to label people from so many countries as Hispanics or Latinos. Indeed, by labeling every Spanish speaking person as Hispanic or Latino, there is a tendency to forget about the diversity, variety, and differences that exist among the different Hispanic subgroups and leads non Spanish people to mistakenly assume that all Hispanics are alike.

Most informants also experienced a tremendous amount of cultural differences in the United States. These cultural differences coupled with an idealization of their home-country memories made informants return to their homelands. However, when informants returned to their home-countries they realized that things had changed there and that they missed the newly acquired customs in the United States. Informants realized that their home countries had good and bad things to offer and that it was not as perfect as they remembered.
After disillusionment with the economic opportunities that they found in their home-countries, they decided to return to the United States and started to establish goals for living permanently in this country. This experience made them detach themselves from their pre-conceptions and rethink their plans for the future.

*Parents’ Educational Experiences and their Children’s Schooling*

The research findings indicate that participants not only bring a cognitive cargo about their own identities but also about their own schooling experiences. These schooling experiences that they bring with them from their home countries are also conceptions they have about education and the education of their children. Their schooling experiences in their home countries influence the way they see their role in their children’s education in two different ways.

On the one hand, informants’ experiences may influence their children’s schooling positively because they are able to compare and realize that the educational opportunities that their children get in the United States are better than the ones that they can obtain back in their home countries. For instance, informants noted that back in their home countries they were forced to drop out school because they had to start working at a very early age. Most informants regret not having had the opportunity to complete their studies, and for that reason they place a great emphasis on the education of their children, and show a positive attitude toward working hard and doing well in school. They believe that education is an empowerment tool that can be used to achieve success in life and the best legacy they can bestow on their children.
Informants are very grateful for the opportunities that they have in the United States and are appreciative of the free school supplies, books, free lunch, and breakfast that their children receive at school; especially because they did not receive them for free back in their home countries. They are also grateful for the academic and social support system that their children have access to. Children are able to participate in enrichment activities and programs such as music, art, and technology, which contribute to the development of the whole child.

On the other hand, informants’ experiences may influence their children’s schooling negatively because they are unaware of the critical role that parental involvement plays in their children’s education. Hispanic parents usually come to the United States with the belief that teachers are solely and ultimately responsible for their children’s education. Parents in all honesty assume that it is not appropriate for them to question the teacher regarding teaching practices and students’ academic progress because in doing so, they would be interfering with the school’s work. It is upon their arrival to the United States that they learn that the education of their children is a partnership between teachers and parents.

Informants agreed on the fact that back in their home countries, parents had little participation in school related matters. Most of the parental involvement activities that parents experienced in their home countries were related to fundraising activities and not necessarily to educational matters. Informants mentioned that generally, there were two general meetings, one at the beginning and another one at end of the school year when parents were invited to sign their children’ report cards. They mentioned that teachers do not have the opportunity to meet with parents on an individual basis as they do in the
United States. Most participants reported that communication between school and home is very limited or even non-existent in their home-countries, especially in rural schools. They noted that if a student had failing grades, the teacher would not contact the parent or the school would not provide extra services. Failing students would simply repeat the grade.

Finally, parents reported that they want to participate in U.S. schools, but sometimes they are not able to do so because they do not know how, or because they feel intimidated by the language barrier between teachers and parents. Therefore it would be advisable and beneficial if schools took the initiative to actively involve and educate parents to become their children’s first teachers.

*Accommodations Provided to Hispanic/Latino Students*

Throughout the interviews participants made reference to the ways in which these New Hispanic Diaspora schools responded to their children’s needs and helped them overcome cultural, linguistic, and social barriers. They also made reference to school programs and activities geared to help parents become involved in the education of their children.

Among the most salient accommodations that schools provide to Hispanic/Latino parents and students the following were highlighted: (a) Spanish speaking school administrators, (b) Spanish speaking community liaison, (c) translators during parent conferences and school meetings, (d) use of headphones during PTO and board meetings for simultaneous translation, (e) bilingual transitional program, (f) Spanish speaking staff,
(g) notices sent home are translated into Spanish, (h) parent education workshop, (i) Great Start Program, (j) Family Literacy Night, (k) Before and After School Program, (l) Summer School Program, (m) ESL classes for Spanish speaking parents, (n) Spanish classes for English speaking teachers and community members, (o) Back to school night, (p) Ask 3 Pizza Nights, (q) school partnerships with the community, and (r) PTO activities.

This events and initiatives provide parents with opportunities to understand the United States school system and individual school expectations for students’ achievement and behavior. In fact, parents of culturally different backgrounds benefit when educators explain the school’s goals, make them feel welcomed and valued, and involve them in their children’s education (Manning & Lee, 2001).

*Strategies to Mitigate Home School Discontinuity*

The analysis of the data shed light on the discontinuity that exists between home and school. Informants reported experiencing different instances of home-school incongruities mainly due to language differences, diverging views on teaching methods, unfamiliarity with the curriculum, lack of communication between teachers and parents, teachers’ lack of multicultural awareness, and parents’ lack of participation in school.

Informants expressed that many times they felt that their inability to communicate in English was the main obstacle for helping their children with homework or assignments, get actively involved at school, and interact more frequently with teachers. In order to mitigate the language difference that exists between home and school, parents
reported that they use dictionaries to help their children complete their homework. They also attend ESL classes to learn English, and they send their children to the before/after school program that the schools provide. At the same time, the schools are sensitive to the language issue and have implemented a bilingual program and hired bilingual staff. The schools also provide translations of school notices that are sent home to erase the language barrier. Thus, both parents and school devise mechanisms to bridge the language gap that separates them and may negatively affect students’ achievement.

The findings further reveal discontinuities in teachers’ expectations and children’s behaviors. For instance, children complained at home if teachers yelled at them, forced them to participate in class, or required them to be quiet. Students that were newcomers were the ones who were affected the most by these experiences and had a hard time adapting to their new school environment and to their teachers’ expectations.

In addition, participants mentioned that their children were not used to receiving prizes for learning in their home countries, but in the United States, children are expected to be competitive and they always receive something in exchange for their learning. One informant mentioned that her daughter always felt sad and discouraged when she did not receive rewards for not participating in class.

Informant 11 also talked about the difference in communication styles that exist between her son and his teacher. She said that her son’s teacher always used sarcasm and figurative language when he misbehaved, two language functions her son did not understand. Her son thought that his teacher was trying to ridicule him in front of his classmates and their relationship eroded since then. Informant 11 says, “His teacher told him, ‘do not push me’, and he answered ‘I am not pushing you’. The teacher was very
upset with him and told him that he was being disrespectful. I know my son is stubborn, but his teacher is stubborn too.”

In addition, parents mentioned that in their home countries, they were not used to getting involved in the education of their children since they did not want to interfere with teachers’ decisions and thought that teachers always knew best. The findings reveal that this mindset among Hispanic parents is a discontinuity that prevents their active participation at school. While participants were able to overcome this misconception, they are aware that many Hispanic parents still believe so and thus do not get involved at school simply because in all honesty they believe it is the best they can do for their children. They pointed out that in their home countries teachers did not meet with parents to discuss children’s progress. Therefore, they value when teachers have conferences with them to discuss their children’s report cards and academic progress. They also value when teachers take time to call them, invite them to visit their children’s classrooms, and encourage them to participate in school activities and events. Parents noticed the differences regarding parental involvement here and back in their home countries, and they noted that they are willing to learn about the new culture and expectations because they realize it is pivotal to their children’s academic success.

The research findings suggest that these New Hispanic Diaspora schools are aware that parents do not know how to participate. Therefore, they provide parents with guidance and support on how to help their children at home develop literacy skills. For instance, participants mentioned that they make their best effort to follow teachers’ advice. They read to and with their children, they have books available for them, and they emphasize the value of leaning and hard work.
The findings indicated that participation in PTO meetings was another strategy parents and school used to mitigate the differences and to bring parents and school closer in an effort to educate their children. Most participants are active members of the PTO and attend PTO meetings on a regular basis. Some other participants want to participate but do not do so because they do not have time in their busy schedule. While most informants consider the PTO meetings as a positive exchange between parents and school, some informants noted that they do not like to attend PTO meetings anymore because they do not like that the only activities they carry out is to raise money. Informant 9, for instance, says that he “got tired of going to PTO meetings. They are always thinking of ways to raise money. PTO meetings should be an opportunity for parents to voice their concerns and to give their suggestions on how to improve the school.”

Another area of discontinuity had to do with cafeteria food and how difficult it was for children to adjust to the options offered in the cafeteria menu. Participants said that their children refused to eat cafeteria food; consequently, they had to pack their lunch everyday.

Parents also noticed the differences in culturally patterned socialization practices between home and school such as learning values and socialization styles. They felt that schools encouraged children to become independent and competitive, whereas participants at home encouraged their children to collaborate and to depend on their parents as much as possible.

Flexibility and adaptation on part of the teacher and parents will benefit children, no matter how different their cultural practices might be. If parents and teachers work
cooperatively and enhance communication, cultural discontinuities between home and school can be softened and the likelihood of children's academic success can be enhanced.

_Students' Hispanic Identity and Schooling_

Students' ethnic identities constantly change as a result of social interaction in the school community and at home. What parents and school transmits, influences children's identity formation. Therefore, children's identities are permanently being redefined as they learn new things and interact with other children, teachers, and people during their educational experience.

Parents' identity and their perceptions influence how children feel about their own culture, traditions, and celebrations. Children learn at home who they are through symbolic resources such as rituals, traditions, and celebrations. Clothing, adornments, flags, and food are also a public affirmation of children's ethnic claim.

When children start school, they learn another language and other customs and behaviors. Children undergo the normative socialization experiences of the dominant culture. Although schools have a formal curriculum, which teachers follow represented by textbooks and materials, there is a hidden curriculum that unintentionally teaches students socializing norms, attitudes, and knowledge of the dominant culture (Parkay & Hass, 2000). In this way, children develop a dual conception of identity. At home they act and behave in certain way, while at school they adopt different interaction patterns that correspond to teachers' expectations. In spite of the fact that some children easily adapt
to co-exist in two different worlds, some children experience difficulties in finding the perfect balance between what is expected at home and what is expected at school.

These children find themselves in two conflicting worlds that send different messages. These messages come from parents at home and teachers at school and from friends, relatives, and the media. As children interact, both inside and outside school they realize how different or similar they are from other people around them. Differences such as accent, physical appearance, dress define students' sense of belonging to their ethnic group and separate them from the rest.

Besides, their sense of not belonging to their new environment is affected by situations and experiences that remind them that they are not Americans. For instance, when children and their parents have to hide from immigration officers, when parents are not able to find decent jobs because they are undocumented, and when they are not able to access higher education opportunities remind children and their parents that they do not belong.

The process of identity formation is also influenced by parents' desire to have their children embrace American culture. They acknowledge that children have better opportunities in the United States and that they should be proud of living in the United States. However, they do not want their children to be ashamed of their ethnic roots. Parents want their children to affirm their own cultures without overtly rejecting the mainstream values and institutions. Children conform to majority practices at school but reaffirm Hispanic ones at home.

The findings also present language as another important factor in the formation of ethnic identity. When children start school and become proficient in English, they start
interpreting their world from a different perspective. They have other words to express the same things they already know, and at the same time, they realize that there are certain words and feelings that cannot be expressed in their native language or vice versa. Linguistic determinism as it was postulated by the Sappier-Whorf hypothesis (Sappier & Whorf, 1930, as cited in Yule, 1997) argues that the language that people speak determines the way they experience and interpret the world that surrounds them.

In an effort to better serve Hispanic students, teachers should not impose their views about mainstream language or culture as being superior. They should provide students with choices, and teach about the mainstream culture without asking bilingual students to renounce to their first language, cultural identity, and heritage.

In this way, students will be able to develop positive feelings about both cultures and become bicultural. Teachers should also recognize that the linguistic form a student brings to school is intimately connected with loved ones, with their community, and personal identity. To suggest that this form is “wrong” is to suggest that something is wrong with the student and his or her family (Perry & Delpit, 1998).

Conclusion

This chapter presented a detailed description of the findings of this research study regarding Hispanic identity, home-school discontinuity, and schooling of Hispanic students. It provided with an understanding of the cultural knowledge of Hispanic parents and their experiences in this New Hispanic Diaspora.
To begin with, the findings render important information about Hispanic Identity formation in this new Hispanic Diaspora and the crucial role that participants’ shared experiences have in the formation of their identity. At the same time, parents’ experiences influence their children’s schooling experiences and shape their children’s identity.

According to the informants’ cultural knowledge the formation of diasporic identity consists of a series of experiences that follows a developmental progression which can be summarized as follows: (a) abandonment of home country in search of work, (b) empathy and solidarity with other Hispanics who share the same experiences, (c) existence of social networks, (d) the possibility of advancement in the host country, (e) idealization of the memories from home country, (f) desire to return to home country, (g) maintenance of customs and traditions, and (h) conflict with other ethnic/racial groups reinforces diasporic identity.

In addition, the description of the findings also sheds light on home-school discontinuity. The conflict that can occur between home and school cultures is reinforced by parental attitudes, and school teachers’ assumptions. The findings indicate that participants have their own cultural views and beliefs about child rearing, schooling, and parent responsibilities, which they transmit to their children. Thus, the messages that children receive in the contexts of home and school are not always consistent. These diverging views can sometimes accentuate the conflict that occurs between family and school cultures. In an effort to overcome the differences, parents and schools develop strategies to mitigate home-school discontinuity.
Finally, as new Hispanic students and parents settle down in this new Hispanic Diaspora, teachers and school administrators provide accommodations and resources to help them overcome cultural, linguistic and social barriers. Schools responded to the needs of Hispanic parents by creating and establishing learning environments where students’ native language is appreciated, parents and children are welcome, and where cultural differences are seen as assets and positive contributions to the school community.

A detailed discussion of this research study and its findings, policy implications and recommendations for further research is presented in Chapter V. The discussion in the next chapter includes a description of the developmental progression of Hispanic Diasporic identity formation, how students’ identity is shaped by school and their parents, what strategies parents and teachers employ to mitigate home-school discontinuity, and what the characteristics of responsive schools are.
Chapter V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings that relate to Hispanic identity, home-school discontinuity, and the schooling of Hispanic students. It also provides an account of policy implications and recommendations for further research.

Hispanic families in this study came to the United States in search for a better life, better education for their children, and greater economic opportunities. As they settled down in this New Hispanic Diaspora in New Jersey, they had to adapt to its new environment, culture, and language.

As a result of their experiences, they learned for the first time that they are Latinos or Hispanics. They noticed the differences between their homeland and the United States and started redefining their identities. Their ethnic identity consolidated as they developed a sense of belonging to a particular group of people that share their experiences. They also had to adapt to their new environment and to rely on their co-ethnics who provided them with the support they needed to live in America.

As the Hispanic population increased, the schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora also faced new challenges to accommodate the newly arrived Hispanic children and to provide them with the educational services they merit. Schools were forced to implement programs and services geared to satisfy the social, educational, and emotional needs of the new student population.
The school district in this New Hispanic Diaspora has one primary school serving students from Pre-K to third grade, and one middle school serving students from fourth grade to ninth grade. At the time this research study was conducted, there were about 20 students per class, with the exception of Pre-K and Kindergarten classes that had about 25 students each. The schools have undergone several changes in order to accommodate the growing Hispanic population. A bilingual program was implemented, ESL teachers were hired, and bilingual materials were purchased.

The primary school student population is 67% Hispanic and the middle school is 65% Hispanic. The rest of the school population is mostly African-American, with a low percentage of White and Asian students. It is interesting to note, that most of the White affluent families that live in this town do not send their children to these schools but instead chose to send their children to a Catholic private school, or to the charter school located in this New Hispanic Diaspora.

The research was conducted using ethnographic methodology. The 11 subjects that participated in this study are Hispanics who have lived in this New Hispanic Diaspora for 3 or more years, and whose children attend the schools located in this community. The 11 informants interviewed included 6 females from Mexico, 1 female from Costa Rica, 2 males from Mexico, 1 female and 1 male from El Salvador. Each informant was interviewed a minimum of four times for one hour each time. Informants in this study were identified and recruited from assemblies, PTO meetings, ESL classes for adults, and parent conferences.

Informants were formally invited to participate in the study through a letter that provided an explanation of the purpose and duration of the research, a description of the
procedures to be followed, a statement of the voluntary nature of the participation, and an explanation of how the subject’s data would be used and securely stored to maintain confidentiality.

All interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Transcriptions were analyzed through open coding which is the process of naming or labeling things, categories, and properties describing different phenomena found in the text. Part of the analytic process consisted of identifying the more general categories that these things were instances of, such as institutions, work activities, social relations, and social outcomes, among others. A codebook was created in order to maintain an inventory of themes with their descriptions. In addition, as codes were developed, it was useful to write memos known as code notes that discussed the terms, themes, and domains identified.

The purpose of the study was to find out what elements contribute to the formation of Hispanic identity in this New Hispanic Diaspora, how the school district in this New Hispanic Diaspora in New Jersey accommodates this growing Hispanic school population, and what strategies the Hispanic families schools adopt to mitigate the discontinuities that exist between home and school.

The research findings gravitate around the five research questions stated below:

1. What kinds of experiences contribute to the formation of Hispanic identity in this New Hispanic Diaspora in New Jersey?

2. What kinds of schooling experiences do participants bring from their home countries?
3. What kinds of accommodations do schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora provide to Hispanic children and parents to help them overcome cultural, linguistic and social barriers?

4. How do families mitigate home-school discontinuity?

5. How does students’ ethnic identity change as a result of social interaction in this school community? Is there a new identity emerging as a result of schooling in this New Hispanic Diaspora?

The findings associated with each research question are discussed separately in five main sections. The first section, Hispanic Diasporic Identity: Shared Experiences, discusses the experiences that are shared among the members of this Hispanic Diaspora. These shared experiences that participants bring with them contribute to the formation of a Hispanic diasporic identity which is a complex and ongoing process. As participants interact with each other, they reinforce this diasporic identity in a developmental progression that is unique to members of this new Hispanic Diaspora.

The second section, Parents’ Educational Experiences and their Children’s Schooling, discusses participants’ schooling experiences and the manner in which they influence the way parents view the schooling experiences of their children, the role they play in the education of their children, and the role of their children’s teachers.

The third section, Home-School Discontinuity, deals with the divergent views between parents and school and how these views may affect students’ performance at school. It also addresses the strategies that schools and parents use to help their children to mitigate home-school discontinuity.
The fourth section, Schooling in this New Hispanic Diaspora: Accommodations and Resources for Hispanic Students, discusses what teachers and school administrators do to adapt to the Hispanic newcomers and what kind of accommodations they provide to help Hispanic students and their parents overcome cultural, linguistic, and social barriers.

Finally, the last section, Hispanic Students’ Identity and Schooling, discusses how participants’ experiences and schooling acculturation practices contribute to the development of children’s identity.

Discussion of Findings

*Hispanic Diasporic Identity: Shared Experiences*

This study revealed that Hispanic identity is built in a complex process that is subject to constant change. It is the product of shared experiences and specific relationships that are formed in this New Hispanic Diaspora. Hispanic identity evolves over time as informants encounter different situations, people, and places.

The research findings suggest that Hispanic identity is a result of Hispanics’ awareness of shared experiences that they went through back in their home countries and in the United States. This awareness of shared experiences delineates, defines, and positions informants’ identity. In other words, informants’ identity is constructed on the basis of similar rituals, stories, goals, culture, upbringing, and language that they share with other Hispanics. When they notice these similarities and commonalities, they feel identified with other Hispanics that are just like them, and who understand and support each other.
As Hall (as cited in Cohen, 2001) points out, cultural identities are in constant transition, drawing on different traditions and harmonizing old and new experiences without assimilation or total loss of the past. He designates this process as the evolution of cultures of hybridity and closely associates the growth of these cultures with the new diasporas.

The analysis of participants’ responses describes the hybrid nature of this diaspora based on the fact that people that live in this New Hispanic Diaspora are from different Hispanic countries and have different traditions and cultural practices. However, as they become aware that they share experiences, they create solidarity and eliminate salient differences among them. Thus, they build strong bonds with their co-ethnics as they help and learn from each other and provide each other with advice, financial support, and shelter.

Galfrorsoro (2007) argues that “this notion of hybrid is often associated with the ideas of nomadic movement, traveling cultures, borderlands, and the notion of ‘in-betweeness’ and ‘the transnational’” (Galfrorsoro, 2007, para.3). Adding to this statement, it is possible to say that this New Hispanic Diaspora is not only “hybrid” because people in this community live in-between nations and still have close ties with their home countries, but also because they are a combination of diverse people from different Hispanic countries who share the same experiences and want to achieve the same objectives and goals.

The findings reveal that informants share similar experiences that contribute to the formation of a diasporic identity that is unique to members of this New Hispanic Diaspora and which may correspond to the experience of many other Hispanics around
the country. The research findings show the notion that the formation of this diasporic ethnic identity follows a developmental progression of experiences. These shared experiences that contribute to the formation of diasporic Hispanic identity can be summarized as follows: (a) abandonment of home country in search of work, (b) empathy and solidarity with other Hispanics who share the same experiences, (c) creation of social networks, (d) the possibility of advancement in the host country, (e) idealization of the memories from home country, (f) desire to return to home country, (g) maintenance of customs and traditions, and (h) conflict with other ethnic/racial groups reinforces diasporic ethnic identity.

The research findings indicate that these experiences are shared by all members of this New Hispanic Diaspora and define informants’ ethnic identity and their cultural group membership. Below, there is a detailed explanation of each of these stages or experiences that play an important role in the formation of informants’ diasporic identity:

Abandonment of Home Country in Search of Work

The study revealed that participants construct their identity by selecting values, beliefs and concepts that define them. When participants left their countries of origin and arrived in the United States they realized that their old selves remained at home, as they left their occupations, relatives, friends, and community behind. They had to start forging a new identity as they left their countries in search of jobs and economic advancement.

Most of the informants were driven away from their countries of origin because the local economies were too poor to support them. Informant 3 says, “We came because in Mexico it seems that you cannot make progress… Everyone talks about the American
dream and how you can have a house and a car here. People imagine that life is beautiful here, because you do not have anything in Mexico.”

Participants agreed on the fact that living in the United States is not easy at all; however all of them are ready to make sacrifices, work hard, and live on a budget to secure a better future for themselves and their children. When they arrive in the United States they do not bring anything with them, but the clothes they are wearing and the burning desire to improve themselves. Informants’ strong motivation to come to and stay in the United States is what makes them cherish and be grateful for the opportunities they are given in America.

*Empathy and Solidarity with Other Hispanics*

The research findings indicated that during their journey to the United States, they met strangers who had to cope with the same situations they encountered. They met other co-ethnics who wanted to pursue the same objectives, and interpreted the world around them in the same way. By interacting with other people, participants re-constructed their identities, re-conceptualized their ideas of themselves, and re-interpreted the world around them in new ways.

As Informants made their way to the United States, they encountered other people like them with similar dreams, expectations, and histories. These shared experiences constitute collections of concepts and understandings that contribute to the formation of participants’ ethnic identity as they share stories, interact with other Hispanics, learn from one another, and help each other. This empathy and understanding among Hispanics is what binds each other in an interdependent relationship.
Existence of Social Networks

Identity formation takes place when individuals associate with certain groups, and gain a consciousness of themselves as members of a group. The group they associate with gives them support as its members unite and show solidarity and empathy through various interactions. These interactions take place by choice or by circumstance.

Regarding this, Cornell and Hartmann (1997) pointed out that “all human beings are not only connected to other human beings in various ways but also see themselves as members of groups, as occupiers of categories, as variously similar to and different from other people” (p.196).

The role of the network or familial and social connections that informants have already established in the United States plays an important role in their lives. It is often a family member living in the United States that provides financial support, housing, and the information needed to settle down upon Hispanics arrival to the United States. Informant 5 recalls, “It was my cousin who encouraged me to come here. When I arrived, he was waiting for me; he had even found a job for me.” This kind of network serves to increase the immigrant’s sense of belonging to the common culture of the United States as well as providing a support system through which immigrants can maintain some cultural identity with their country of origin.

The social network that supports Hispanics coming to the United States often starts long before they step into American soil. It is their family and close relatives who organize themselves to subsidize the long journey to America. Hispanics willing to cross
the border also make use of an intricate network of “coyotes” that serve as guides who lead the way through the desert into American territory.

Participants also highlighted the existence of other people who play a key role assisting informants to cross the border. They provide Hispanics with shelter, food, and other essentials they need to make it through. Regarding this, Informant 7 eloquently captures the idea that coming to America involves a lot of people by saying, “If you want to come, you cannot do it alone, it is very important to have contacts, otherwise you cannot do it alone.”

Coming empty handed is usually not a problem because in most cases Hispanic immigrants know that relatives or friends will provide them with a place to stay and will help them find a job. These family and friends are already part of a social network of Hispanics that supports and provides newcomers with the information they need to find a job, send their children to school, rent a place to live, and go to a hospital in case of sickness. Participants also relied on networks made of co-ethnics who are willing to share their experiences, backgrounds, and skills in order to build and strengthen their community. In other words, these community members “learn from one another in the quest to attain their common goal while developing and enhancing their own respective skill sets, which add value to their individual lives and the larger communities to which they belong” (Kerka, 2003, p. 5).

Moreover, these social networks are groups of people that perform personal and informal activities, create, and promote spaces for the affirmation of Hispanic cultures and identities. Informants rely on social networks that not only allow them to learn the norms or shared values of their new community, but also grant them the trust to become
members of this community. These social networks provide them with tangible and intangible resources and relationships that enhance their opportunities for socializing and solidarity.

*The Possibility of Advancement in the Host Country*

When participants arrived in the United States, they realized that they had open doors to new opportunities. They found in this New Hispanic Diaspora a distinctive, creative, and enriching life where they can thrive not only economically but also intellectually. For instance, the job opportunities that exist in this new Hispanic Diaspora have made the Hispanic population grow and settle down. Consequently, Spanish-speaking businesses and organizations expanded in response to the great demand for authentic Latino products which in turn created more job opportunities for Hispanics.

In fact, it is the availability of jobs in this wealthy town and adjacent areas that keeps attracting Hispanics to this New Hispanic Diaspora. Once they find a job and become acquainted with the community, they realize that it is a nice place to live, start a family, and send their children to school. Regarding this, Informant 7 says, “I do not want to leave because I already know this place, I have friends, there are good schools, Hispanic stores, a train station. It is a good place to live and work.”

In addition, Hispanics in this New Hispanic Diaspora contribute to the growth of American businesses in different ways. “It is a win-win situation” comments Informant 2 as she explains that Hispanics in this community and across the country benefit and contribute to the American economy. She also adds, “It is like a circle. We grow and we make businesses grow. There are Hispanic restaurants that weren’t here 10 years ago.”
The supermarkets bring products from our countries because they want to cater to the Hispanic clientele. Shops hire Spanish speaking people because they want to make business with Hispanics.”

Apart from that, all the participants reported that they are certainly more prosperous and their children more educated than their fellow co-nationals who still remain in their home-countries. The same is true of the jobs they hold. Even though their jobs are menial and low paying to American standards, most informants are grateful for the opportunity to have a decent job that allows them to provide for their families. The participants have different kinds of jobs such as cleaning houses of affluent residents, they work in a bagel shop, they work on construction sites, they baby sit, and they work as a chef in local restaurants.

*Idealization of the Memories from the Home Country*

Informants in this study were molded by the culture in which they grew up and by the customs, traditions, and lifestyles of the people of their own country. They became used to the celebrations, style of dress, the types of food, and the general cultural norms of their upbringing environment. When they moved from their home country to the United States, they noticed many cultural differences that made them cherish and even idealize those memories and traditions they brought with them from their home countries.

For instance, participants feel that life in their home countries was more relaxed and slow paced. All the informants observed that in their countries children were allowed to go out and play alone in the streets or wander in the neighborhood without supervision. Informant 5 made reference to this saying, “Children are free. They are happy, they run
and play outside and ride horses. They are not inside watching TV all day...Life was simpler in Mexico.”

Informants also believe that in the United States everything seems to be more complicated and stressful. Participants noted that back in their countries they did not have to worry about paying the rent, monthly utility bills, or paying for food. They did not have the means to afford material things due to the scarcity of jobs; however, they always seemed to find a way to satisfy their basic needs by sharing property with relatives, and by growing their fruits and vegetables at home.

Idealization of traditions and memories from the home country is facilitated by keeping in touch with the mother country thanks to modern technology such as the internet, telephone, and television. For instance, informants watch on television how people back in their countries celebrate certain holidays or traditions, or their relatives, who still live in their home countries, tell them about things that they do, the places they visit, or they foods they eat. These stories awaken the informants’ memories and ignite their desire to be part again of what they left behind as they perceive their culture, countries, traditions, and customs better than what they actually are.

*Desire to Return to their Home Country*

The tremendous amount of cultural differences, which some of the participants faced when living and working in the United States, made them vulnerable in their cultural adjustment process. They faced difficulties with some of the most elemental parts of American culture: the people, the language, the places they live in, and the differences in life styles. All these differences that informants had to contend with, led them to
strongly desire to go back to their countries. However, those who returned to their home
country realized that life in their countries was harder than what they remembered.

For instance, Informant 2 said that she went back to her home-country after
saving money and thinking that she was not going to come back to the United States. In
allusion to this, she comments, “When we arrived in Costa Rica, at the beginning we felt
extremely happy, but then... we missed the economic opportunities we had here in the
United States.” It was not long that Informant 2 and her family were back in the United
States.

Participants terribly missed their home country, relatives, and friends when they
were in the United States; however, when they returned to their home countries, they
realized that the United States had made a profound impact on their personality,
expectations and ways of being and behaving. They mentioned how accustomed they got
to American life standards, safety, and job opportunities. Informant 2 illustrates this
point, “When I went back to Costa Rica I felt that I wasn’t the same anymore. I had
changed, I wanted different things, and I missed living in the United States. That is why I
came back.” Most informants talked about a contradictory feeling. On the one hand, they
want to be back in their home country, and on the other hand they know that they and
their families are better off in the United States.

*Maintenance of Customs and Traditions*

Symbolic resources are ways of representing ethnic identities. They establish or
reinforce the sense among group members of sharing something special such as a history,
a way of being, and a particular set of beliefs that captures the essence of ethnic identity (Cornell & Hartmann, 1997).

Informants maintain their customs and traditions on a daily basis. For instance, most informants belong to religious groups and celebrate religious events that provide them with the emotional support necessary to develop and maintain their ethnic identity. Religious events such as the celebration of the Posadas during Christmas time, the Day of the Dead in November, the Three Wise Men in January, and the Guadalupe Virgin celebration in December are some of the ways in which Mexicans informants maintain their traditions from their homelands.

Moreover, participants also mentioned that they strongly cherish their memories from their home countries and share them with their children. On special occasions, such as birthday parties, children play traditional games and participate in customs such as hitting a “piñata”, which is a recipient made of paper in the shape of an animal or cartoon character filled with candy and toys, suspended with a rope from a tree or ceiling. They also cook their favorite foods on special celebrations and occasions.

Another way in which informants maintain their customs and traditions is by keeping close ties with their homelands. They try to visit their countries whenever possible. They may send their children to their homelands during summer to spend time with their grandparents or relatives, they keep in touch via telephone with relatives and friends, and they keep abreast with the latest news pertaining their countries’ politics, economy, and social issues.
Conflict with other Ethnic/Racial Groups Reinforces Diasporic Hispanic Identity

Ethnic identity refers to a person’s knowledge of belonging to or not belonging to a particular group and hence identifying with or not identifying with characteristics of that group. It refers to the differences and similarities of what participants see among people belonging to their group and the differences of what they see among people belonging to other groups.

Participants observed different types of interactions among other racial and ethnic groups coexisting within their community. Identity formation is a complex and dynamic process that is influenced by external factors such as competition and conflict between different groups which promote ethnic and racial boundaries. These boundaries delineate what participants are or what they are not, what group they belong to or do not belong to.

Many participants made reference to conflicts with Whites and African-Americans who hold stereotypes and misconceptions about Hispanics. Informants mentioned that Whites usually harass them about their undocumented status, while African-Americans dislike them because they think that Hispanics are taking jobs and resources away from them. Informants also reported that they feel that many Americans view them as criminals and outlaws that take advantage of the American system. Regarding this, Informant 3 said, “I am undocumented, but that does not mean that I am a criminal. I am a very honest and hard working person. I obey the law. I respect my neighbors. I pay my taxes. I am a good person.”

It is worth mentioning that most of the informants have good opinions of the White Americans they work for. They regard them as generous, good hearted, and very
considerate. Informants noted that most Whites they know are nice and polite people and those who hurt them are often strangers they encounter in the streets.

Considering that, participants’ identity is rooted in particular events and in particular experiences, relationships, and processes, their identity is also shaped, changed, and influenced by the competition and conflict that exist between different groups. For example, this conflict promotes ethnic and racial boundaries between Hispanics and African Americans who struggle for affordable housing and jobs.

In fact, informants reported high levels of conflict with African-Americans. Their narratives give account of instances of discrimination, disrespect, and disdain on part of African Americans. Moreover, in their descriptions, the informants pointed out instances in which Hispanic acquaintances, friends, or relatives have been the target of violent attacks committed by African-Americans. Informant 10 noted, “My husband was brutally attacked by three African-American men when he was coming back from work and he lost vision from his left eye.”

Sometimes rivalry between Hispanics and Blacks also percolated among students at school. Regarding this, Informant 10 shared, “My son got off the bus and a group of African-American boys were waiting for him outside our apartment building. They started hitting him without any apparent reason. They just did not like him. One girl came frantically knocking on my door to tell me what was happening. I was hysterical, I went out and started screaming and I called the police. The boys left when they saw me, but left my son bleeding. His clothes were all torn. I started crying when I saw him like that.”
Parents’ Educational Experiences and their Children’s Schooling

Hispanic parents in this New Hispanic Diaspora bring with them beliefs about their own identities, about the identities and beliefs of established residents, and cultural beliefs about household responsibilities and family values. As Valdes (1996), Delgado-Gaitan (1990), and others have noted, “Latino parents frequently have different conceptualizations of parent and school responsibilities than the middle-class Anglo American parent” (Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann, 200, p.5)

Hispanic parents bring a cognitive cargo about their own educational experiences that may affect how they view the education of their children. They carry with them a powerful conception of who they are and a strong conception of what education is, based on their own experiences with school and schooling. These experiences in school and on schooling influence the way they look at the schooling experiences of their children. They also influence the way in which they see their role in their children’s educational experiences. The research findings suggest that parents value education as an empowerment tool. They encourage their children to do well in school because they believe that it is the only way that they will be able to achieve economic success in America.

Parents also realize about the importance of learning English to become part of American society and to be able to find better paid jobs. Parents feel proud when they hear their children speaking English and hope that their children will do well at school, will attend college, and will attain economic prosperity. Participants believe that
education will help their children achieve the American Dream of having a well paid job, a nice house, and a prosperous future.

Participants also reported that they are grateful for the opportunities that they find in American schools. They compared how hard it was to attend school in their home countries, especially because they had to pay registration fees, buy school supplies, books, and uniforms for their children. Informant 10 always reminds her children what it is like in Mexico and she highlights how grateful she is that her children have the opportunity to receive a sound quality education. She tells her children that she had to quit school at an early age because she had to work to contribute to the family income. She says to her children that her childhood was difficult and that she will do whatever she can to provide them with better opportunities than the ones she had.

Informants’ former experience at school influences parents’ perceptions about education and the role they play as participants in their children’s schooling. Participants reported that parents are not required to participate in school activities or attend school events back in their home countries. While parents are welcomed to the school, they are not actively encouraged to participate in school matters. Informants noticed that teachers in their home countries do not communicate with parents as much as teachers do in the United States. This might happen because teachers have too many students and limited time during the school day. Informants reported that the regular school day in rural areas is usually half day, and that teachers usually work two shifts: one in the morning and another in the afternoon.

Moreover, parents explained that, back in their home countries, they did not question teachers about teaching methods and curriculum. They said that they did not
visit the school regularly, and that they rarely inquired about their children’s progress. They usually found out how their children were doing at the end of the school year when parents were informed if their children had completed all the requirements successfully. These former experiences with school and their limited involvement at school certainly affected the manner in which they got involved in American schools.

Although participants were not used to participating in school and in the education of their children, the findings suggest that participants are willing to adapt to the expectations of American schools, and they would like to play an active role in the education of their children. Informants’ beliefs and literacy practices that they brought with them from their home countries start to change with their interactions with American teachers. Parents did not mind reading early to their children and following teachers’ suggestions and advice because they trusted their expertise and knew that their children would have a better chance of academic success. Informant 5 said, “Teachers know best and if they say that I have to read to my child even if it is in Spanish, I will do it. I want the best for my son.”

Some participants pointed out that Hispanic parents sometimes prefer to keep a low profile because they do not know what teachers expect, do not want to interfere with teachers’ decisions, and they feel embarrassed for not speaking English. While parents have legitimate reasons for not getting involved at school, teachers often misinterpret parents’ lack of participation as lack of interest. The findings suggest that it is in the teachers’ hands to reach out to parents and make them aware of the way in which they can participate and help out their children at home.
Partnerships between home and school create awareness among parents that they are children’s first teachers and that schools alone cannot do all the work. When teachers and administrators reach Hispanic parents, they realize that parents are not only willing to work as a team, but also want to become active partners in the education of their children.

*Schooling in this New Hispanic Diaspora: Accommodations and Resources for Hispanic/Latino Students*

Schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora provide different accommodations and resources to help parents and children overcome cultural, linguistic, and social barriers. Among the most salient accommodations, the following programs were highlighted: Great Start Program, Family Literacy Night, ESL Classes for Parents, Before and After School Program, and the Summer School Program.

The Great Start Program for Spanish-speaking parents was highlighted throughout the ethnographic interviews. This program recognizes that education begins at birth and not necessarily when a child enters school. Parents meet twice a month and each meeting provides them with strategies to help their children develop vocabulary, concepts, language, and social skills that they are most likely to need when they enter school. The program promotes early literacy development in any language. Parents appreciate that the program values and acknowledges home language and culture as a stepping stone to build up literacy skills.

Parents are also thankful for the school efforts to help them improve their children’s literacy skills. Informants noticed that teaching methods in the United States
differ greatly to those of their native countries. They pointed out that in their native countries children learn to read by memorization and constant drilling. Although parents have a different view on how children learn to read, and how they can help their children develop their literacy skills, they are willing to change their views and learn the methods that the school presents as effective.

Informants also made reference to another school initiative geared to help parents improve their children’s literacy skills. This program is called Family Literacy Night and it consists of night workshops for parents who learn about reading strategies and the benefits of reading to and with their children.

In addition, informants stated that they like attending school-sponsored activities because they help them improve their parenting skills and enable them to work more confidently with their children on school assignments. Informants respond more positively to those workshops and programs conducted in their native languages, or when native language interpretation provided.

Furthermore, ESL classes for parents give parents the opportunity to learn English and be able to help their children at home. Classes are held twice a week and they are free. Textbooks, dictionaries, and babysitting services are also provided. Participants valued these classes because they acquired English skills that allowed them to communicate with their children’s teachers at parent conferences, help their children with homework, and become more involved in school matters. Parents also appreciated the fact that child care was provided. They considered that this accommodation was an indication that the schools valued them and really wanted them to attend the program.
This school district also offers programs that cater to Hispanic students needs. For instance, the Before/After School program helps children with Reading and Math. The program is especially beneficial to Hispanic students since it provides them with the additional opportunities to learn content, and to improve their English skills. The Before School bilingual program provides an extended day for bilingual students and gives them the opportunity to further develop their Spanish literacy skills. Informant 3 said that her daughter has made “great progress thanks to the program, so much so that she can read and write in English and Spanish now.”

The Summer Program is another academic program that provides students with the opportunity to not only reinforce what they have learned during the school year, but also to develop further literacy skills in English. Students improve academically, and at the same time, they are occupied in productive and engaging activities.

All these programs value students’ and parents’ linguistic and cultural background. The programs and accommodations contemplate parents’ and students’ first language thanks to bilingual teachers and staff who provide classes, offer translation services, and understand that a child’s first language supports literacy and language acquisition in the second language.

These programs and accommodations also foster a school climate that values cultural and language diversity and promote communication with Hispanic parents in their native language. In this way, parents feel welcomed and empowered because they feel that their language is validated as an asset. Parents feel that they play an important role in the education of their children, and learn how to support their literacy development at home.
Home and school language differences can challenge both parents and educators. Removing language barriers is a critical first step to accommodate to Hispanic parents and their children. It contributes to greater parental participation and student success. Spanish speaking personnel, such as secretaries, principal, teachers and support staff can help newcomers understand how the school operates, what teachers expect, and what they can do to help their children.

Schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora continue to receive students who have little or no proficiency in English, and they are also faced with an increasing number of students in need of extra academic instruction in addition to ESL classes. In order to satisfy the needs of these newly arrived children and their families, schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora adapt to these challenges by providing families with the necessary support, reinforcing learning that takes place at home and at school, providing opportunities for meaningful family involvement, and bridging the gap between home and school.

**Characteristics of Responsive Schools**

Schools have experienced a rapid growth in Hispanic student population. In the near future, the young Hispanics now filling classrooms will be paying taxes, working in the public and private sectors, and consuming the goods and services that stimulate our economy. For this reason it is important that schools ensure that all students master the social, emotional, intellectual, and technical competencies necessary to fulfill these essential roles (Bazron, Osher, & Fleischman, 2005).
In order to meet these challenges brought about by the increasing Hispanic student population, it is necessary that schools develop responsive characteristics geared to involve parents and the community, support students learning with academic and enriching learning activities, and promote cultural integration, awareness, and tolerance. Moreover, schools that care about their students care about their students and families. (Garcia, 2002).

The characteristics of responsive schools outlined in Table 10 can help establish a learning environment that promotes the success of all students, fosters and ongoing participation of parents, encourages professional development, and values Hispanic students’ native language and background. If these characteristics of responsive schools are present in schools that cater to Hispanic students’ needs, home school discontinuity will be minimized, parental participation will be promoted, students and families will feel welcomed and valued, and teachers and administrators will develop a better understanding of students’ heritage and background.

Table 10 illustrates characteristics of responsive schools that will help schools, teachers, and administrators, examine the extent to which they are reaching out Hispanic students and their parents.

Table 10

*Characteristics of Responsive Schools*
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<th>Characteristics of Responsive Schools</th>
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| **Value Students’ Native Language**  | - Hire bilingual school personnel whenever possible: bilingual teachers, instructional assistants, social workers, secretaries, community liaisons, psychologists, counselors, administrators.  
- Encourage an open communication between home and school by providing parents with translations of notices, report cards, and signs throughout the school.  
- Provide workshops and education courses for parents in their native language.  
- Provide translators for parents during parent-teacher conferences, and PTO and Board meetings.  
- Recruit bilingual parents to work in the cafeteria, volunteer in PTO activities, and share their culture and traditions.  
- Provide Hispanic students with additive bilingual programs that will allow them to develop literacy skills in both their native language and the second language. |
| **Support students learning with academic and enriching learning activities** | - Make sure that before and after school programs provide students with academic as well as enriching learning activities.  
- Encourage ELL students to attend before and after school programs.  
- Provide summer school programs that focus on enriching and academic learning experiences.  
- Encourage cultural activities and exhibits that showcase students’ performances in their native language. |
| **Encourage parents to attend school events** | - Send notices home in English and Spanish.  
- Provide transportation.  
- Provide babysitters to watch children while parents attend workshops, classes, and meetings.  
- Provide refreshments during meetings, workshops, and parent educational classes.  
- Provide a resource center with materials, books, and magazines that parents can borrow and use at home with their children.  
- Offer Spanish classes for English speaking teachers so they are able to communicate with parents. |
| **Offer classes and school events for parents** | - Provide ESL classes for foreign born parents.  
- Offer Adult Literacy and technology classes.  
- Provide classes for parents that address language and culture differences as well as ways to deal with |
| Encourage parents' participation in school decisions | Place high priority on professional development for all school staff with training that is designed to serve ELL's more effectively.  
- Encourage teachers to visit students' homes and make phone calls to students' parents.  
- Make parents will feel welcome and important partners in the education of their children.  
- Provide professional development on topics related to cultural and linguistic differences.  
- Encourage and support classroom teachers and other staff in using effective instructional practices that promote second language and content development.  
- Help create a climate of professional growth and accountability to support teachers in an effort to become proficient teachers of ELL students. |
|---|---|
| Provide professional development for teachers | Provide Bilingual parents with an opportunity to meet and interact with other members of the school community.  
- Organize events that highlight school partnerships with the community and how parents can take advantage of these partnerships.  
- Organize assemblies to celebrate Hispanic Heritage and Diversity. |
| Promote cultural integration, awareness, and tolerance | Invite parents to attend board meetings and make sure a translator summarizes at least main points of discussions.  
- Invite bilingual parents to participate in the School Improvement Team.  
- Encourage parents to provide input on matters related to school improvement and the education of English language learners.  
- Keep parents informed about different instructional programs through PTO meetings, notices, and parental advisory committees who mobilize community resources.  
- Encourage parents to participate in literacy activities.  
- Prepare brochures that outline program expectations for each grade level or subject. |
| those differences.  
- Provide Family Literacy Nights that provide parents with strategies to help their children learn at home.  
- Offer events such as Back to School Night, Ask 3 Pizza Nights, and Open House to help parents become acquainted with teachers and school's expectations. |
Home-School Discontinuity

Home school discontinuity is a term used to refer to the gap or lack of cohesion that sometimes exists between home and school practices and which affects minority children’s school performance when compared to the white majority. As Macias (1987) points out this discontinuity rises in more culturally pluralistic settings where children’s home culture is radically different from that of the social mainstream, the segment of the population generally responsible for the social and educational policies affecting these children (Macias, 1987).

In this study, informants have reported experiencing different instances of home-school discontinuity mainly due to language differences, diverging views on teaching methods, and unfamiliarity with the school system. As a result, a series of discontinuities are manifested in different ways which range from lack of communication between teachers and parents to teachers’ lack of multicultural awareness.

These discontinuities between the new, structured school environment and children’s prior experiences within their families and community have a great impact on children’s schooling experience. A vast amount of research have pointed out that the erosion of the home-school relationship undermines teaching and learning, particularly in schools serving groups with gaps between their own social experiences and mainstream expectations. On the contrary, encouraging a positive and enriching relationship in order to find new ways to close the gap between home and school contributes to a successful schooling experience for culturally diverse children.
In order to mitigate the incongruence between home and school cultures, informants in this study reported several strategies which they consciously or unconsciously carry out. Indeed, parents' awareness of the differences, seems to be their most important tool to mitigate home-school discontinuity.

Although some participants came with relatively low levels of education, they teach their children the importance of education especially because educational opportunities in their home countries were only for the rich or elites. Participants exert pressure on their children to study, do well and finish school. They remind their children about the sacrifices they made back in their home countries and the sacrifices they make here to ensure that they have a prosperous future. Informant 3 says, "I want my children to do well in life. Especially because we did not study in our countries and then we emigrated to the U.S., I want my children to do better than me, to study."

Other discontinuities are also evident in informants' experiences with school and schooling back in their home countries. They highlighted that in the United States, schooling is available and free to all children from K-12. However, back in their home countries, many children do not have access to the same opportunities. For example, some informants reported that they have not completed their high school degrees, mainly because secondary schools are virtually nonexistent in rural areas, or because they had to start working in order to help their parents.

Besides, participants noted schooling in the United States is mandatory for all children regardless of their socioeconomic status. Participants mentioned that attending school in their home countries is mandatory for children from kindergarten through ninth grade. However, parents do not always send their children to school because they simply
cannot afford to do so. They have to pay a registration fee, which may become a financial burden for families that have more than one child. Informants explained that when parents do not pay the required registration fee, children are not allowed to attend school. In addition, when children do not come to school prepared with the necessary books and supplies, teachers discourage them from attending school, and as a result children may end up dropping out school.

Informants also regard the amount of time that children spend in school in the United States as another discontinuity. They noticed that the time children spend at school in the United States is considerably longer when compared to the time they spend in schools in their home countries. Children that attended school for a few years and then came to the United States had greater difficulties adapting to a longer school day than students who attended school from kindergarten in the United States. In their home countries, children usually spend four hours at school and they are used to having a mid-morning break to play outside or to eat snacks that they can buy on school premises.

Furthermore, informants referred to parental involvement as another type of school discontinuity. While in the United States parents are expected to actively participate in the education of their children, informants noted that back in their home countries parents had little, if any participation in school related matters. Participants also reported that communication between school and home is very little or even non-existent in their home countries, especially in rural school. Most of the times, teachers do not contact parents if students have academic or behavior problems. If a student is failing in school, it is nobody’s fault but his or hers. Failing students simply repeat the grade and no support systems are in place to help struggling students.
As a matter of fact, parents do not get involved because they respect what teachers say and do not want to intervene in the education of their children. The general belief is that teachers know what is best for the children. Parents do not want to insult the teacher by asking questions or meddling in school life. It is in the United States that parents learn about the importance of actively participating in their children’s education. Informants admitted that they used to think that only teachers were responsible for their children’s education, but now they understand that it should be a partnership between home and school. They realized that their children can achieve a lot more if parents get involved in their children’s education.

Informants also highlighted the language barrier as one of the main discontinuities affecting their children’s performance. Informants expressed that many times they felt that not speaking English was a barrier for helping their children succeed at school. Most of the informants felt that they could not help their children with homework or assignments because they did not understand English.

Cultural disparities between home and school such as students’ language can be the cause of poor schooling for minority groups. In effect, the degree of efficacy in children’s schooling is determined by the way in which cultural disparities are dealt with (Macias, 1987). For that reason, “building on students’ native language and their prior personal and cultural knowledge and experiences, and engaging students with an interesting, pertinent, and challenging curriculum” is very important for the academic success of Hispanic children (Beykont, 2000, p.56).

In an effort to overcome the language discontinuity, parents engaged themselves in learning English. They made every effort to attend the ESL classes provided by the
school district. Parents are convinced that learning English will allow them to improve their language skills and to help their children at home with school. They will also be able to communicate with their children’s teachers, and they will be able to find better jobs.

Interestingly, some parents experienced language discontinuity not only in English but also in Spanish. They explained that as time passed by, their children became English dominant and gradually lost their ability to express themselves in Spanish. Even when parents understood children’s homework and had to explain it to them, their children could not understand what their parents were saying in Spanish.

Parents made every effort to promote the maintenance of Spanish at home. They required their children to speak Spanish when addressing them, they taught them vocabulary, they read books in Spanish, and they even sent their children to visit family and relatives in their home countries.

Some informants also reported that they had vehemently insisted on having their children in a bilingual program, but their requests were denied. Unfortunately for them, parents’ choices for language of instruction were not taken into consideration. As Monzo (2005) points out, it is evident “the need for systematic policy that protects language-minority communities from school administrators and teachers who perceive members of the language-minority community as not sufficiently knowledgeable to make choices for their children’s education, and/or not sufficiently powerful to make demands of schools and assure the protection of their rights and their children’s rights” (Monzo, 2005, p.19)

Another instance of home-school discontinuity is when Hispanic children behave differently from what teachers expect. Because teachers and children do not share the
same communicative norms, it is very likely that Hispanic children’s behavior might be misinterpreted, considered rude, or inappropriate, especially if this behavior differs greatly from teachers’ expectations and mainstream children’s habits.

Informants said that they talk with their children about kinds of behavior that might be misinterpreted or misunderstood. Parents make their children aware of cultural differences. They warn their children that being affectionate through physical contact can be misinterpreted. Parents also tell children to speak English when the teacher is present to avoid misunderstandings and breaks in communication. Informants further noted that they talk with their children and make them reflect on school experiences trying to answer their questions the best way they can so they can easily adapt to the new environment.

As to behavioral patterns, children usually enter American schools with a different conception of discipline and behavioral expectations. Their conception of how they could behave affects their expectations about how learning will occur, how their teachers and peers will treat them, and how they should behave in the classroom. This is a broad source of home-school inconsistency that could undermine the ease with which children make the adjustment to school settings. For instance, informants noticed that schools in their home countries were more relaxed and children were used to working in groups, talking in class, being loud, and cooperating with each other. Informants also pointed out that schools are more structured and sometimes inflexible. For example, children are required to be quiet and silent during lunch time in spite of the fact that it is the only opportunity they have to interact with their classmates outside their classroom.
Another type of discontinuity occurs when there is a mismatch in child rearing discipline practices. Parents admitted that they would hit, spank, or slap their children to discipline them and teach them to be well educated, respectful, and good mannered. It was in the United States that they realized that their discipline practices were frowned upon and often misinterpreted as child abuse.

However, informants did not agree with the school policy when teachers asked their children questions about disciplining practices at home. Parents felt that this inquiring undermined their authority and their right to discipline their children. “They lose respect for their parents,” said informant 11 and added that children challenge their parents’ authority and even “threaten to report their parents to the police if they feel that their parents are being too harsh with them.”

Finally, informants reported that celebrating the diversity at school was another way of overcoming the incongruencies between home and school. Informants appreciate when the school celebrates Hispanic cultural relevant holidays and customs such as “Batalla de Puebla” (Cinco de Mayo), Hispanic Heritage, and International night. By celebrating Hispanic relevant holidays, teachers and administrators show Hispanic children and their parents that their cultures and experiences are valued.

The research findings remind us how important it is to create bridges that make home-school interaction more plausible. As both, school and home, adapt to each other, new discontinuities and continuities will emerge considering that school and home practices are constantly changing and fluctuating.

The research findings indicated that parents may already have their beliefs about school and schooling. However, the research findings also suggested that they are ready
to change those beliefs and practices if teachers show them that there are other ways to help their children at home. Flexibility and adaptation on part of the teacher and parents will benefit children, no matter how different their cultural practices and beliefs might be. If parents and teachers work cooperatively and enhance communication, cultural discontinuities between home and school can be erased and children’s literacy and learning can be increased.

Table 11 illustrates the kinds of experiences that Hispanic children may experience at school, the kind of discontinuities that these experiences produce, and the negative effects in which these experiences may result. The table also highlights what strategies teachers and parents may use to reduce the negative impact of home school discontinuity. These strategies incorporate students’ values, culture, and heritage while recognizing the importance of parental involvement, and students’ learning styles and educational needs.

Table 11

*Strategies to Mitigate Home School Discontinuities*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiences</th>
<th>Discontinuities</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Strategies to mitigate discontinuity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language differences:</td>
<td>Spanish at home vs. English at school</td>
<td>• Poor school performance</td>
<td>• Parents use dictionaries to help children complete homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic competence</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Low English vocabulary development</td>
<td>• Parents attend English classes to learn the language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mother tongue not valued at school</td>
<td>• Schools provide bilingual staff to help students develop mother tongue</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Low parental participation due to language barrier</td>
<td>• Children are allowed to express themselves in their first language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students yelled at</td>
<td>Sensitivity of students vs. indifference of</td>
<td>• Students shut down, withdraw emotionally, feel insulted and humiliated</td>
<td>• After school program provides help with homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers use comforting and non-punitive words, low tone of voice, and give impersonal warnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers use sarcasm</td>
<td>Implicit vs. explicit</td>
<td>• Students misunderstand instructions and expectations</td>
<td>• Teachers use direct language to avoid misunderstandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sarcasm erodes relationship between teacher and student</td>
<td>• Teachers show respect for students’ cultural differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• It is culturally connoted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcing students to participate in</td>
<td>Shyness vs. self-confidence</td>
<td>• Students experience shaky confidence</td>
<td>• Teachers build students’ self-esteem, little direct questioning, tolerance for non-participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required to be quiet and walk in</td>
<td>Rules vs. Autonomy</td>
<td>• Students learn appropriate behavior according to the situation</td>
<td>• Teachers reinforce school rules in a positive, non-punitive manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>line</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Minimal talking in class | Control vs. independence | • Students learn appropriate behavior according to the situation | • Teachers give students impersonal warnings  
• Teachers reinforce positive behavior |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Ethnic foods            | Familiar vs. unfamiliar  | • Newly arrived children refuse to eat cafeteria food | • Teacher encourages, but does not require children to eat cafeteria food.  
• Children can bring food from home.  
• Cafeteria serves ethnic food at least once a week |
| Parent-teacher collaboration | Familiar vs. unfamiliar | • Home-school collaboration enhances student achievement.  
• Lack of collaboration results in students’ poor academic achievement. | • Parents are willing to learn about new culture and expectations  
• Teachers invite parents to get involved, visit classrooms, and talk with teachers and administrators  
• Teachers and administrators educate parents about school expectations and the roles of parents through different school programs such as Great Start Program and Family Literacy Nights.  
• School hires translators, bilingual staff, and bilingual administrators |
| Extrinsic rewards       | Familiar vs. unfamiliar  | • Learning for material reward but not for the reward of learning | • Teachers and parents emphasize the importance of learning and doing well at school  
• Teachers do not reward students with food or prizes  
• Teachers use positive reinforcement and praise to generate love for lifelong learning |
| Classroom and playground rules | Rules vs. autonomy  
Familiar vs. unfamiliar | • Children learn that rules in the mainstream culture are different from home | • Teachers reinforce rules at school in a positive manner through repetition and praise  
• Teachers guide parents how to teach their children differences between both cultures  
• Workshops for teachers to learn about their students’ cultures are provided |

Experiences | Discontinuities | Results | Strategies to mitigate discontinuity
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written notices</th>
<th>English vs. Spanish</th>
<th>Lack of communication between parents and school</th>
<th>Translate school notices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Little interaction between home and school cultures | Familiar vs. unfamiliar | Home and school cultures are disconnected | Teachers use scaffolding e.g.: they use home language, and home discourse style  
Teachers encourage children to respect the demands of school while preserving the integrity of the school culture  
Schools celebrate Hispanic Heritage and multicultural diversity |
| Individualistic competition | Field dependent vs. field independent cognitive learning styles | Values and socialization styles differ from home and school  
Children are sensitive to the opinion of others  
Collaborative behavior at home vs. competitive behavior at school | Teachers minimize the negative effects with experiences that assure students that their cultures are not ignored  
Teachers recognize students' collaborative learning styles |
| Abstract concepts removed from experience and practical daily life | Familiar vs. unfamiliar Practical vs. abstract | Children have difficulties learning abstract concepts  
Children have difficulties learning aspects of the mainstream culture | Teacher models and encourages new experiences.  
Teachers use home culture to reinforce mainstream culture |
| Playing during recess | Rules vs. autonomy | Children used to playing without supervision in their home-countries. | Teachers reinforce rules at school in a positive manner through repetition and praise |
In this study, participants' children were not interviewed, but participants provided information regarding their views of their children's self. Considering that ethnic identity is shaped by the social attributes ascribed to an individual by others, participants' interviews reveal how school, home, and parents' experiences contribute to the development of their children's ethnic identity. A sense of ethnic identity is part of experiences and emotions of an individual. In a world populated by people of many different ethnic backgrounds who often interact and conflict with each other, a child's developing sense of ethnic group identity is an important social issue.

Students' ethnic identities change constantly as a result of social interaction in the school community, as a result of schooling, and as a result of parents' influences. Their identities are constantly fluctuating and being redefined as they learn new things and interact with other children, teachers, and people they meet during their educational and growing experience.

As Bernal and Knight (1993) pointed out, ethnic identity is a construct or set of ideas about one's own ethnic group membership. The emphasis in defining ethnic identity is on knowledge about one's own ethnic group and on the sense of self as a member. Ethnic identity develops gradually in children. Children's information about their ethnicity and ethnic group membership is acquired through social learning experiences provided by their families and communities as well as by the dominant society. As they grow older, and have greater freedom and wider opportunity for social contact, they learn increasingly complex information, and integrate past learning with
present learning. Through social cognitive processes, they make social comparisons and become aware of reflected appraisals relating to their ethnicity (Bernal & Knight, 1993).

Informants in this study carry a powerful conception of who they are. This cognitive cargo that they bring with them is rooted in their experiences in their home countries and transmitted to a certain degree to their children who may have a far more modest version of that conception because it is not part of their own experience. Their parent’s identity thus becomes a somewhat influencing factor in the shaping of their own children’s identity.

In effect, parents teach their children about ritual events, history, ways of being, and a particular set of beliefs that captures the essence of their ethnic identity. These are symbolic resources that represent the group and reinforce their sense of belonging to a group which shares their ethnic identity. A common resource of this affirmation of ethnic identity is cultural rituals, which are unique to a particular group. For instance, for Mexicans, the celebration of Posadas, the Day of the Dead among others, contributes to the development and maintenance of their ethnic identity.

Some informants realize that it might be hard for children to understand the real meaning of these celebrations because their children did not have the opportunity to experience them first hand. Children only experience the traditions and customs parents try to reproduce in the United States. In order to keep alive celebrations and rituals, some parents sent their children to their home countries for a few months so that they can understand and experience firsthand those customs and traditions that their parents always talk about.
However, participants noticed that despite of all their efforts to transmit their
cultural knowledge and to keep their traditions alive, their children also show a
preference for everything that is American. Thus, children learn to live in two worlds,
and they learn to interact in two cultures. Children’s identity is not only shaped by their
parents, but it is also influenced by the teachers, peers, and people they encounter in their
school community.

Children come into contact with the outside world when they start school and
start socializing with other people. Pennycook (2001) explains that classrooms function
as a “kind of microcosm of the broader social order,” (p.115) and everything that
happens outside, it influences what is taught in there because classrooms are not
autonomous islands of learning. Thus, classrooms are “related to social, cultural,
political, and ideological concerns,” (Pennycook, 2001, p.117) which may affect how
people think since they create a consciousness produced by ideologies of the dominant
group. For instance, a classroom utterance, textbook illustration, “translation,
arrangement of seats, and choice of language” may have major effects in what students
learn (Pennycook, 2001, p.120).

According to Giroux (1998), “schools are conservative forces which, for the most
part, socialize students to conform to the status quo” (p. 34). As the findings of this
research study indicate, parents may try hard at home to teach their children about
traditions, customs, and history of their heritage; however children learn about traditions,
customs, and history of the United States at school. Thus, children’s identity formation is
constantly shaped and influenced by what parents and schools do and say.
While children experience at home the symbols that their parents teach them as a public affirmation of their ethnic claim, they also learn at school about traditions, customs, and history of the United States. As a consequence children find themselves living in two conflicting worlds. The conflict may become a struggle unless children are made aware that both sides are equally valuable and merit respect and appreciation.

Schooling is a major variable in acculturation, the process by which the members of a society are taught the elements of the mainstream culture. However, this acculturation process is not simple and linear. It is a complex process by which students do not simply lose certain ethnic characteristics and replace them with Anglo ones, but it is an ongoing combination and recombination of original ethnic characteristics with American ones.

Because schools are also places where students learn to socialize, schools become sites of crucial importance in the formation of Hispanic students’ ethnic identity. The process of socialization leads individuals to see themselves as connected to other people, and more important, as connected to other categories of people.

In their search to be accepted and not considered different, children may try to blend in with their environment. To this avail, they may disassociate with ethnic cultural traits that make them stand out as different. However, children’s attempt to fit in may not be successful all the time, different experiences remind them that they do not belong. For instance, students’ sense of not belonging is stressed every time their families have to hide from immigration officers or when they are not able to access education opportunities because they do not have the means or the legal status. Instances like these, also contribute to the formation of ethnic identity and salience of certain ethnic traits.
Once again, students receive contradictory messages. At school, they learn that they are equal, and that they are Americans just like their peers. However, the world outside school sends them the message that they are undocumented, and not part of America. Some Hispanic children may realize that they might not be able to pursue further education and attend college because they are undocumented and do not have access to student loans, scholarships, and other benefits reserved to legal residents. They may have the desire to study, but the system stops them.

Another factor that plays an important role in ethnic identity is the use of language which as a complete system of communication becomes a symbolic resource of ethnic assertion. The power of language evokes the boundary between two groups and evokes a sentiment of commonality, a key component of identity.

Schools are key sites for the construction of community identity and inclusion but they can also be sites that exclude Latino newcomers through practices that deny their language, heritage, and culture. As Jim Cummins (2003) writes, “to reject a child’s language in the school is to reject the child” because language is a central part of children’s identities (para.19). When children feel this rejection, they are less likely to participate actively and confidently in the classroom and at school.

Since language is a central part of identity formation, when teachers make students feel that their language is not accepted at school, they are also implying that students’ cultural identity is not accepted either. Not to mention the detrimental results that it has when students are forced to shift to the second language before a critical level of competency in the first language has been achieved. When this happens, students are
being denied the possibility of developing full competence in any language (Cummins, 2003).

Schools that encourage children to become bilingual and bicultural give students the ability to make choices about their cultural identity and learn to function in two worlds. If students can develop their first and second language simultaneously they will most likely be able to reach their intellectual potential (Ramírez & Castañeda, 1974). However, if students develop negative attitudes towards features of the dominant culture, learning may be inhibited, and they may try to rebel against values, expectations, and rules of the mainstream culture.

Some informants reported that schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora through a bilingual program helped their children become bilingual and bicultural, maintain Hispanics customs at home, be respectful of their parents, and read and write in English and Spanish. On the contrary, some other informants whose children did not receive bilingual education reported that their children lost their ability to speak Spanish as they gained proficiency in English. Besides, they noticed that their children preferred to speak in English most of the time, were less likely to watch Spanish television, had greater language ability in English than in Spanish, and preferred to use English to play with their younger siblings.

The ultimate goal of a meaningful education should be to provide children with the possibility of becoming bilingual and bicultural, by embracing both the cultural influences found at home and at school. This will allow children to become well-adjusted students with the ability to function in either culture. As Wallace Lambert (1977) points out, children who are target of social pressures to give up one aspect of their dual identity
for the sake of blending into the mainstream culture are caught up in a subtractive form of biculturalism. Identities are fragile and they can, through social pressures, be easily tipped off balance. Therefore, it makes sense to assist children find the balance between their home culture and the mainstream culture as they develop their own identity (Lambert, 1977).

Therefore, the findings suggest that Hispanic children would benefit if teachers provided learning opportunities for students to develop communicative competence in English while preserving students’ language. They should attempt to display a positive attitude towards students’ home culture, customs and traditions while the culture of the mainstream gradually becomes an integral part of students’ identity (Perry & Delpit, 1998).

In order to better serve Hispanic students, teachers should not impose their views about mainstream language or culture as being superior. They should not only provide students with choices, but also should teach about the mainstream culture without asking bilingual students to renounce to their first language, cultural identity, and heritage. Teachers should also recognize that the linguistic form a student brings to school is intimately connected with loved ones, community, and personal identity. In this way, students will become bicultural and be able to develop positive feelings about both cultures.
Final Remarks

The findings presented in this research study are a modest contribution to the research literature on the issues pertaining Hispanic Latino identity, schooling of Hispanic students, and home-school discontinuity.

This study sheds some light on Hispanic experiences and identity formation that may help teachers and administrators develop an understanding about Hispanic identity culture, and perceptions about school and schooling in the United States. This study may give new insights and perspectives to the research on Hispanic students’ education by inspiring teachers and administrators to reconsider teaching practices, professional development, and programs geared to mitigate the culture shock that parents and students experience when coming to the U.S.

It may also help educational practitioners to understand the reasons for which parents do not attend school events and get actively involved in their children’s education. Learning about the factors that promote and discourage Hispanic parental involvement will assist teachers and school administrators to devise strategies that overcome the barriers and increase parental involvement throughout the school community.

The findings demonstrate that parents sometimes may not have the necessary knowledge about the U.S. school system, and are not aware of teacher’s expectations regarding their participation at school. Indeed, Hispanic parents come to the United States with limited knowledge of the American school system and what it expects from parents. Hispanic parents may not know how to help their children develop literacy and
math skills at home. They may have different schooling experiences that influence their perception of the role parents play in their children’s education.

Moreover, the findings shed light on how schools and parents in this New Hispanic Diaspora carry out various strategies to accommodate the growing Hispanic student population. The schools make a conscious effort to respond to the needs posed by the newcomers. Among the successful characteristics of responsive schools mentioned in the previous section bridging the gap between home and school and breaking down barriers which inhibit home-school partnerships is of great importance. One way to do this is to provide parents with the information and resources that they need in order to support their children’s education, learn about school activities, and feel that they are welcomed at school. Information and resources about health and social service agencies, adult educational opportunities, child development, school policies and procedures, and how to support their children’s learning at home are crucial strategies to promote parent-school collaboration.

Family literacy programs, such as the Great Start, Family Literacy Night, and Open House, to name a few, have been successful in bridging the gap between home and schools in this New Hispanic Diaspora. Thus the implementation of a family literacy environment has provided parents and children with opportunities to learn together. Programs may include book give-a-ways, lending libraries for parents, and workshops on story book reading, early childhood programs, adult basic and parenting education, and coordination with other service providers.

In addition, teachers should also be provided with training on how to best involve parents, keep them informed about their children’s progress, and help them become
involved in the education of their children. Multiple means should be used to communicate with parents including handbooks, newsletters, notes home, telephone calls, parent-teacher conferences, home visits, home learning packets, and school and class meetings. Foremost, parents should be provided with information in the language that they can understand. For this reason, notices sent home should be translated, and bilingual personnel should be available whenever they need help communicating with their children’s teacher, principal, or other school personnel.

Children benefit the most when parents are empowered and encouraged to see themselves as their children’s first teachers, even if they have limited reading skills. For example, parents should be encouraged to engage in a variety of activities with their children, to provide questions and comments that promote language development, and to view story telling as an important literacy activity that lays the foundation for learning to read. Linguistically diverse parents should be encouraged to tell stories, to read to children in their primary language, and to share knowledge of their culture, helping the child to connect their life outside the school with literacy activities regardless of the language.

In fact, home-school continuity lays the foundation for children’s success at school and in life. Effective teaching should build upon children’s prior knowledge and experience. As Bowman and Stott (1994, as cited in Novick, 1996) pointed out, “children’s learning is context-bound, and tied to specific settings. In order to make sense of their experience, children must see the connections between what they already know and what they experience in school” (para. 436). This will only be achieved if schools
develop a meaningful and culturally relevant curriculum that integrates Hispanic culture, validates their home language, and incorporates their unique life experiences.

The transition from home to school often results in sharp discontinuities for the Hispanic child (Novick, 1996). "The young child must adapt to a new culture, a new ecology with different sets of procedures, requirements, and values" (Caldwell, 1991 as cited in Novick, 1996, para. 437). In order to mitigate this home-school discontinuity, schools administrators and teachers should be aware of the cultural differences that Hispanic children bring with them to school, parental involvement should be encouraged, and the curriculum should be culturally sensitive to the needs and experiences of these children.

Mitigating the differences between home and school, requires that both, parents and teachers, become aware of the cultural differences in terms of behavior, child rearing practices, and learning styles. For example, what Hispanic parents may consider accepted behavior at home may not be accepted as such at school. Hispanic households are always loud, active, and comprised of several individuals. On the contrary, school environment requires students to sit quietly, raise their hands, stand in line, follow instructions, and answer only when addressed.

Another cultural element not typically recognized by school personnel as appropriate is Hispanic parents' child rearing practices which include physical punishment. Besides, Hispanic parents tend to have authoritarian parenting styles and hence, children tend to be shy around adults. This behavior can be misinterpreted at school as disrespect or lack of interest when students do not participate or fail to look in the eye when addressed.
Lastly, discontinuities may arise due to lack of awareness related to Hispanic students’ learning styles. Indeed, Hispanic students are more kinesthetic learners and enjoy interaction with their peers. They have field dependent learning styles (Ramirez & Castañeda, 1974) and hence they need to develop personal relationships with their teachers, they respond to warm and caring adults, and like closeness and hugs.

However, physical contact and demonstrations of affection between children and adults are avoided in mainstream American schools. Likewise, schools usually promote independence and autonomy among students from an early age, in spite of the fact that Hispanic students usually need teachers’ support, guidance, and encouragement at all times (Ramirez & Castañeda, 1974).

Bridging the discontinuities is a process that demands systematic and continuous attention. Educators need to be made aware of the differences in order to provide children with the necessary accommodations so that they can be understood and can express themselves in their first language, home context, and culture.

In addition, it is necessary that teachers and administrators learn about Hispanic students’ family life, experiences, and identity formation. This can help teachers and administrators understand cultural differences and develop strategies to remove barriers to parental involvement and to mitigate home-school discontinuity.
Policy Recommendations

Reorientation of Teacher Preparation Programs, Teacher Recruitment, and Teacher Retention:

In order for schools to meet the needs of Latino students, there will need to be a major reorientation of this country’s teacher recruitment and preparation programs. There is a pressing need to recruit more Hispanics into the teaching profession so that the teaching force is more reflective of the student population. With nearly 40 percent of all Hispanic students (K-12) identified as limited English proficient (Ginorio & Huston, 2001, as cited in Wortham, Murrillo, & Hamann, 2002) teachers need preparation in the theories and methods behind ESL and Bilingual Education and second language acquisition. This will certainly allow both bilingual and monolingual teachers to be better prepared to address the needs of Hispanic students. Also there is a need to devise strategies that address the severe shortage of fully credentialed bilingual teachers. American college and high school students who are bilingual should be encouraged to take up teaching as a career. They should be given the necessary academic and financial support they need to complete a college degree and teacher credential program.

As to teacher retention, first time bilingual teachers should receive the support they need to prevent teacher burnt out. One way to do this is providing teachers with orientation workshops on bilingual and ESL curriculum development and instructional planning, which directly impact their classrooms. Besides, teachers should receive adequate resources and facilities to support their instructional practice as well as clear job descriptions and expectations. If teachers know what they are supposed to do and receive
adequate training they will know how to reach out their students and feel successful as
teachers because their students will be successful as learners. In addition, there should be
open lines of communication between teachers and administrators and professional
development activities that promote improved teaching and learning (Wood &
McCarthy, 2002).

*Invest More Public Funds in the Education of ESL Students:*

   Educational policy development should be geared toward the educational success
of Latino students. The education of Latino students should be made a priority in
American schools. Hispanics will determine the quality of the labor force throughout this
country in the years ahead given their increasing numbers. Therefore, it would be
sensible to invest in their education so that they can actually contribute to America’s
wealth. Indeed, the costs of closing the achievement gap for Latino students will be high,
but the costs of not doing so will be far higher (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

   Moreover, it is vital to expand Hispanic students’ access to higher education by
promoting comprehensive federal student aid policies that seek to close the gap in
college participation and degree completion between low-income and under-represented
students and their more advantaged peers. It is necessary to assist Hispanic parents with
planning and preparation for college, including early awareness of student financial aid
and career opportunities. It is also important that no high school graduate in the United
States, who meets the academic qualifications for college, is denied access solely on the
basis of immigration status.
Contemplate the Dynamics of Race and Ethnicity:

Race and ethnicity shape children's experiences with education, particularly in middle and high schools. Race and ethnicity have a powerful impact on how Americans are treated and viewed. It might also be useful to examine how schools as social institutions perpetuate or challenge racial, ethnic, and class stratification.

Responsive schools help students to develop a strong sense of ethnic identity. They respect students' mother tongue, and encourage language maintenance. They provide opportunities for parental involvement, and promote respect and tolerance for students' diversity and cultural practices. Children who have a strong sense of ethnic identity and feel that their parents are welcomed in school develop self-confidence, a sense of belonging, and feel proud and secure. On the contrary, students whose ethnic heritage is not respected or acknowledged develop feelings of inadequacy and inferiority and commonly end up dropping out from school (Kanellos, Weaver, & Esteva-Fabregat, 1994).

Recommendations for Further Research

This study on Schooling of Hispanic students is a humble contribution to the research literature on diasporas, Hispanic identity formation, Hispanic schooling, and home-school discontinuity. It also provides a base for conducting further research related to these issues.

This study examined the cultural experiences of parents in Central New Jersey. However, it would be useful to replicate this study in other parts of the country that have
experienced similar demographic changes and compare findings. Such a comparative study could build upon the findings presented in this study and add validity to the study.

Furthermore, a comparative study of two or more school districts with similar characteristics in the composition of their school population may present a useful opportunity for identifying differences and similarities regarding Hispanic diasporic identity formation, schooling of Hispanic students, and strategies to mitigate homeschool discontinuity. The differences or similarities drawn from such a study may reveal the general underlying structure which generates or allows constancy or variation among school districts that serve Hispanic students.

Finally, the 11 informants that were randomly selected and agreed to participate in this research study are first generation immigrants from Mexico, Costa Rica, and El Salvador. Thus, further research should consider involving not only more informants, but also informants representing other Hispanic countries not mentioned in this study.

This consideration is important because the term Hispanic/Latino does not imply or refer to a homogenous group with the same needs, values, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The term refers to diverse individuals that come from different countries, have different experiences, family values, traditions, and religions. Being aware of further differences and similarities that exist among Hispanics will help teachers and administrators provide Hispanic students with an equal and equitable education that addresses their needs, promotes their success, and bridges the discontinuities that may exist between home and school.
References


Appendix A

Letter of Solicitation For The Parent Interviews
Appendix A
Letter of Solicitation For The Parent Interviews

Date

Dear ____________,

I am a doctoral student in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University, working under the mentorship of Dr. Juan Cobarrubias. I am writing this letter to request your permission to allow me to interview Hispanic parents in your school district.

My doctoral dissertation research deals with the topic of *Schooling in a New Hispanic Diaspora in New Jersey* and the purpose of this study is to find out how school districts accommodate their resources to satisfy the needs of their growing Hispanic school population. It will also try to identify what strategies Hispanic families adopt to mitigate home-school discontinuity and how schooling shapes their identity.

I will be asking potential participants to volunteer. Each subject will need to be parents who send their children to the schools in your school district, be Hispanic, live in the school neighborhood, and have been living in the community for more than three years.

Subjects will participate in a series of about three interviews approximately one hour each. The interviews will be conducted under the strictest guidelines to protect the identity of the participants and the confidential nature of the research data. No individual will be identified other than by a pseudo-name. All participants reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The interviews will take place at the program site.

The subject’s data will be securely stored in a locked cabinet to maintain confidentiality. Upon completion of the research all notes and any other information with the possibility of identifying the participants will be completely destroyed.

I will contact you by telephone or email in the next few days to follow up this request for an opportunity to address the parents in your school district. I am available to answer any questions you may have concerning this study.

Your cooperation will offer me a unique opportunity to add to the existing research on the topic of community and school relations, home-school discontinuity, and Hispanic identity.

Thank you in advance for your kind attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Andrea Solange Fonteñez
Appendix B

Letter of Introduction Participants’ Interview
Appendix B
Letter of Introduction Participants’ Interview

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am conducting research for my doctoral dissertation at Seton Hall University and I am interested in the topic *Schooling in a New Hispanic Diaspora in New Jersey*

My study will have many benefits for the Hispanic school population because it will help to understand how school districts accommodate the growing Hispanic school population and how they are able to provide better assistance for Hispanic students. Also this study will attempt to find out what elements contribute to the formation of Hispanic identity and what strategies Hispanic families adopt to overcome the differences that might exist between what is taught at home and what is taught at school.

I imagine that you have interesting stories to tell about your experience in this town in New Jersey and I would appreciate if you would like to share these experiences with me in order to contribute with this study.

We will set up appointments to talk about your experiences in the US. I will be recording these interview sessions to improve accuracy when recalling information. I will personally transcribe these interviews in order to keep them confidential.

I promise you that I will not reveal your name by any means. All information received will be treated in a confidential manner.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate or to withdraw once participation has begun, your decision will not affect you in any way.

I realize that I will take some of your valuable time and appreciate your willingness to share your experiences with me.

Feel free to contact me for any question. My name, address, and phone number are given below.

Thank you in advance,

Sincerely

Andrea Solange Fonteñez
Doctoral Student
College of Education and Human Services,
Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079.
Telephone: (973) 761-9617.
Querido Señor o Señora,
Estoy realizando una investigación para mi disertación doctoral en Seton Hall University y estoy interesada en el tema Escolaridad en una Comunidad Étnica e Hispana en New Jersey.

Mi estudio será beneficioso para la población Hispana porque tratará de entender como los distritos escolares acomodan y ayudan a la creciente población Hispana. También este estudio tratará de averiguar cuáles son los elementos que contribuyen a la formación de la identidad Hispánica y que estrategias las familias Hispánicas adoptan para aliviar las diferencias que puedan existir entre lo que se enseña en el hogar y lo que se enseña en la escuela.

Me imagino que UD. tiene historias interesantes para contar sobre sus experiencias en este pueblo de New Jersey y le agradecería si UD. quisiera compartir estas experiencias conmigo para contribuir con este estudio.

Haremos citas para hablar sobre sus experiencias en los Estados Unidos, y yo voy a grabar estas entrevistas para asegurarme de que sean precisas cuando revise la información. Yo misma transcribiré las entrevistas para mantenerlas confidenciales.

Prometo que no revelare su nombre en ninguna forma y toda la información recibida será tratada en forma confidencial.

Su participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Si UD. decide no participar o dejar de hacerlo, su decisión no lo afectará en ninguna forma.

Me doy cuenta que estaré tomando parte de su valioso tiempo y le agradeczo sus ganas de compartir sus experiencias conmigo.

Puede contactarme por cualquier pregunta. Mi nombre, dirección y número de teléfono están abajo.

Muchas Gracias,

Atentamente

Andrea Solange Fonteñez
Colegio de Educación y Servicios Humanos,
Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079.
Teléfono: (973) 761-9617.
Appendix C

Informed Consent Form: Participants' Interview
Appendix C
Informed Consent Form: Participants’ Interview

**Informed Consent Form**

1. **Title Of Research Study:**
   *Schooling In A New Hispanic Diaspora In New Jersey*

2. **Researcher And Researcher’s Affiliation:**
   Researcher: Andrea Solange Fontanéz, Doctoral student, College of Education and Human Services, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079. Telephone: (973) 761-9617. Email address: fontnan@shu.edu

3. **Purpose Of The Research:**
   The purpose of this study is to find out how school districts accommodate their resources to satisfy the needs of the growing Hispanic population that live in the area of the school district. The study will also try to find out what Hispanic families do to overcome the differences that might exist between what is taught at school and what is taught at home. Moreover, this study will try to find out what elements contribute to the formation of Hispanic identity.

4. **Procedures For This Research And Duration Of The Subject’s Participation:**
   The study requires the participation of 10 or more Hispanics who have lived in the community for at least three years and who are parents that send their children to schools located in the school district. Participants will be interviewed three times. Each interview will last 50-60 minutes each. All interviews will be recorded and later on transcribed by the researcher. No other individual will have access to the research data. All Tapes will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

5. **Voluntary Nature Of The Participation:**
   Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If participants decide not to participate in the study they can do so at any time without consequences or penalty.

6. **Statement of Anonymity**
   Interviews will not be anonymous; however, participants’ identity will be kept confidential at all times. Participants will be identified by a pseudo-name.

7. **Protection Of Confidentiality:**
   Participants’ names, work sites, and any other identifying information will be kept confidential at all times. Likewise, names will not be identified on audiotapes. Taped interviews will be transcribed by the researcher and kept confidential. No one else will have access to participants’ information for this research.
8. **Security of Subject’s Data:**
This signed consent form, audiotapes, interview transcripts and any other material related to this investigation will be maintained in a secure and confidential manner by the researcher so that no one will ever be able to link the data to any individual. Upon completion of the study, all tapes will be destroyed. The transcriptions will be maintained for three years.

9. **Potential Risks Or Discomforts:**
It is very unlikely that participants will experience any major discomfort as a result of this investigation. Participation is voluntary and participants may drop out at anytime.

10. **Potential Benefits To Participants Or Others:**
This study might have no particular benefit to individual participants, but the results of this investigation can help school administrators, teachers, policy makers and researchers by contributing to the general body of knowledge on home-school relations and Hispanic/Latino identity formation.

11. **Contact Information**
   Participants may contact
   1) Researcher: Andrea Solange Fontenez at 732.758.1500 x1530 with any questions concerning this study.
   2) Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Juan Cobarrubias, Director of Bilingual and Bicultural Education, College of Education and Human Services, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079. Telephone: (973) 761-9617. Email address: cobarrju@shu.edu
   3) Institutional Review Board Chairperson: This research has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. Participants may contact the Chairperson of the IRB at 973 313-6314 for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subjects’ privacy, welfare, civil liberties and rights.

12. **Taped Interviews:**
By participating in this study, subjects will be giving consent to the use of taped interviews. Participants may review any portion of the tape(s) and they may request that any portion of the tape(s) be destroyed. All tapes will be destroyed upon completion of the study. The transcriptions will be maintained for three years.

13. **Copy Of The Informed Consent Form:**
All participants will be given a copy of the signed and dated Informed Consent Form.

Participant: ___________________    Date: ________________
Formulario de Información y Consentimiento

1. **Titulo Del Estudio De Investigación:**
   *Escolaridad En Una Nueva Comunidad Étnica Hispana en New Jersey*

2. **Investigador Y Afiliación Del Investigador:**
   Investigador: Andrea Solange Fontañez, Estudiante Doctoral, Colegio de Educación y Servicios Humanos, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079. Teléfono: (973) 761-9617. Correo electrónico: fontanar@shu.edu

3. **Propósito De La Investigación:**
   El propósito de este estudio es averiguar como los distritos escolares acomodan sus recursos para satisfacer las necesidades de la creciente población Hispánica que vive en el área del distrito escolar. Este estudio tratará también de identificar qué hacen las familias Hispánicas para superar las diferencias que existen entre lo que se enseña en la escuela y lo que se enseña en la casa. Además este estudio tratará de averiguar que elementos contribuyen a la formación de la identidad Hispánica.

4. **Procedimientos Para Esta Investigación Y Duración De La Participación De Los Sujetos:**
   El estudio requiere que la participación de 10 o más hispanos que hayan vivido en la comunidad por un mínimo de tres años y que sean madres que envían a sus niños/as a las escuelas ubicadas en el distrito escolar. Los participantes serán entrevistados tres veces. Cada entrevista durará 50-60 minutos cada una. Todas las entrevistas serán grabadas y luego transcriptas por la investigadora. Nadie más tendrá acceso a los datos recolectados. Las cintas serán destruidas una vez completado el estudio.

5. **La Participación Es Voluntaria:**
   Participación en este estudio es enteramente voluntaria. Si los participantes deciden no participar en el estudio pueden hacerlo en cualquier momento sin ninguna consecuencia o penalidad.

6. **Declaración de Anónimo:**
   Las entrevistas no serán anónimas; sin embargo, la identidad de los participantes se mantendrá en forma confidencial en todo momento. Los participantes serán identificados con un pseudónimo.

7. **Protección De Confidencialidad:**
   Los nombres de los participantes, sitios de trabajo y otra identificación serán mantenidos como confidenciales en todo momento. Así también los nombres no serán revelados en las grabaciones. Las entrevistas grabadas serán transcriptas por el investigador y se mantendrán confidencialmente, y nadie más tendrá acceso a la información dada por los participantes para esta investigación.

8. **Seguridad de la Información de los Individuos:**
Este formulario de consentimiento ya firmado, las cintas, las transcripciones y cualquier otro material relacionado con esta investigación serán guardadas en forma segura y confidencial por el investigador para que nadie pueda relacionar la información con ningún individuo. Una vez que el estudio se haya terminado, todas las cintas serán destruidas. Las transcripciones se guardarán por tres años.

9. **Posibles Riesgos O Malestas**:
   Es muy difícil que los participantes experimenten molestias o riesgos a causa de esta investigación. Participación es voluntaria y los participantes pueden dejar de participar en cualquier momento.

10. **Posibles Beneficios Para Los Participantes Y Otros**:
    Este estudio probablemente no tendrá ningún beneficio para los participantes, pero los resultados de esta investigación pueden ayudar a los administradores de escuelas, maestros, políticos, e investigadores contribuyendo con la literatura acerca de las relaciones entre la escuela y el hogar, y la formación de la identidad Hispánica/Latina.

11. **Información de Contactos**:
    Participantes pueden contactar
    1) Al Investigador Principal: Andrea Solange Fontenez al 732.758.1500 x1530 con cualquier tipo de preguntas relacionadas con este estudio.
    2) Supervisor de la Facultad: Dr. Juan Cobarrubias, Director de la Educación Bilingüe y Bicultural, Colegio de Educación y Servicios Humanos, Universidad Seton Hall, South Orange, NJ 07079. Teléfono: (973) 761-9617. Correo Electrónico: cobarrju@shu.edu
    3) Jefe de la Junta Institucional de Revisión (IRB): Esta investigación ha sido revisada y aprobada por la Junta Interna de Revisión para Investigaciones con sujetos humanos de la Universidad Seton Hall. Participantes pueden contactar al jefe del IRB al 973-313-6314 para preguntar sobre la investigación y la privacidad, libertades civiles y derechos de los sujetos de la investigación.

12. **Entrevistas Grabadas**:
    Al participar en este estudio, los sujetos están dando consentimiento para que las entrevistas sean grabadas. Los participantes pueden revisar cualquier parte de las cinta(s) y solicitar que una parte o toda la cinta sea destruida. Las transcripciones de las cintas serán guardadas por tres años y luego destruidas.

13. **Copia De Este Formulario de Información y Consentimiento**:
    Todos los participantes recibirán una copia firmada de este formulario de Información y Consentimiento.

Participante: ______________________  Fecha: ________________
Appendix D:

Domain Analysis Worksheets
Domain Analysis Worksheet

1. **Semantic Relationship:** Means-end
2. **Form:** X (is a way to) Y
3. **Example:** Walking is a way to go to work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>IS A WAY TO</td>
<td>Go to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riding a bike</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By bus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By car</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By charter bus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By taxi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Structural Questions:** How do parents go to work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving advice</td>
<td>IS A WAY TO</td>
<td>Help each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing with a place to live</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lending money</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing “Tanda”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing support groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being part of a network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Structural Questions:** What are the ways to help each other?
Domain Analysis Worksheet

1. **Semantic Relationship:** Rationale
2. **Form:** X (is a reason for) Y
3. **Example:** To be able to buy things at the supermarket is a reason for learning English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be able to buy things at the supermarket</td>
<td>IS A REASON FOR</td>
<td>Learning English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be able to get a promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be able to find a better job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be able to help their children with homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be able to communicate with teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be able to integrate with the local community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be able to continue education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be able to understand American Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make new friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Structural Questions:** What are the reasons for learning English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual program at schools</td>
<td>IS A REASON FOR</td>
<td>Moving to this community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train Station</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealthy residents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job availability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful Hispanic businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of a network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Structural Questions:** What are the reasons for moving to this community?
Domain Analysis Worksheet

1. **Semantic Relationship:** Strict Inclusion
2. **Form:** \( X \) (is a kind of) \( Y \)
3. **Example:** Family Literacy Night is a kind of event the school carries out to promote parental involvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Start Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Literacy Night</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before/After School Program</td>
<td>IS A KIND OF</td>
<td>Event the school carries out to promote parental involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer School Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Classes for Foreign Born Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back to School Night</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask 3 Pizza Night</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pizza Bingo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halloween Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Night</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast with Santa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher's Recognition Day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Structural Questions:** What kind of events the school carries out to promote parental involvement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fast Food Company</td>
<td></td>
<td>Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardener</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chef</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Sitter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a TIN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a SSN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pays Taxes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Structural Questions:** What kind of work do informants have?
Domain Analysis Worksheet

1. Semantic Relationship:  Strict Inclusion
2. Form: X (is a kind of) Y
3. Example: Way people dress is a kind of cultural differences

Included Terms  Semantic Relationship  Cover Term

Dress and grooming
The way people greet each other
Value of time
Eye contact
Food preparation
Wife's roles
Raising children
Language
Schooling

IS A KIND OF

Cultural Differences

Structural Questions: What kind of cultural differences did informants find in the U.S.?

Included Terms  Semantic Relationship  Cover Term

Puerto Rican
Salvadorians
Costa Ricans
Mexicans
Hondurans
Ecuadorians
Colombians
Dominicans

IS A KIND OF

Hispanic groups
living in this community

Structural Questions: What kind of Hispanic groups live in this community?
### Domain Analysis Worksheet

1. **Semantic Relationship:** Rationale
2. **Form:** \( X \) (is a reason for) \( Y \)
3. **Example:** Job opportunity is a reason for coming to the U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational opportunity for their children</td>
<td>IS A REASON FOR</td>
<td>Coming to the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political reason</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family already in the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Structural Questions:** What are the reasons for coming to the U.S.?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational experiences in their home countries</td>
<td>IS A KIND OF</td>
<td>Home-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language differences</td>
<td></td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views on teaching methods</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfamiliarity with the curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication with teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parental involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' lack of multicultural awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Structural Questions:** What are kinds of home-school discontinuity that parents and students experience?
### Domain Analysis Worksheet

1. **Semantic Relationship:** Strict Inclusion
2. **Form:** X (is a kind of) Y
3. **Example:** Translators is a kind of accommodations provided to Hispanic parents and students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translators during parent conferences</td>
<td>IS A KIND OF</td>
<td>Accommodations provided to Hispanic parents and students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translators during meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of headphones during PTO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And board meetings for translations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish speaking administrators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish speaking community liaison</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual transitional program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish speaking staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notices sent home translated in Spanish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent education workshops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Structural Questions:** What kind of accommodations does the school provide Hispanic parents and students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coming to the U.S.</td>
<td>IS A KIND OF</td>
<td>Shared Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for coming to the U.S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Networks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socializing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in this New Ethnic Community or in its Surroundings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying taxes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language barrier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and using English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Differences</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning to their Home Countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict with other ethnic/racial groups</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Structural Questions:** What kind of shared experiences informants had?
Domain Analysis Worksheet

1. **Semantic Relationship**: Attribution
2. **Form**: X (is an attribute of) Y
3. **Example**: Volunteering in the cafeteria is an attribute of Hispanic parents

| Included Terms                                           | Semantic Relationship         | Cover Term                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|                            |
| Volunteer in the cafeteria                               |                               |                             |
| Participate in school activities                         |                               |                             |
| Volunteer as classroom readers                           |                               |                             |
| Help in PTO events                                      | IS AN ATTRIBUTE OF            | Hispanic Parents             |
| Make customs for Hispanic Heritage Month                 |                               |                             |
| Support school events                                    |                               |                             |
| Donate ethnic foods for school celebrations              |                               |                             |

**Structural Questions**: What are attributes of Hispanic Parents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish instruction</td>
<td>IS AN ATTRIBUTE OF</td>
<td>Schools in participants'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large class size</td>
<td></td>
<td>home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multigrades</td>
<td></td>
<td>countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of instructional supplies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents buy books and supplies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents pay registration fee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction is teacher centered</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Telesecundaria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are frequently on strikes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short school day (AM or PM)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No school nurse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students buy their snacks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniforms</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Structural Questions**: What are the attributes of schools in participants' home countries?
### Domain Analysis Worksheet

1. **Semantic Relationship:** Attribution
2. **Form:** X (is an attribute of) Y
3. **Example:** Being able to speak Spanish is an attribute of the School Community Liaison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaks Spanish</td>
<td>IS AN ATTRIBUTE OF</td>
<td>Community Liaison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translates letters and notices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizes Parent education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>workshops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serves as a translator in PTO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meetings and conferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches English Classes for Foreign Born Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps newcomer parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides information about community services</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Structural Questions:** What are the attributes of the school community liaison?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assists parents</td>
<td>IS AN ATTRIBUTE OF</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual/ ESL certified</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates with parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works very hard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is patient</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Structural Questions:** What are the attributes of teachers?
Domain Analysis Worksheet

1. Semantic Relationship: Means-end
2. Form: X is a way to) Y
3. Example: Using dictionaries at home is a way to mitigate language differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using bilingual dictionaries at home</td>
<td>IS A WAY TO</td>
<td>Mitigate language differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending English classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing bilingual staff to help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing children to express themselves in their first language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before/After school program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation of school notices</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structural Questions: What are the ways to mitigate language differences?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about new culture and expectations</td>
<td>IS A WAY TO</td>
<td>Improve parent teacher collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging parents to visit classrooms</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educating parents about school expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing parental education workshops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring translators, bilingual staff and bilingual administrators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structural Questions: What are the ways to improve parent teacher collaboration?
Domain Analysis Worksheet

1. Semantic Relationship: Means-end
2. Form: X (is a way to) Y
3. Example: using direct language to avoid misunderstandings is a way to mitigate home-school discontinuity.

Included Terms

- Using direct language to avoid
- Misunderstandings
- Show respect for students
- Build students’ self-esteem
- Tolerance for non-participation
- Impersonal warnings
- Home notices in English and Spanish
- Allowing students to bring own ethnic food from home
- Cafeteria serves ethnic food at least once a week
- Teachers use positive reinforcement and praise
- Teachers are aware of culture differences
- Teachers and parents teach their children differences between both cultures
- School celebrates Hispanic Heritage and multicultural diversity
- Students’ learning styles are recognized
- Teachers use home culture to reinforce mainstream culture

Semantic Relationship

IS A WAY TO

Cover Term

Mitigate
Home-School Discontinuity

Structural Questions: What are the ways to mitigate language differences?
Appendix E:
Taxonomic Analysis
Taxonomic Analysis

Taxonomy of Views on Education

1. Participants’ Views on Education

2. Schooling in Home Country
   i. Paying registration
   ii. Buying school supplies and books
   iii. Uniforms
   iv. School Hours and Breaks
   v. Parental Involvement
   vi. Teaching Methods

3. Schooling in the U.S.
   i. Teachers
   ii. School Programs
   iii. Translation
   iv. Channels of Communication
   v. Parental Involvement
## Taxonomy of Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Child's place of birth</th>
<th>Child's age when coming to the U.S.</th>
<th>Child's current age</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>U.S</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
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<td>Costa Rica</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>U.S.</td>
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<td>3 months old</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>4 years old</td>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Salvador</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Salvador</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>U.S.</td>
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<td>Being Hispanic/ Latino</td>
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<td>Returning momentarily to home countries</td>
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</table>
### Taxonomy of Kinds of Schooling Experiences Participants Had in their Home Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schooling Experiences Participants Had in their Home Countries</th>
<th>Paying Registration</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buying School Supplies and Books</td>
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<td>Uniforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Hours and Breaks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Parental Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching Methods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Taxonomy of Kinds of Programs/Activities carried out by the Primary School and/or Middle School.

|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----|
Appendix F:

Componential Analysis
Componential Analysis: Paradigm Worksheet: Kinds of Residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTRAST SET</th>
<th>Owns a house?</th>
<th>Rents?</th>
<th>Shares rent with other people?</th>
<th># of bedrooms</th>
<th># of adults</th>
<th># of children</th>
<th>Lives in the East side?</th>
<th>Lives in the West side?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informant 1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informant 2</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Informant 5</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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<td>Informant 6</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
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<td>Informant 7</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Informant 8</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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<td>Informant 9</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>No</td>
</tr>
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<td>Informant 10</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 11</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Componential Analysis: Paradigm Worksheet: Kinds of Workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTRAST SET</th>
<th>Works for a food company</th>
<th>Works on her own (e.g., cleaning houses)</th>
<th>Works for an individual</th>
<th>Has a TIN</th>
<th>Has a SSN</th>
<th>Pays federal/State taxes or both</th>
<th>Plans to stay in the U.S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informant 1</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 3</td>
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Componential Analysis: Paradigm for Ways of Going to Work.

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Componential Analysis: Participants’ English Proficiency

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