FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE AND COLLEGE IDEOLOGIES:

LIVED EXPERIENCES AMONG MEXICAN-AMERICAN FAMILIES

by:

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As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation

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Lived Experiences among Mexican-American Families, and recommend that it be

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Judy Marquez Kiyama

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DEDICATION

To the most influential parents in this study,
Charlie and Gilda Marquez

for developing and encouraging my passion for learning.

Thank you
I love you

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS - Continued

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

There are a number of factors that contribute to the differences in college access rates of under-represented students compared with their white and Asian American counterparts. Families play a role in whether students experience a college-going culture. In an effort to challenge the dominant literature which focuses primarily on familial deficits, the intent of this research is to understand families from a different model, that of funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).

Using a qualitative approach of embedded case studies and oral history interviews, this study explored the funds of knowledge present in six Mexican families in a university outreach program and sought to understand how those funds of knowledge contribute to the development of the college ideologies for their families. Participants are represented by the term *household clusters*, which includes extensions of families beyond the nuclear household (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 2005).

Three theoretical frameworks were used for this study. The primary framework utilized is funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005), with social capital (Bourdieu 1973, 1977) and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Passerson, 1977) serving as supplemental frameworks. Findings illustrate that funds of knowledge in the form of daily educational practices were present in household clusters and influenced children's academic experiences and college knowledge. Educational ideologies highlighted the ways in which beliefs around the college-going process were formed and manifested as both helpful and limiting. Finally, it was evident that parental involvement

was valued; this also included examples of non-traditional involvement, particularly

when mothers worked at their children's schools.

CHAPTER 1:

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

With less than 10% of under-represented high school students entering college (Perna, 2000), a compelling picture is painted. What is missing in that picture are the tens of thousands of students who do not go to college for reasons of unmet admissions standards, poor grades, and insufficient funds to pay for college, and the tens of thousands of students who would have gone to college had they been born into different social circumstances and settings. What is also missing from this picture are the families of these students.

Most scholars argue that such students are simply unprepared for the rigors of college work. Others say that it is due to the lack of social and cultural capital of under-represented students (Gonzalez, Stone & Jovel, 2003). While those are just a few of the issues contributing to college access, the tapestry is complex, and contains various interwoven threads each affecting the next, and all affecting a student's opportunity at a college education. One of the key threads is family. The majority of literature operates from the assumption that there are fundamental deficits in the families of under-represented students. Families are portrayed as lacking information, knowledge, and attitudes about how to ensure preparation and navigation of the college-going process. Thus, in an attempt to enhance college access, much emphasis has been placed both on the secondary school systems and the post-secondary systems to provide under-

represented students and their families with enhanced preparation for college (Kiyama, 2004). Partnerships have been created between school systems in the form of outreach programs to provide both students and families with the knowledge they will need in navigating through the educational process.

In an effort to challenge the dominant literature which focuses primarily on familial deficits, the intent of this research is to understand families from a different model, that of funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge refer to the "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992, p. 133). In doing so, this study will highlight the educational ideologies (specifically regarding college) and funds of knowledge of families to better understand the development of educational philosophies, processes, and lessons that families progress through. This study will also highlight the different levels of college knowledge, educational ideologies, and funds of knowledge in the families.

The development of ideologies (and the conceptualization of the term itself) has been widely studied in a variety of disciplines. Generally speaking, ideologies refer to an integrated or comprehensive set of idea or perspectives. For this study, I have chosen to look specifically at educational ideologies, comprehensive perspectives and beliefs about education and the college-going process. In developing this working definition of educational ideologies, I have drawn from sociological research on ideologies which look primarily at the nature and the extent of the distribution of particular ideas (Cheal, 1979). The notion of educational ideologies also emerged from research that a team (including

myself and other members in the College of Education) conducted on one of the University's outreach programs. We used the term to describe the ideas, stories, and attitudes about education that parents were expressing during interviews. This preliminary research also serves as the pilot study and data for the current study detailed in the following pages.

Outreach initiatives

While the first outreach programs (referred to as early intervention programs) were established by private organizations (Perna, Fenske, & Swail, 2000), more recent approaches at outreach have come from the federal and nongovernmental sector, the state and the local levels of government, and colleges and universities, as well as from private organizations and foundations (Swail & Perna, 2002). In a study conducted in 1999 by the College Board, the Education Resources Institute, and the Council for Opportunity in Education, more than half (57%) of outreach programs were based at a college or university, 16% were based at a school, and 13% were based in the community (Swail & Perna, 2002). College preparation programs have been part of the federal government's agenda since the 1960's with the establishment of TRiO programs and later (1998) with the establishment of GEAR UP programs (Perna & Titus, 2005). As part of the 1992 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, collaborative efforts between federal, state and local governments, such as the National Early Intervention Scholarship and Partnership have been established. Collaborations between local schools and colleges,

which typically connect colleges with a middle school serving lower-income students have also been developed (Perna, Fenske, & Swail, 2000).

Although there are many varieties of outreach programs in existence, very few outreach programs have provided both parents and students with consistent educational information about the college-going process. This is ironic because we know parents play a pivotal role in affecting students' college going behavior. Much of the research on outreach programs stress the importance of parental involvement and the need to increase parents' college knowledge, as well as their social and cultural capital (Auerbach, 2004; Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Jun & Coylar, 2002; Tierney, 2002). College preparation programs are realizing that families, specifically under-represented families, must be included in the process of college preparation (Jun & Coylar, 2002). By including parents in the outreach and education process, different forms of capital (social, cultural and college knowledge) can be gained and distributed through the families (Jun & Coylar, 2002).

It is important however, to keep in mind the strategies suggested by researchers in order to effectively engage parents in the college process. Some of these strategies include helping guide parents through specific actions needed to gain access to college, aiding parents in expanding their social networks related to college options, and reinforcing their own sense of self-efficacy (Tierney & Auerbach, 2002; Jun & Colyar, 2002).

Recognizing and understanding cultural differences and values among families are also critical aspects of successfully engaging them in outreach initiatives. When

referring to cultural differences among families, maintaining cultural integrity becomes essential. Approaches to cultural integrity include viewing education not simply as a process of teaching facts and figures to a faceless population, but interacting in a process of identity and community development (Tierney & Jun, 2001).

Adopting a funds of knowledge framework in outreach programs takes cultural integrity to the next level. The funds of knowledge framework views households as containing substantial cultural and cognitive resources with great potential for classroom instruction (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). This can aid program developers and teachers in formulating pedagogy specific to the situations of under-represented populations and in developing pedagogies that build upon the social relations and cultural resources of the community (Moll & Gonzalez, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

Researchers continue to assume that parents and families are lacking in college experience, knowledge, and educational attainment. By adopting this deficit assumption we, as researchers and practitioners, miss the inherent resources already present in families and will continue to blame families for creating educational limitations and barriers for their children. The literature is clear that families (specifically, Mexican families) value education. It is necessary to understand how families form their educational ideologies and how those ideologies can influence future college-going attitudes and processes. Because of the many recommendations to include families in outreach programs and because families in those programs have been under-studied and

misrepresented, this research seeks to understand the experiences of six Mexican[1] families in a university outreach program (the Parent Outreach Program[2]).

Despite many recommendations to incorporate parental involvement in the school systems and in outreach programs, there is a gap in the practical application and in the literature illustrating programs that utilize comprehensive ways (such as funds of knowledge) of incorporating parents. Recommended strategies for effective parental involvement in outreach programs generally stop short of maintaining cultural integrity and lack clear practical recommendations of how to do so. If families' funds of knowledge are not being valued and utilized by outreach initiatives, parents may not realize their own resources, may not develop the confidence to help their children with the educational process and may fail to tap into their own experiences in order to help their children succeed.

Additionally, while the conceptual model of funds of knowledge has a rich presence in K-12 literature, there are very few examples of utilizing a funds of knowledge approach within higher education, outreach programs, adult education, or any setting beyond a K-12 classroom.

Representing funds of knowledge within families and the subsequent use of that knowledge poses an additional challenge. In order for funds of knowledge to be effective, regardless of the means in which it is transferred, is dependent upon students and families learning how to identify, negotiate, activate, enhance, and invest these funds in order to benefit fully from them (Monkman, Ronald & Théramène, 2005). Not only will this further stratify educational equity if students do not fully know how to begin the process

of negotiation and activation, it has larger implications rooted in a mainstream perspective. By expecting Mexican students to function in individualistic ways the familial and communal values and perspectives richly ingrained in their own culture are denied. If students can navigate smoothly between their traditional culture and the dominant culture by utilizing their funds of knowledge and new forms of capital in order to reap the benefits of historical forms of cultural capital, higher levels of educational access might be acquired (Trueba, 2002).

There are many layers influencing the inequities that exist between minority students and their white and Asian American counterparts. While issues such as institutions' economic resources, rising tuition, the political climate, and overcrowded secondary schools are beyond the scope of this research, understanding the role of families and the development and influence of their educational ideologies is not, as I will address next.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the study is to explore the funds of knowledge present in six Mexican families in a university outreach program and understand how those funds of knowledge contribute to the development of the educational ideologies of the families and children. The study will document the daily funds of knowledge utilized by family members within the immediate family, the household clusters, their community, and their work. Special attention will be paid to if, when, and how funds of knowledge are activated and converted into forms of capital. This study will also serve to understand

families' philosophies of education, their educational ideologies, and how those ideologies are formed, reshaped, and evolve into opportunities for educational pursuits. Finally, this study seeks to understand how families interpret and incorporate the information received in the Parent Outreach Program into their daily lives.

Findings from this study will offer insight into the college-going beliefs and practices of families, thus influencing practice in outreach initiatives and higher education programs. Practitioners can begin to understand the multiple-part relationship between the student, family, and various institutional entities as students move through the three-part experience of pre-college, college, and beyond. Additionally, findings from this study will aid practitioners in understanding how to tap into students' and families' funds of knowledge and capital throughout their educational experiences. Understanding of families' funds of knowledge provides an opportunity to expand on the concept of cultural integrity, linking the inherent resources of these families into specific recommendations for outreach practitioners. The study is guided by three primary research questions.

Research Questions

Utilizing the theoretical framework of social and cultural capital and funds of knowledge, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What funds of knowledge are present and utilized by families?

2. What influences the development of families' educational ideologies?

   - How might educational ideologies influence future college access?

3. How do parents interpret the college information they are receiving from the Parent Outreach Program?

- How do parents utilize the information they are receiving from the Parent Outreach Program?

Methodology

Participants in the outreach program currently being studied, the Parent Outreach Program, include both students and parents. Participants will be represented by the terms "families" or "household clusters", which includes extensions of families beyond the nuclear household (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 2005). The program is the result of a local school district and university collaboration.

The data for this study were obtained from two sources. The first data source represents an embedded case study which I completed during the spring 2007 program with six families. When conducting case studies from an embedded approach it provides an opportunity to study more than one unit or object of analysis (Scholz & Tietje, 2002), thus allowing for each household cluster to serve as a separate unit of analysis.

Each family was diverse in terms of income levels, educational levels, and family size and structure. All families spoke English as their primary language. The current study included 12 semi-structured pre and post interviews combined with approximately 20 open-ended oral history interviews with six families (a total of five interviews with each family). I conducted oral history interviews approximately three to four times with each family while the program was in session. These interviews consisted of questions

about family history, labor history, routine household practices, and child-rearing philosophies. I then developed a list of informal codes based on an initial read of the transcripts. Once all transcripts were coded, I organized findings around key categories. This process involved both deductive and inductive processes.

A second data source consisted of interviews with English-speaking parents during the two pilot years of the program (a total of 27 interviews). These pre and post program interview questions focused on parents' expectations for the program, educational values and ideologies, social and cultural capital, and outcomes of the program. I utilized this pre-existing data set to create a foundation and understanding of social and cultural capital and, educational ideologies of families. These interviews provided initial insight into the differences in educational ideologies, college knowledge, and parental involvement of families in the program, particularly when comparing by year. Additionally, these interviews helped to establish trustworthiness for the study as the interview protocol was revised to include questions specific to families' funds of knowledge.

Representation of Voice

My own voice and experiences

As previously mentioned, the strategies of inquiry for this study are comprised primarily of an embedded case study and ethnographic approach. I should begin however, by explaining why these approaches are relevant to my own educational experiences and how those experiences have shaped my perspective.

If my life were a play or a novel, my experiences would have foreshadowed the type of research that I do. I am a first-generation, Mexican-American college student. Neither of my parents graduated from a four-year institution and both held working-class positions (as a secretary and electrician). However, it is evident to me now that positive educational ideologies were always present in our household and our family's funds of knowledge influenced my own parents' attitudes and expectations of my educational experiences. In second grade I experienced writing book reports for the first time. I remember my dad proof-reading these one-page book reports and making me rewrite these reports until there were no errors. At the time I hated having to work through many versions of my book reports (much like the on-going editing process of this dissertation), but in hindsight, this process encouraged me to continue reading and writing critically – something I learned to love throughout school.

Second grade must have been an educational milestone for me since another important memory is tied to this particular year. My mom reminds me every so often that I was determined not to miss a day of school because I saw my friend receive an award for perfect attendance the previous year. At the end of my second grade year I had accomplished my goal but my teacher failed to hand out awards. Seeing my disappointment, my mom visited the teacher after the school year had ended explaining my goal and ultimate disappointment, and convinced the teacher that she owed me recognition for this accomplishment.

Why are these stories important? These examples provide insight into the funds of knowledge and educational ideologies of a working-class, Mexican family, my family.

Although neither parent had completed formal college education at the time and neither parent had officially been taught to navigate the school system, there were certain expectations about what the educational process should be for my siblings and I. Reflecting on these experiences has helped me to realize that while the families in this study are also from working-class backgrounds, they illustrate multiple examples of the value of education, positive educational ideologies, and funds of knowledge.

As previously mentioned, I have utilized ethnographic methods to understand the experiences of the families in this study. Specifically, I employed oral histories to explore the past and the process of remembering. Family stories provide a unique way to pass on educational lessons, family traditions, and values. Again, my own experiences have influenced why I believe in the strength of oral histories. I began unintentionally experimenting with oral histories during my sophomore year of college. After my tata's (grandfather) death each of my cousins in the area were assigned a night to stay with my nana (grandmother) until she felt comfortable living by herself. I was assigned Monday nights. Tuesday mornings quickly became my favorite time of the week because my nana would tell me story after story of our family as we shared breakfast. Her memory was (and still is) impeccable and I learned about who my family is through her vibrant stories. I would leave each Tuesday thinking, "next time I need to remember to bring a recorder". I never ended up recording our breakfast stories, but still hope to do so. The experience taught me the significance of providing people an opportunity to share their family histories. By exploring the past, both of my own family and those in this study, I have learned volumes about the importance of education for the future.

The voices of the families

It is appropriate when using ethnographic methods to include detailed descriptions of the context and settings, and the individuals and families are presented (Creswell, 2003). I have chosen to use the families' own voices to provide many of those descriptions. As an introduction to the findings in chapter 4, I have described each of the families participating in the study in great detail. While observation notes provided the primary method for describing the family context, each family description opens with a parent sharing a personal anecdote about how they characterize their family. Therefore, you will not find participants' voices and quotes solely in the findings, they are represented throughout. Chapter 4 does include both short and long quotations used to support the three primary themes and sub-themes. I thought it important, as I am representing each of these families and sharing each of their stories, to include their funds of knowledge in various ways. By incorporating descriptions of the families in their own words and supporting quotes throughout the chapter 4, I hope to show value and validate the experiences of the families – the ways in which they construct their household clusters, the ways in which funds of knowledge are present in everyday educational activities, and the ways in which they made meaning of the Parent Outreach Program.

Significance of the Study

Stories have a powerful impact on people. The same is true for the stories and lessons that are told by families about the educational process. These stories can shape students' K-12 experiences and postsecondary aspirations (Auerbach, 2002). It is because

of the powerful impact and the need to understand the educational ideologies of families from their own perspective that I have chosen this particular research design. The design of this study provides families the opportunities to reveal their points of view about education while highlighting the rich values already present in their households. The voice of parents, siblings, extended family members, and children, particularly those from under-represented groups, are rarely tapped into a resource in school settings. Mexican families draw on their stories and life lessons to pass on important information about school and life (Auerbach, 2002). An understanding of these educational ideologies through parents' own voices may help practitioners, policy makers, and researchers work towards closing the gap between students' home cultures and the cultures of the schools and begin to bridge the gap between K-12 experiences and access to college opportunities.

By utilizing the funds of knowledge theoretical framework (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005), I have the opportunity in this study has the opportunity to present families and their stories from a viewpoint that is not grounded in a deficit perspective. Because this framework is currently found primarily in K-12 literature, this study will build on the funds of knowledge framework by expanding it into a higher education realm. Additionally, because familial funds of knowledge will be illustrated throughout, this study will contribute a direct translation of funds of knowledge into practical recommendations for outreach programs. The intentionality to include parents in outreach programs and the effectiveness of those efforts can be strengthened with the practical recommendations.

This study will also contribute to the expansion of the concept of parental involvement. Parental involvement has been widely studied and widely critiqued in K-12, outreach, and higher education literature. Sometimes seen as an interventionist approach, it is a strategy encouraged by policymakers and practitioners with potential positive results for both parents and children (Valdes, 1996). While this study is not intended to refute notions of parental involvement, it is designed to understand what involvement looks like from the perspective of the families themselves. This study will broaden the definition of parental involvement and represent the concept from various angles. It is imperative that as researchers and as practitioners we do not continue to limit ourselves in how we define parental involvement. Ultimately, by presenting new examples of parental involvement this study offers practitioners a new understanding of the involvement role that Mexican parents play, broadens literature, and challenges the way in which researchers currently measure parental involvement.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study will draw from three theoretical frameworks. The primary theoretical framework utilized is funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005), with social capital (Bourdieu 1973, 1977) and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passerson, 1977) frameworks serving as supplemental. I note theoretical frameworks intentionally as I am drawing from the constructs and ideas found within each of these frameworks rather than operating within the strict parameters of one particular theory. Additionally, I hope that study will expand upon the current understanding of the funds of knowledge framework

and shed some light onto the overlap in theoretical concepts found within each of these three frameworks. While each framework will be presented in further detail as part of the literature review of the study, a brief overview is provided below.

The theoretical concept of funds of knowledge is based on the foundation that people are competent, have experiential knowledge that is valuable and developed through life experiences (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005). The term originally referred to the non-market forms of exchange among households and evolved to include the general knowledge and cultural exchange among households (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). Funds of knowledge are described as the "cultural glue" (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 2005, p. 54) that sustains relations between cluster households and kinship networks. The transmission of funds of knowledge is a dynamic process and examples of this transmission are found both within households and within the cluster networks of the community and neighborhood where children play and associate (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 2005).

Funds of knowledge have been described as families' defining pedagogical characteristics. Researchers argue that the educational process can be greatly enhanced when teachers learn about and understand the everyday lives of their students (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005). Funds of knowledge have been introduced into K-12 classrooms as a way to provide systematic and powerful way to represent communities in terms of its inherent resources and aid in utilizing those resources for classroom teaching (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005). Approaching the classroom experience from a funds of knowledge framework offers teachers an opportunity to create culturally relevant

classrooms and curriculum in which children are able to learn from participating in multiple experiences.

Although rooted in economics, capital moves beyond the economic perspective (Bourdieu, 1986). In the most general sense, capital is accumulated labor and when distributed by groups of agents provides for social energy in the form of living labor. The games of this group of agents or of society (although rules are arbitrarily decided upon) offer others various opportunities and possibilities. It is not decided upon by games of chance (Bourdieu, 1986). Capital takes time to accumulate and has the potential to yield profits, reproduce itself, and provide opportunities for some, but not for all. In order to fully understand the properties and potential of capital, a more detailed explanation of both social and cultural capital is needed.

The original development of social capital came from Bourdieu (1973, 1977) and is described as the aggregate of resources which are linked to possession of a network or membership in a group which provides its members with collectively-owned capital or credit (Bourdieu, 1986). In other words, social capital is the result of people intentionally building their relationships for the benefits that will be provided at a later time (Portes, 2000). The volume of social capital possessed by an individual is dependent upon the size of network connections that are mobilized and on the volume of capital possessed by each of those networks with whom one is connected to (Bourdieu, 1986).

The networks of relationships are of key importance in understanding social capital. Networks are the products of investment strategies (both individual and collective) that can be either consciously or unconsciously directed at attempting to

establish or reproduce social relationships. Portes (2000) summarized that according to Bourdieu, social capital can be traded for other forms of capital and can seldom be acquired without the investment of other material resources or knowledge, which leads to the development of relations with others. For the purposes of this research, social capital is best understood not only by the resources and social benefits developed through participation in social networks, but also by the trust and norms established in these social networks (Monkman, Ronald, & Théramène, 2005).

Cultural capital exists in three forms: in the *embodied* state or dispositions of mind and body; the *objectified* state, in the form of concrete cultural goods; and in the *institutionalized* state, illustrative of when embodied cultural capital is recognized. The institutionalized state can take the form of being recognized as academic credential (Bourdieu, 1986). Originally presented as a theoretical hypothesis to explain the unequal academic achievement of children in different social classes (Bourdieu, 1986), cultural capital is clearly summarized as, "high status cultural signals used in cultural and social selection" and used to analyze "how culture and education contribute to social reproduction" (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 153). The term is used broadly in an attempt to understand societal inequalities and specifically inequities in educational outcomes. Bourdieu (1977) has critically looked at how the educational system reproduces the structure of distributing cultural capital among various classes. He argued that the culture that is transmitted is closer to that of the dominant culture thus perpetuating the dominant culture's social class standing and sanctioning the hereditary transmission of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). The transmission and accumulation of cultural capital actually

covers the whole period of one's socialization in which the family and the educational system are both active in the transmission process.

A primary concept in the framework of cultural capital is *habitus*. Cultural capital is a function of one's habitus, the environmental conditions and structures, and the systems of disposition that mediate and aid between structures and practice of cultural and social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1973; Bourdieu, 1977). Although habitus is a central concept in explaining cultural capital and the laws that determine how structures reproduce themselves, I will not be drawing on it to help explain the findings from this study nor did it serve a lens from which I analyzed data. Cultural capital has been applied to a number of different disciplines, from economics to sociology to education and is now being used to explain the college attendance behaviors of low-income and minority students (Gonzalez, Stone, & Jovel, 2003). This new use of cultural capital will be explored further in the next chapter.

While funds of knowledge is the primary conceptual framework utilized in this study, there are commonalities and overlap with other forms of capital, specifically cultural and social capital. However, I do acknowledge one key difference – social and cultural capital have been constructed from a sociological perspective while funds of knowledge has been constructed from an anthropological perspective. One of the key commonalities is that all three forms – funds of knowledge, social capital and cultural capital, can be and are transmitted. Although there are differences in how each is transmitted and the context of the transmission process, each form can be passed on to others. Secondly, all three forms can be converted. For example, cultural capital can be

converted into economic capital and academic gains, social capital can be converted into economic capital and institutionalized gains (Boudieu, 1986), and finally, funds of knowledge can be converted (when officially recognized) into social and cultural capital. There are also commonalities in how each form measures and defines its properties.

With regards to funds of knowledge and social capital, both can be accumulated and membership in a cluster of households (or a cluster network) can translate into future positive benefits for the members. However, both social capital and funds of knowledge require that a certain level of investment be made in the relationships of the network in order to access the future gains. Funds of knowledge and cultural capital share a common perspective in how culture is defined. Both frameworks argue that certain individuals are not valued because they do not belong to the legitimate dominant culture (see Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama & Bryan, 2008 for a more detailed description of the theoretical overlap).

Information gathered from previous research and data gathered from the current research provide multiple examples of the interaction between families' cultural and social capital, their educational ideologies, and their funds of knowledge.

Limitations

As with all studies, there are limitations to this research that must be addressed. The methodology used in the study presents a limitation, this includes both in gathering the data and in the analysis of data. Although it is an embedded case study the sample includes six families from one outreach program at one institution. The implications

outlined are not applicable to all institutions or outreach programs. However, the practical recommendations provided can and should be taken into account when considering outreach initiatives of any sort.

Secondly, when conducting the pilot interviews I did not frame the pre and post interviews from a funds of knowledge perspective. Although initially this might be perceived as a limitation, the guiding theories for the pilot interviews were social and cultural capital and yielded rich data about families' educational ideologies. These pilot interviews helped to connect educational ideologies with funds of knowledge even though questions specifically asking about families' funds of knowledge were not originally included. It was because of this that the embedded case studies with the six families and their oral history interviews were framed from a funds of knowledge perspective. This allowed for a more intentional interview protocol to be developed.

The Parent Outreach Program serves approximately 85 families each year. The majority of these families speak Spanish as their first language. A significant limitation of this study was the fact that I did not include Spanish-speaking parents as part of my sample. All families spoke English as their first language and all interviews were conducted in English.

Finally, the theoretical concept and pedagogical approach of funds of knowledge generally does not take into account the limitations present in families. It is an approach meant to highlight survival strategies, familial competence, and resources that are inherent and valuable in household units. However, one cannot conduct an in depth study of families without realizing that limitations do exist. By representing the true nature of

families in this study I captured both the funds of knowledge, complete with a strong

value and pride of education, and the limitations around the educational process that were

present in the families. Stepping away from the experience and allowing both of these

occurrences to present themselves was not always an easy process. Realizing that

families can both value education and sometimes not understand the whole process, thus

manifesting certain limitations, was a valuable experience, one that contributed to the

findings and hopefully, will contribute to the expansion of the funds of knowledge

theory.

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1 The terminology used for identifying persons of Latin American origin is sensitive and an ongoing debate. For the sake of clarity, I will refer to study participants as Mexican, which is the primary term used by families themselves when explaining their identity. This will encompass both those that were born in Mexico and those of Mexican heritage born in the United States. It is important to note that when referencing research the terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably and are used to describe a more generalized Latin American population. I have not substituted those terms for any other descriptor so that the integrity of the study being referenced will be maintained.
2 In order to maintain anonymity, "Parent Outreach Program" will be utilized as a pseudonym.

CHAPTER 2:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is guided by three theoretical frameworks. The primary framework utilized is funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005), with social capital (Bourdieu 1973, 1977) and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Passerson, 1977) serving as supplemental theoretical frameworks. Funds of knowledge served not only as a guiding framework when developing the research design and specifically, the data collection measures, it also provided the lens through which I analyzed data and made sense of the findings. As detailed in the previous chapter, there is no denying the overlap between funds of knowledge and other forms of capital, particularly, social and cultural capital. It was important to include both social and cultural capital as supplemental frameworks as they provided a way to understand concepts such as social networks, reciprocity, cultural signals, perpetuation of social class placement, conversion, and others. In many ways funds of knowledge represents an alternative viewpoint of the capital present in working-class families. Thus, understanding the influence of the social and cultural capital theoretical frameworks is imperative. The following sections detail each of the frameworks, their presence in the literature, and the most commonly cited critiques.

Funds of Knowledge: From Survival Strategy to Pedagogical Approach

The pedagogical and theoretical approach of Funds of Knowledge refers to the "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992, p. 133). The theoretical concept of Funds of Knowledge is based on the simple foundation that people are competent, have knowledge and that their life experiences have contributed to that knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005).

The term originally referred to the non-market forms of exchange among households and has evolved into the general knowledge and cultural exchange among households (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). Economic and political forces shaped the nature of bi-national households and families across the United States and Mexico borders. These forces contributed to the transformations of cultural and behavioral practices termed, funds of knowledge (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 2005). Because of changing economic and political circumstances it became necessary for household members to become generalists and obtain a range of knowledge. Examples of such knowledge include water management, animal husbandry, mechanics and construction (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 2005).

Often minority, immigrant and low-income people rely on the support of extended family relationships to survive (Warren, Thompson, & Saegert, 2001). Each of these forms of survival (funds of knowledge and capital) contain much of the previous generation's repertoire of information and skills used for subsistence (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 2005). Funds of knowledge can be described as the "cultural glue" (Vélez-

Ibáñez & Greenberg, 2005, p. 54) that sustains relations between cluster households and kinship networks in the formation and is understood in the following definitions:

Cluster households: extensions of families beyond the nuclear household.

Kinship networks: social networks that help one another gain access to resources found on both sides of the border.

Exchange relations: can take on a variety of forms – labor services, access to information, putting up visitors. Favors are reciprocal and balance out in the long term. They are less important economically than the exchange of information and special funds of knowledge.

Family rituals: Allow for households to maintain and build on their social networks. These rituals bring members of one's network together to reaffirm solidarity and cooperate by investing their labor or pooling resources (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 2005).

The transmission of funds of knowledge is a dynamic process. Children control the method by which they learn and which allows for them to make mistakes and experiment with their learning. Funds of knowledge are found both within households and within the cluster networks of the community and neighborhood where children play and associate (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 2005). When funds of knowledge are fully understood and properly utilized they are able to facilitate a systematic and powerful way to represent communities in terms of its inherent resources and aid in utilizing those resources for classroom teaching (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005). When this approach is used for classroom teaching it is important to understand that children learn from

participating in multiple spheres of activity from family relationships to the social worlds and resources of the community. Knowledge acquisition is not limited to the "single-stranded" relationship between the student and the academic teacher (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). This view of families is drastically different from the accepted perceptions of cultural and intellectual deficiencies. The funds of knowledge framework views households as containing ample cultural and cognitive resources with great potential for classroom instruction. Understanding the productive activities of households and families' knowledge can aid program developers and teachers in formulating pedagogy specific to the situations of under-represented populations and in developing pedagogies that build upon the social relations and cultural resources of the community (Moll & Gonzalez, 2004). These everyday household practices can be strategically related to classroom practices (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005).

Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005) described funds of knowledge as the (the families') defining pedagogical characteristic and argue that the educational process can be greatly enhanced when teachers learn about and understand the everyday lives of their students. Ultimately, the concept of "funds of knowledge serves as a cultural artifact" (p. 21) helping to mediate the comprehension of social life within households (2005). This concept serves as a "conceptual organizer", a way of theoretically breaking down the complexity of students' everyday experiences, while respectfully understanding the totality of their families and lives (2005).

Funds of Knowledge in the Literature

Before translating the everyday funds of knowledge practices into a classroom pedagogical approach, it is helpful to understand how funds of knowledge function within a family unit. Mexican households, especially ones that are socially linked to the community and extended family, provide children with many opportunities to be exposed to various funds of knowledge. During daily household tasks, children have the opportunity to ask questions, emulate adult behavior and experiment with new skills (Vélez-Ibáñez, 1996; Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). Everyday reading materials such as magazines, self-help books and newspapers create an atmosphere that is appreciative of literacy and one in which adults model positive literacy behaviors (Tapia, 2000).

Literacy practices, both in English and in Spanish allow for transference between the two languages. When families set up opportunities to read in Spanish, it builds opportunities for enhanced literacy development in English (Rubinstein-Ávila, 2004). Likewise, simple activities like using a calculator to figure out which product is cheaper to buy allows for enhanced mathematical skills to develop (2004). Funds of knowledge transmission occurs both in household activities that may be more clearly linked to academic subjects, and in activities such as masonry, gardening, ranching, and auto repair which provide children with opportunities to learn about agriculture, material and scientific knowledge (1992). For example, Knobel (2001) illustrated one young man who observed his father ordering machine parts and balancing his accounts for his business. This allowed for the young man to experiment with creating his own lawn mowing service, where he used mathematical skills and marketing skills in the development of a

marketing flyer. As Vélez-Ibáñez (1996) stated, experimenting with newly acquired skills is an important step in children developing the confidence to use these skills outside of the home.

Once educators and instructors begin to understand the natural funds of knowledge present in families, these resources can be tapped into to create an enhanced learning experience in the classroom. An example of this is shared by Amanti (2005), describing an instructor who after visiting with many of her students' families, realized that much of the class had substantial knowledge relating to horses. She decided to create a learning module on this topic and began not only to collect resources and do research on the area, but invited guest speakers including her students' family members to come and share their knowledge with the classroom. Additionally, she allowed for the students to brainstorm what they wanted to see out of this module and what they desired to learn about horses. The module was infused with social studies topics (Spanish explorers bringing horses into the U.S. and the early history of horses), language arts topics (horse vocabulary, story analysis about horses) and science and math topics (horse anatomy, horse evolution, horse behavior). This contextualized experience acknowledged and validated the capital, interest and values present in the families' homes and effectively used the funds of knowledge framework to create a meaningful learning environment.

Therefore, while funds of knowledge are becoming a practiced pedagogical tool in some K-12 classrooms, they have been present in Mexican families long before researchers began documenting their survival processes. Various types of funds of

knowledge exhibit themselves through the social and cultural capital that families have and develop, and in the educational ideologies that are shared with their children.

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Social Capital: Definitions, Evolutions, and Limitations

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Social capital is a powerful concept that has found its way from sociology into other social sciences and has been given a variety of meanings by a variety of people, each around a different purpose. References to the concept of social capital in education and sociology tend to center on either the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1973, 1977) or James Coleman (1988). Another more recent, yet important contributor to the definition of social capital is Ricardo Stanton-Salazar (2001). His definition of social capital represents a concept that draws from both Bourdieu's (1973, 1977) and Coleman's (1988) frameworks. While the definitions have similar themes, such as their focus on individuals or small groups as the primary units of analysis (Portes, 2000), and similar functionalist perspectives, it is important to distinguish among them.

Defining social capital:

Social capital as a form of social reproduction

The original development of social capital came from Bourdieu (1973, 1977) and noted that people intentionally built their relationships for the benefits that they would provide at a later time (Portes, 2000). Portes (2000) summarized that according to Bourdieu, social capital can be traded for other forms of capital and can seldom be

acquired without the investment of other material resources or knowledge, which leads to the development of relations with others.

Bourdieu (1973), in his chapter entitled, "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction" described the nature of the reproduction of structures, which are understood as "systems of objective relations which impart their relational properties to individuals with whom they pre-exist and survive" (p. 71). This system fills its functional role by transmitting power and privilege and reproduces the structure of class relations. Bourdieu (1973) summarized examples of prestigious individuals who have social capital at their disposal because of their inherited capital of relationships and skills which enable them to obtain such qualifications. This definition of social capital highlights the importance of institutionalized power in relation to helping individuals achieve social mobility and connects it to the process of social inclusion and exclusion (Akom, 2006).

Bourdieu's concept of social capital has been criticized for not addressing how resources are activated and the difficulties in obtaining social support from significant individuals. (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Stanton-Salazar (2001) explored this in his own definition of social capital. Further critiques explain that Bourdieu did not acknowledge the racial hierarchy that informs local and everyday realities (Akom, 2006).

Two streams of social action: Coleman's definition of social capital

The goal of defining social capital for Coleman (1988) came from wanting to capture the social organization of the process of rational action in the analysis of social systems. Social capital became a tool in helping to understand the social organization of

these processes. Social capital is seen not as a "single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they facilitate certain actions of actors – whether persons or corporate actors – within a structure…social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible" (Coleman, 1988 p. 98). He further described that social capital is not lodged in the actors (those engaging in relationship building) nor in the physical results of social production. Ultimately, the function identified by social capital is the value of social structure to actors as resources that they can use to achieve their goals and interests. Coleman called attention to the obligations, expectations, and trustworthiness that are integral to sustained relationships and allow for the flow and exchange of resources and support (1988).

In sum, Coleman (1988) offered a definition of social capital that captures two intellectual streams in the explanation of social action. The first sees the actor as socialized and governed by social norms, rules and obligations. Action in this stream is shaped, constrained and restricted by the social context. The second sees that actor as acting independently and in self-interest. Action in this stream has a principle of maximizing utility.

Critiques of Coleman's (1988) definition of social capital are centered around the idea that the concept remains decontextualized and does not grant full attention to the unequal power relationships in society (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). This critique is explored in further detail in the broadening of social capital by Stanton-Salazar (2001).

Stanton-Salazar: Incorporating Bourdieu and Coleman

Social capital, as defined by Stanton-Salazar (2001), represents the "properties existing within socially patterned associations among people that, when activated, enable them to accomplish their goals or to empower themselves in some meaningful way" (p. 265). This definition mirrors that of Bourdieu's (1973, 1977) as it is rooted in a class-economic framework. And while this definition of social capital reflects many of the principles found in Bourdieu (1973, 1977) and Coleman (1988), the idea of activating capital and institutional support play pivotal roles in this idea of social capital.

The idea of institutional support represents opportunities created to help low-status individuals cope with marginalizing forces in society and to enable them to socially advance despite these forces (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Important in this concept is the idea of human bridges that connect individuals to influential gatekeepers and social networks, institutional funds of knowledge, advocacy, role modeling, emotional and moral support and finally, personalized advice and guidance (2001).

Social support and social resources occur as a direct result of activating relationships or ties or as a by-product of social interaction. The resources and opportunities that come from social capital are incorporated into the three dimensions of the concept, as described in the following section, however Stanton-Salazar (2001) has been explicit in saying that this capital must be activated in order to reap the benefits. There is an underlying assumption with the idea of activating capital and it implores one to question whether or not individuals, communities and particularly minority students and families know that they should be attempting to activate capital. Granted, activation

of social capital can naturally occur as a result of social activity. However, one must be careful in placing a large amount of responsibility to activate social capital on those individuals within less powerful societal roles.

The three dimensions of social capital

A common element in most definitions of social capital is the distinction between its three dimensions or forms. Some researchers depict the three dimensions as obligations and expectations, information channels and social norms (Coleman, 1988). Others depict them as norms and values, networks and consequences (Newton, 1997). Either way, the three distinct dimensions are highlighting important aspects of the relational investments, standards and information transfer created when social capital is activated. Each dimension serves its own purpose and will be explored further in the following section.

Norms

Often originating from a subjective perspective, norms are comprised of a range of values and attitudes of social groups that influence or determine how they relate to each other. Coleman (1988) provided an example of norms as a value that is reinforced by social support, status, honor and both external rewards for selfless actions and disapproval for selfish actions. When considering communities and the public good, norms often are important for overcoming the problems that exist within the community (Coleman, 1988). However, Coleman (1988) cautioned that social norms may also

constrain members of the community in addition to facilitating certain actions and may sometimes reduce innovativeness.

Of particular importance are the values of reciprocity and trust. These values provide for group social and political stability and cooperation (Newton, 1997). Generally speaking, reciprocity is based on the assumption that good acts will be repaid at some point in the future, sometimes even by someone other than the original recipient. Communities with high levels of social capital are able to benefit from reciprocity because of their ability to trust in others.

Information channels or networks

Social networks are considered the means by which information is transferred or channeled from one member to another. Although sometimes these social relations are maintained for other purposes, they provide a means for new information to be acquired and new action to be performed (Coleman, 1988). Unlike norms and values, social networks are observable and objective. The literature is unclear however whether establishing trust and norms leads to strong social networks or if social networks lead to strong community norms and values (Newton, 1997). It is clear however, that these networks facilitate higher levels of productivity and achievement that would not be made possible without them (Coleman, 1988).

Obligations, expectations and consequences

Building on the value of reciprocity, this dimension of social capital depends on two elements: whether or not the social environment is trustworthy and the extent of obligations that are held. Individuals in environments with high levels of outstanding obligations have more social capital from which they can draw (Coleman, 1988). Coleman (1988) further explained that within hierarchical structures like extended family settings in which there is a patriarch or matriarch, this person holds a large set of obligations that he or she can call in at any time to get things done. Vélez-Ibáñez (1996) offers one interpretation of this in his explanation of household clustering. Household clusters are usually centered around an ascending generation in which kin live close to children and their families of origin. In these communities, exchange relations are mobilized and easily maintained. However, as Portes (1998) explained, reciprocity in social capital tends to be characterized by unspecific obligations, uncertain timeframes and the possible violation of expectations.

Negative implications and critiques of social capital

Social capital is often depicted as offering positive consequences - a basis for sustained growth and democracy in communities (Portes & Landolt, 2000), and the catalyst to various resources (Newton, 1997). A critical view can highlight the potential negative implications of social capital. Portes (1998) argued that the same mechanisms that offer positive outcomes can also lead to less desirable consequences. He provides an overview of four negative consequences of social capital: exclusion of outsiders, excess

claims on group members, restrictions on individual freedom, and downward leveling

norms (Portes, 1998).

Exclusion of outsiders: Described as social capital that is created by the bounded

solidarity and trust that are at the center of a community's economic and social advance,

one that does not require economic exchanges outside of the community and thus,

restricts outsiders.

Excess claims on group members: This allows for access to community resources by all

members with less diligent members enforcing demands on the more successful and

skillful members.

Restrictions on individual freedom: Essentially, the demand for conformity. Because the

level of social control is strong, it also can become restrictive on personal freedoms.

Downward leveling norms: This function operates to keep members of the community in

place and force the more ambitious to leave from it.

Ultimately, Portes (1998) asserted that social capital can take the form of social

control and can have opposite effects of those often referenced in the literature.

Akom (2006) offered another critique of social capital and argues that it recodes

structural notions of racial inequality as various forms of capital processes and

interactions. Further, issues of racism and discrimination operate just below the surface

and allows for racialized social practices and public policy to remain unchanged and

invisible. As discussed above, this notion of social capital places the burdens of social

change on the individual or on communities of color, continuing to perpetuate privilege

and specifically, white privilege (Akom, 2006). Finally, Akom (2006) argued that

traditional definitions of social capital fail to incorporate the ways in which people's

identities influence the accumulation of social capital and potential for mobility.

Cultural Capital: Origins and New Definitions

The notion of cultural capital and its use in explaining stratification and social

reproduction has evolved from its original concept as created by Jean-Claude Passerson

and Pierre Bourdieu (1977). Originally, cultural capital represented a theoretical

hypothesis that was used to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children in

different social classes (Bourdieu, 1986). These variations in scholastic achievement

might manifest in specific profits that can be obtained from the academic market

(Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital is clearly understood as, "high status cultural signals

used in cultural and social selection" and used to analyze "how culture and education

contribute to social reproduction" (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 153). However, it has been

adapted from its French roots and used to explain political attitudes, systems of

stratification, educational inequality, and the impact that family background has on

educational attainment (Lamont & Lareau, 1988) and has developed into an economic

framework and likened to that of human capital (Throsby, 1999). Even more specifically,

cultural capital is now being used to explain the college attendance behaviors of low-

income and minority students (Gonzalez, Stone, & Jovel, 2003). Although the term is

used broadly in an attempt to understand societal inequalities, it is important to explain

cultural capital in terms of its original conception and its link to an "arbitrary" (Bourdieu

& Passerson, 1977, p. 5) power perpetuating social reproduction and specifically, how it

is utilized to explain educational inequalities, the three states in which cultural capital

exists, and critiques of the theory.

Original conception

      Conceptualizing social reproduction and the role that cultural capital plays in the

reproduction of class relations is best understood through the legitimization and

transmission process. Bourdieu explained a sociological practice which reveals

"legitimations, misrecognitions of power, and symbolic violence" inherent in social

systems (DiMaggio, 1979, p. 1460). It is best understood through Bourdieu's own

explanation of these misrecognitions of power,

      In any given social formation the cultural arbitrary which the power relations

      between groups or classes making up that social formation put into the dominant

      position within the system of cultural arbitraries is the one which most fully,

      though always indirectly, expresses the objective interests (material and symbolic)

      of the dominant groups or classes (Bourdieu & Passerson, 1977, p. 9)

      To explain this process more clearly, Bottomore (1977) highlighted that there are

ruling ideas within the dominant class and those ruling ideas reinforce the power of the

dominant class, creating themselves as legitimate. One can think of cultural arbitraries as

the unquestioned foundation of systems of domination. The persistence of this

domination depends on the systematic misrecognition of the oppressive nature by both

dominators and the dominated (DiMaggio, 1979). Thus, as power is perpetuated and

cultural capital becomes the means by which middle and upper class families transmit

properties to their children, this substitutes for or supplements the transmission of economic capital as a means of maintaining class status and privilege across generations (Bourdieu, 1977). To summarize, any given competence can function as cultural capital if it enables the distribution and attainment of the cultural heritage of a society; however, this distribution is unequal among its members, thus creating exclusion within the society (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). A key factor in understanding this distribution is the transmission process.

It is claimed that the most powerful factor in the symbolic value of cultural capital is in the logic of its transmission (Bourdieu, 1986). The process of transmitting cultural capital and the time it takes to transmit is dependent on it being embodied in the entire family. However, the initial accumulation of cultural capital starts from the very beginning of being born into a family with strong cultural capital and continues throughout one's entire period of socialization (Bourdieu, 1986). Therefore, while one can accumulate cultural capital throughout a lifespan, it is most strongly accumulated through an arbitrary hereditary process.

Three states of cultural capital

Although not often defined as such, three states of cultural capital exist. Bourdieu (1986) provided a summarized version of the three states of cultural capital possessed by individuals within high-status culture who have acquired higher levels of societal competence.

Embodied State: A long-lasting part of a person's character or disposition of both mind and body.

Objectified State: When an individual can turn cultural capital into a physical state of cultural goods such as, books, pictures, or machines, etc.

Institutionalized State: When embodied cultural capital is recognized. This can take the form of being recognized as academic credential. (Bourdieu, 1986)

According to Bourdieu, the embodied state is the most important state because in its fundamental state, the properties of cultural capital are linked to the body (Throsby, 1999). However, Bourdieu does not focus on how individuals gain social class status, but how the structures and systems unequally value capital (Lamont & Lareau, 1988).

Bourdieu and Passerson's contributions to the fields of sociology and education help researchers and practitioners to better understand the perpetuation of social inequities on multiple levels. Researchers have gone a step further and explored how culture capital is translated into different geographic and ethnic cultures. Examples of this are examined by Lamont & Lareau (1988) in their documentation of American forms of cultural capital and Trueba (2002) in his illustration of "new cultural capital of marginal people" (p. 17). In exploring the evolution of cultural capital it is hoped that the confusion surrounding the use and value of the concept can be diminished.

Cultural capital and educational inequalities

Originally, Bourdieu and Passerson were concerned with the role that the educational system and family socialization played in the reproduction of power relationships and symbolic relationships (and distribution of cultural capital) between classes (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). The role that the educational system plays is key because it exposes schools as non-socially neutral institutions which reflect the experiences of the dominant class. Children from upper class families are benefited because they already have the necessary social and cultural cues necessary to succeed. Lareau (1987) summarized that schools use specific linguistic structures, authority patterns, and types of curricula which children from higher social classes are already familiar with and taught certain patterns and structures in the home and their adjustment to school is positive. Children from lower class families must learn this knowledge and negotiate their educational experience. It is argued that although these students can acquire social and cultural competencies, they can never achieve the natural familiarity of those in the upper classes (Lareau, 1987). The transmission of these privileges becomes legitimized because differences in academic achievement are typically explained by differences in ability rather than by the wealth of cultural resources within a family (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). The typical functionalist explanation scholastic achievement ignores the role that the educational system plays in the reproduction of the social structure by perpetuating the transmission of cultural capital to those in the higher socio-economic classes (Bourdieu, 1986).

It is argued that the educational system perfectly reproduces the structure of distribution of cultural capital among the different social classes. Furthermore, the culture in which it transmits cultural capital is closest to the dominant culture, thus reinforcing the dominant culture's place in society (Bourdeiu, 1977). Although the educational system demands the same of everyone (i.e. linguistic and cultural competence) it does not give the same to everyone, rewarding only those with familiarity of the expected culture that is typically produced by family upbringing.

Critiques of cultural capital

Cultural capital theory has been applied to and adapted for a variety of disciplines and has been utilized to explain various aspects of inequalities in society. Both the theory and its original author, Bourdieu have been criticized on a number of different levels. Stanton-Salazar (2001) and Lareau and Horvat (1999) reflected upon the importance of institutional agents or institutional actors and their role in validating and activating forms of capital. These institutional actors have the power to either legitimate or reject the efforts by individuals to activate their capital, thus creating moments of social reproduction and social exclusion. Bourdieu is criticized for overlooking these dynamics and the role that institutional actors play in that process (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Lareau and Horvat (1999) summarized that Bourdieu has overlooked three important points: the value of capital is dependent on the setting, there is a difference between possession of and activation of capital, and finally, social actors play an important role in the negotiation of capital.

A conceptual critique of the theory is found in its application for ensuring individual success and achievement. Cultural capital is being used as a way to explain and understand minority student success (Gonzalez, Stone, & Jovel, 2003; Musoba & Baez, 2008) with the hope that if these students are provided with the dominant cultural capital, college access and attainment will begin to equalize. Not only does this view individuals from a deficit perspective, it places responsibility on the individual and ignores the role that society plays in the process and how society could be reshaped in order to address inequalities (Musoba & Baez, 2008).

Review of the Literature

An academic divide continues to exist between Native American, African American and Hispanic youth when compared to their white and Asian American peers. Although efforts have been and continue to be made, there has not been an increase in college attendance, retention, and/or graduation rates for these students (Hagedorn & Tierney, 2002). Obtaining the initial access into a college or university begins long before the celebration of a high school graduation and is made up of layers of barriers.

If one could identify the most important factors contributing to the educational experiences of Mexican students, what would they be? School grades? Ambition? A family history of post-secondary education? It is difficult to pinpoint the most significant contributing factors because these factors do not function in isolation. Multiple pieces affect a student's path to higher education and few of these are within the control of students or their families.

In the following pages I will attempt to unravel the multifaceted and dynamic process between just some of these factors, ones that are inherent to the family or that are within the possibilities of discovering. I will focus on identifying the Mexican family, their struggles and values. I will focus on understanding the funds of knowledge and educational ideologies of the families, and the role of parental involvement. Finally, I will end the literature review section with an overview of outreach programs and initiative and their attempt to incorporate families into the pre-college education process. Information will be presented on how these intrinsic factors interact with and influence each other, and how ultimately, the factors can influence a child's education.

The U.S. Mexican family

This brief section will provide a general overview of the U.S. Mexican family. It is meant to merely introduce the Mexican culture, a culture that will be explored in greater detail through out the following: funds of knowledge, cultural capital, social capital, educational ideologies and the pursuit of a higher education. Each of these sections allow for the dynamic process between the factors (funds of knowledge, cultural capital, social capital, and educational ideologies) and the Mexican family to illustrate the influence it has on education. It is important to note however, that there are significant variations among U.S. Mexican families. This intent of this section is not to capture the multitude of variations influenced by language, economic background and the like. This section merely attempts to provide an overview in the broadest sense.

Understanding the Mexican family requires an understanding of not only the geographic locations of where families have come from, but also of the cultural traditions and norms by which the family has lived and of those that are being created. Vélez-Ibáñez (1996) explained the various names given to the geographic areas from which families have immigrated, Greater Southwest, Northern Mesoamerica, Spanish Borderlands. However, he chooses the southwestern United States and northern Mexico as the areas that define him and his research. It is this description of the land that I will be using for the current research as many of the families in this study have come from the same history.

The values taught in the U.S. society, the present and contemporary, are those of individualism and self-gratification. This creates a cultural struggle for Mexican families

whose values are centered on multiple social relations, reciprocity, and interdependence with others (Vélez-Ibáñez, 1996). Economic security and the struggle for control of their households is also something that many Mexican families must face daily. Many Mexicans earn their living through working-class occupations (Vélez-Ibáñez, 1996). This may result in occupational shifts and job instability that have negative implications for the family as well as, for the schooling of children (Tapia, 2000). Although the struggles are plentiful, the values and funds of knowledge exhibited by Mexican families demonstrate their unique cultural resources. These values are exemplified when families utilize each other for child care, recreation, house sitting and other emotive functions (1996). Family values also encompass a hard-work and education-as-mobility ethic and transmit this on to other members in their family (Gándara, 1993). These inherent funds of knowledge and values have helped families through many struggles: cultural, economic, job, land, and political.

As the culture of Mexican families is explored throughout the following pages, it will become apparent that past and present have "bumped into each other" (Vélez-Ibáñez, 1996, p. 5), that traditional and contemporary have collided, all to form the dynamic, cultural survival process that generations of families experience.

Cultural capital and its connection with funds of knowledge

The notion of cultural capital is being used as a way of explaining college attendance behaviors of low-income and minority students (Gonzalez, Stone, & Jovel, 2003). Before further exploring tightly linked roles that educational systems share with

cultural capital, it is important to recognize the various forms of cultural capital present in low-income, Mexican families.

While cultural knowledge, academic credentials, concerts, and "above all, museum attendance" (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu, 1973, p. 73) are considered to be important ways of transferring cultural capital between families, it is obvious, as the definition of cultural capital acknowledges, that these examples are rooted in economic and social privilege. It is argued that cultural capital is a function of one's habitus, the environmental conditions and structures, and the systems of disposition that mediate and aid between various structures a process of cultural and social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1973). However, families of lower-economic status whose habitus may not reflect a position of high social stature may have unique means of cultural capital as well.

Latino immigrants, once viewed as navigating society with a significant handicap because of their experiences of oppression, are slowly being recognized for their new forms of cultural capital (Trueba, 2002). These new forms of cultural capital are rooted in the traditional experiences of Latinos and include the ability to master different languages, the resiliency in crossing different racial and ethnic boundaries, the psychological flexibility necessary to adapt, and the ability to overcome obstacles and hardships (Trueba, 2002). This is not however, a unilinear assimilation, many Latino immigrants have learned how to transition between their different identities, utilizing new and different communication techniques, new languages, and new ways of earning economic means, all while maintaining their traditional selves and home culture (Trueba, 2002). Importantly, these new forms of cultural capital are passed on to their children,

allowing for their children to model different forms of this behavior in their own navigation of society and institutions of education.

While many studies examine the role of cultural capital in education through the lens of a dominant perspective, Monkman, Ronald and Théramène (2005), sought to understand how social and cultural capital play a role in an educational environment that placed high value on diversity and multiculturalism. A case study is presented of a predominantly Latino classroom where the use of multiple languages and code switching are appreciated and encouraged, where norms learned at home (i.e. "ladies first", children introducing one another as colleagues) play an important role in establishing classroom respect, and where children teach each other. (Monkman, Ronald, & Théramène, 2005). Each of these forms of cultural capital is being cultivated in the classroom, while at the same time, valuing the cultural capital and ways of learning present at home. Because of this children felt more confident when navigating through other components of the educational system.

Utilizing a funds of knowledge framework in the classroom is dependent upon the instructor not viewing themselves as the person "in control" or as having "an agenda to cover" (González, Moll, Tenery, Rivera, Rendón Gonzales, & Amanti, 2005, p.103). Rather, it allows for the cultural capital of the families to inform teaching practices, and to aid in developing creative techniques for covering academic subject matter. Creating these pedagogical techniques often prove difficult particularly in states where bilingual education is banned and/or where a persons' (both the student and their family members) residency is constantly in question.   In a very telling example González et al, (2005)

presented the case of a mother who was a former teacher in Mexico, She was

volunteering in the classroom and instead of the instructor dictating to her what needed to

be done, she allowed for the mother's past teaching experience to guide the way. The

mother ended up working closely with a group of students and a mutual trust (*confianza)*

was developed between the two women. By allowing the cultural capital that the mother

had to guide her new experience and by using a funds of knowledge framework in the

classroom, a new learning environment was created for the children, the instructor and

the mother.

Unfortunately, though research indicates that Mexican families do have and

impart multiple forms of cultural capital, the function that historical forms of cultural

capital play in mainstream society factors into the access that Mexican students have to a

higher education. Even when students' cultural capital is representative of significant

familial and community support and encouragement (Nora, 2004), that support may not

correspond with an educational environment that values or understands that form of

capital. Cultural practices that are high-status in nature and access to elite networks are

still considered indicators of success and historically, have been the types of capital that

are rewarded (Monkman, et al., 2005).

Linking social capital and funds of knowledge

Like cultural capital, social capital provides individuals and families with access

to resources, new networks and benefits. Drawing upon the summarized definition of

social capital that is provided by Monkman, et al. (2005) (as was compiled from the

works of Bourdieu, Coleman, and McNeal), for the purposes of this research, social

capital is best understood not only by the resources and social benefits developed through

participation in social networks, but also by the trust and norms established in these

social networks. As Monkman, et al. (2005) pointed out, a key element of social capital is

the function that obligation and reciprocity play in developing and transferring resources

from one network to another. This view of social capital is imperative to understanding

the reciprocal relationships established within the Mexican communities.

Even during the early establishment of Mexican communities in the U.S. (1850's

– 1900's) a pattern of creating social capital is illustrated. Working class people relied on

the process of visitation and dropping by. These visits created household strategies that

helped to soothe the impact of discrimination (educational, social, economic, and

cultural) (Vélez-Ibáñez, 1996). It also resulted in community and volunteer groups. An

early example of this is the attempted developments of Mexican unions in the mining,

railroad and agricultural industries. These unions were developed in part by the help of

voluntary community associations (Vélez-Ibáñez, 1996). This same process of visitation

and social interaction is evidenced in Mexican communities today and is one example of

the ways in which funds of knowledge are created and distributed. Families invest

significant time and energy in social networks, utilizing them as ways of passing on

knowledge and coping with complex situations (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). This

practice is done through family rituals: holiday time spent together, birthdays, weddings,

religious events and dinners (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). Less formal are those

social interactions mentioned above, the visitations and occasions that allow one another

to just drop by. Thus, familism and the rituals surrounding the family serve as a central value and a central means for increasing life chances (Valdés, 1996).

While researchers may argue that familism is problematic and leads to non-mobilization in society, Valdés (1996) explained through her study with 10 Mexican families how familism can be a part of success. Those within the study were known for employing extended family members in the family business and sharing financial information with one another. Importantly, this allowed for extended family members to learn about business practices, work with customers, and practice math and accounting. These processes reflect both an example of networks of social capital serving as means for mobility and a utilization of the funds of knowledge within the family.

In Dalton, Georgia, Mexican immigrants organized a soccer league which not only provides a space for children to safely play, but has created a board of directors, rents office space, acquired a bank account to hold players' fees, and organizes tournaments across states (Hernández-León & Zúñiga, 2002). This example illustrates both the social capital and social networks which provide for social mobility and the funds of knowledge that are transferred between family members, community members and team members. The same article presents an example of Mexican immigrants that have turned to more entrepreneurial activities such as opening grocery stores and bakeries. The entrepreneurial, business and labor market skills were learned not from previous ownership, but from working in the businesses of others (Hernández-León & Zúñiga, 2002). As these examples present, Mexican families are not lacking in funds of knowledge as they are related to social capital.

Although Mexican families are deeply invested in their own social networks and social capital, one example in which traditional and contemporary collide is in the development of their children's social capital in the U.S. educational system. For students, social capital is significantly shaped through socialization and school personnel attitudes (McDonough, 1997). The school experience that Latino students have often times include subtractive elements, termed subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999). These elements include techniques such as academic tracking which becomes cultural tracking, curricular bias against the Mexican culture and the Spanish language, a legacy of ambiguous relations between the school and the community it serves, dismissing youth their definition of education and encompassing "subtractively assimilationist" policies and practices that are designed to strip Mexican students of their culture and language (Valenzuela, 1999).Valenzuela found that a key consequence of subtractive schooling is the erosion of social capital. Social capital is contingent on both the social structure of the school and the students' help-seeking orientation (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). The more connected one is to groups or individuals who have access to resources, the greater the opportunity of obtaining concrete gains and social benefits (Noguera, 2003). If students in subtractive environments do not have the opportunity to develop their social capital then future chances for concrete gains, such as entrance into college, will be reduced. This can be a prime obstacle facing students when attempting to find and incorporate caring teachers or school personnel into their social networks. Students often take an entire semester to establish a relationship only to find that when a semester comes to an

end sustaining that relationship and the social capital it provides, becomes quite difficult (Stanton-Salazar, 2001).

Parental involvement in education

The understanding of parental involvement has been advanced considerably by the work of Annette Lareau. While parental involvement has long been considered a positive factor in educational performance and academic success (Lareau, 1987; Jun & Colyar, 2002; Tierney, 2002; Zarate, 2007), her research illustrated the differences in parental involvement based on factors such as social class, social networks, and capital, and highlights the standardized views that school administrators have in regards to the proper role of parental involvement (Lareau, 1987). Specifically, Lareau's work highlighted the processes through which educational outcomes and patterns are reproduced.

Lareau (1987) summarized previous studies which examined parental involvement in education. Previous studies conceptualize parental involvement in the following ways: lower-class and working-class families do not value education as highly as their middle-class counterparts, educational institutions discriminate against lower-class families and welcome middle-class families, and/or that institutional differentiation (e.g. the role that teachers play) have a key determinant in parental involvement (Lareau, 1987). The last perspective draws heavily on the concept of cultural capital and the cultural experiences in the home which facilitate children's adjustment to school (Bourdieu, 1977a as summarized by Lareau, 1987).

In a study of two distinct communities and schools (one working-class, white community and one professional, middle-class community) Lareau found that parents in both communities valued educational success but economic, social, and cultural resources supporting those values differed by social class. As educational resources increased with social class, parental participation also increased. The way in which middle-class parents participate is also important as their involvement mirrors the requests of the schools, thus providing their children with advantages over working-class children (Lareau, 1987). A more recent study of parental involvement is highlighted in a policy report published by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute. The dynamics of involvement show that some teachers and schools involved parents of high-achieving children more so than parents of other students (Zarate, 2007). For example, Zarate (2007) reported that one teacher requested parent volunteers based on parents' occupations, those with higher status occupations were asked to serve on the school's governing board while others were asked to provide food for school events. Although findings from the two studies differ in the ways in which social class affects parental involvement, both suggest a level of systemic influence. The kind of involvement experienced by middle-class families represents a systematic ongoing relationship between the parents and the school administrators (Tierney, 2002).

Although the level and type of parental engagement and involvement has evolved significantly since first studied in the 1940's, there is a dominant model of parental involvement that has remained constant over the last 20 years. Home-school partnerships, in which parents engage in the cognitive development of their children, are reflective of

educators' perceptions of what constitutes parental involvement (Lareau, 1987; Zarate, 2007). Also referred to as a "traditional parental involvement paradigm" (Daniel-White, 2002, p. 32), some examples of these expectations include: participation in school committees, PTA membership, attending and staff school events, monitoring school attendance, buying educational materials for the home, helping with homework, and seeking tutoring for their children (Daniel-White, 2002; Zarate, 2007). These examples are categorized as external involvement (i.e. attendance at school meetings) and internal involvement (i.e. family responsibilities such as ensuring the children arrive to school on time) (Valencia & Black, 2002). Researchers argue that internal involvement is more representative of the parental involvement of Mexican families, as it often includes such actions as family stories, advice giving narratives, and family behavioral modeling (Valencia & Black, 2002; Zarate, 2007).

Participants in Zarate's (2007) study grouped involvement into two categories (academic involvement (or external) and life participation (or internal) as presented in the table below. It is important to note that Latino parents mentioned life participation as a form of parental involvement more frequently than academic involvement.

Table 1: Parents' Definitions of Parental Involvement

Academic Involvement	Life Participation
Attend parent-teacher conferences	Be aware of child's life
Sign homework as required by teacher	Be aware of and monitor child
Know when to expect report cards	Be aware of child's peer group and interacting with peers' parents
Ask about homework daily	Teach good morals and respect of others
Listen to the child read	Communicate with child
Visit classroom during open housing	Be aware of and encourage child's abilities and career aspirations
Ask questions about homework	Provide general encouragement

Ask friends, siblings, and other family members for homework help for child	Discuss future planning
Have high standards for academic performance	Monitor school attendance
Purchase materials required for class	Exercise discipline and provide behavioral cuing
Drive child to tutoring and school activities	Establish trust with child
Go to library with child	Provide advice on life issues
Be present when required to pick up report cards at school	Warn of dangers outside the home
	Get to know teachers to assess child's safety
	Volunteer to observe school environment
	Encourage siblings to look out for eachother

(Zarate, 2007)

To summarize, parents' in Zarate's (2007) study believed that formal schooling is complemented with educación at home and that good moral guidance in the home would translate into good classroom behavior and greater academic learning opportunities. Conversely, educators in the study referred more often to formal involvement in school organizations as ways that Latino parents should participate in their child's education. Differences in how each view parental involvement are reflective of their "*role construction*: the set of identities and perspectives held by an individual about the roles one plays in everyday life" (Tierney, 2002, p. 596).

Barriers to parental involvement

Although researchers argue that families should be more involved and included in the educational process, a discrepancy exists between research suggestions and practice. This discrepancy is confounded by barriers such as limited resources, unclear policies that act as structural barriers, narrow definitions of families (usually defined as 'parents'), linguistic barriers, and lack of knowledge as to the level that parents and families should be involved (Tierney, 2002). Daniel-White (2002) argued that while parental involvement

programs have been created by both schools and the government, these programs value middle-class parents and exclude minority families, their home languages, and their cultures, ultimately reflecting a deficit approach.

Families in which both parents have to work, one-parent families, or families where individuals must hold more than one job often do not enough time to balance the requirements of daily survival with the expectations of school involvement. Thus, generating economic capital takes priority, most often at the expense of generating and distributing cultural capital (Tierney, 2002). Research that examines the relationship between family involvement and maternal employment have found primarily negative associations. More specifically, the amount of time that low-income mothers worked affected their involvement. Mothers who were full-time employees or students were less involved than other mothers. Mothers who were part-time employees or students were actually found to be more involved than other mothers (Weiss, Mayer, Kreider, Vaughan, Dearing, Hencke & Pinto, 2003). However, even those mothers that were working full-time created involvement opportunities from work and workplaces that provided educational lessons and learning for their children (Weiss, et al., 2003).

Barriers are also found within the households and among communication patterns between the school and parents. Parents are often unsure of what constitutes educational activities and convey that they would spend more time on educational activities if teachers gave them specific advice (Tierney, 2002). Confusion and misunderstandings about a variety of issues regarding their children's education were illustrated in a qualitative study of ten families conducted by Valdes (1996). Inclusive in these

misunderstandings were confusion about the requirements and grading of assignments,

misinformation from the family's collective experiences, lack of knowledge and

understanding about bilingual and monolingual education programs. Many of the families

in the study did not report knowing which programs their children were in and had

expectations that school officials cared about their children's behavior both in and out of

school. Oftentimes, messages were sent to school officials via the mouth of an older

sibling as opposed to face-to-face or by note, and finally, many families had difficulty

reading report cards (Valdes, 1996). All of these misunderstandings affected the level of

parental involvement.

Educational ideologies of Mexican families

Illiterate, lack of school involvement and value; these are only a few of the

negative educational myths and stereotypes formed about Mexicans and their families.

Quite conversely, Mexicans are a literate population, in English and especially in Spanish

(Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992) and have passed on high educational values despite

having fought through decades of educational systems subordinating their Mexican

culture (Valenzuela, 1999; Vélez-Ibáñez, 1996). Oftentimes, parents from low-income

and minority populations are perceived by school administrators and teachers as resistant

to school efforts and uncommitted to their children's learning process. These erroneous

beliefs about low-income parents ultimately discount the parents' views and diminishing

their value (Lott, 2001). The level of parental involvement, specifically within the Latino

culture, is impacted by factors such as poverty, low levels of education, and immigrant

status which strongly influence the nature and levels of parent and school interaction (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). The basis of this deficit view is claimed to stem from the concept of "familial deficits" (Valencia & Black, 2002, p. 83). This claim argues that Mexican Americans do not hold education in high value, thus leading to inadequate familial socialization for academic competence, in turn, contributing to school failure for Mexican American children (Valencia & Black, 2002).

Valencia and Black (2002) provided a well-constructed argument that breaks down these myths and deficit thoughts and provide evidence of the value of education through the historical and contemporary struggle for equal educational opportunity and the involvement of parents as illustrated in scholarly literature. Mexican families have long been part of advocacy organizations, litigation and have served as individual activists in the fight for equal educational opportunities (Valencia & Black, 2002). Commitment to education is illustrated in non-mainstream forms of teaching, from *consejos* (advice-giving narratives) (Valdés, 1996; Valencia & Black, 2002) to the use of funds of knowledge (Vélez-Ibáñez, 1996; Valencia & Black, 2002).

Like forms of social and cultural capital for Mexican families, educational ideologies stretch beyond the conventional ideas of encouraging students to further their education, helping students fill out college applications, and encouraging college visitations. While some of these behaviors are in fact exhibited in Mexican families, one also must recognize how educational ideologies take on alternative forms and exhibit themselves in other ways. Parents have a vision for their children and Mexican parents are no different. In a case study of five Mexican families, Treviño (2004) found that all of

the families set high academic standards for their children, recognized that they needed to provide academic support when possible, expected that their children graduate from high school and college, and made education the top priority. While these beliefs may fall in line with mainstream educational ideologies, Mexican parents also taught their children to tap into their survival strategies of outthinking and outworking to achieve success, and instilled a foundation of *respeto*, pride and faith (Treviño, 2004).

For example, a family participating in a study conducted by González, Moll, Tenery, Rivera, Rendón, Gonzales, and Amanti (2005) demonstrated their value for education by taking the time to visit their daughters' third grade and kindergarten classrooms (unscheduled visits) in order to help them transition to school. They brought with them a younger son in order for him to begin learning what was expected (González, et al., 2005), and at the same time it demonstrated that school administrators are considered the *segundos padres* (second parents) (Treviño, 2004). This provides an example of the importance of education for the families, as well as, the use of funds of knowledge in transferring knowledge from one child to another. Another example from the same chapter illustrates how oftentimes society tends to view Mexican immigrants as poorly educated. Research from González, et al. (2005) illustrated that many recently immigrated Mexican children were more advanced academically than U.S. students, their parents wanted more homework for their children, discipline that was stricter and more communication with schools. Unfortunately, this negative assumption about Mexican families is made quite often and results in negative stereotypes about parental involvement coupled sometimes with language barriers preventing enhanced

communication. These assumptions and barriers might be what deter Mexican students in their pursuit of a higher education. The next section will address the multiple layers affecting a students' choice, or lack thereof, of a higher education.

The pursuit of a higher education: is it really a choice?

The educational paths and patterns of Mexican students are influenced by a number of factors inside of the home – survival strategies, economic, social, educational, and linguistic (Tapia, 2000), as well as, outside of the home – school resources, access to school information, and social groups (Tapia, 2000; McDonough, 1997). As shown, Mexican families do place a high value on education; however, outside factors play both an indirect and direct role in determining the educational options and choices for Mexican students. As a result, a gap continues to exist in the college going rates of minority students and more specifically, for, Mexican students.

Despite many efforts to diminish the college attendance gap between minority populations (African American, Hispanic and Native American) and their white and Asian American counterparts, the gap continues to exist. A college degree is viewed as the "passport into the middle class"; therefore, it is argued many of those students who would benefit most from a postsecondary education (i.e. low income and historically under-represented populations) are not receiving some of the services needed to access higher education. (Hagedorn & Tierney, 2002).

College attendance rates

The attendance rates between African Americans and Hispanics as compared to white students have fluctuated over the last 50 years. The 1960's presented larger gaps of 13%, where as attendance rates became less divided in the 1970's and rose again in the 1980's. During the period of the 1980's, attendance rates rose to 18% for African Americans and 22% for Mexican Americans (Baker & Velez, 1996). As Ruppert (2003) reported, the current gaps in college participation based on factors such as age, race, ethnicity and income suggest a greater number of people may be at risk of losing access to a college education. Researchers predict that the proportion of the nation's Latino population will continue to grow and is expected to increase by nearly 50% between 2000 and 2015 (Ruppert, 2003). This indicates that the gap in college attendance between Latino and white students will also continue to grow dramatically larger. According to the 2000 Census, 48% of the Hispanic population age 25 or older lacked a high school credential, compared to 20% for the population as a whole and compared to 15% for people identifying as white (Ruppert, 2003). There are many inequities contributing to this gap in education for under-represented populations and specifically for Latinos.

Inequities in college access

Ethnic minority students continue to struggle with a myriad of social and educational inequities in their pursuit of a higher education. Their lack of representation in colleges and universities has been influenced not by a lack of academic ability or academic potential (Gonzalez, Stone & Jovel, 2003) but by the rising costs of college,

increased standards in admissions criteria, inadequate secondary educational preparation, and insufficient cultural and social capital (Auerbach, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). As Oakes, Rogers, Lipton, and Morrell (2001) explained, the "cultural capital of white and wealthy families masquerades as meritorious natural ability, rather than as a function of social privilege" (p. 112). Although cultural capital potentially can be viewed as an assimilationist approach when utilizing it as a theoretical foundation for programs (Hagedorn & Tierney, 2002), it provides a valuable understanding of the perpetuation of social inequality in schools and its influence on the relationship between race and class and the school structures (Lareau & Horvat, 1999).

Mainstream definitions of social and cultural capital prove to be significant barriers in the pursuit of higher education, but financial capital is also a daunting factor in gaining college access for Mexican students. As the price of college continues to climb, it has a direct effect on the number of Mexican students attending college. After adjusting for inflation, the cost of tuition at public four-year colleges and universities increased at four times the pace of median family income over the last ten years (Ruppert, 2003). Even with the federal government's commitment to college access for all students, under-represented and low income student participation continues to decline and financial aid is channeled to middle-class students (Orfield, 1992). Because many of under-represented students come from lower-income families, this increase in the cost of tuition and decrease in federal financial aid has had a detrimental impact on their college attendance behavior. Although under-represented students may demonstrate strong academic abilities, obtaining financial aid for the increasing costs of tuition involves a multi-step,

complex process requiring strong cooperation between the student, parents, and the school (Orfield, 1992). This complex process adds another piece to the equally complex puzzle of inaccessibility to a higher education.

Overview of Outreach Programs

In an effort to address many of the obstacles and inequities previously mentioned, and in hopes of developing college knowledge, and social and cultural capital in families, efforts in the form of outreach programs have been established. Outreach programs are defined as college preparation programs aimed at enhancing and increasing access to college for low-income youth who attend public schools (Tierney & Jun, 2001). This definition will be used for the purposes of this research. There currently exists a variety of trends in outreach activities. These trends include: conditions in creating a successful outreach program, issues of support and funding, expanding the populations served by outreach programs (including younger students and Latino youth), and family and parental involvement and will be discussed further.

Conditions for creating a successful outreach program

Literature addressing the function of outreach programs has been very effective in defending the importance of and need for outreach programs, and in outlining the conditions necessary to create a successful outreach program. Some of these conditions include: personalizing information, expanding family social networks, reinforcing parents' self-efficacy, including multiple constituencies, and increasing social and

cultural capital of families (Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney & Auerbach, 2002). When developing a successful outreach program many strategies must be considered as institutions of higher education have been challenged with increasing the diversity among incoming students. The following have been adopted by the University of California's "UC Outreach" programs.

> *1. College-going culture* – where adults and peers see college-going as expected and attainable.
>
> *2. Rigorous academic curriculum* – where honors and AP courses are offered.
>
> *3. High-quality teaching* – including well-qualified teachers and engaging instructional techniques.
>
> *4. Intensive academic and college-going support* – including academic tutoring, SAT preparation, coaching about the college admissions process, etc.
>
> *5. A multicultural, college-going identity* – outlined as confidence and skills to negotiate college without sacrificing one's own identity.
>
> *6. Parent/community connections regarding college going and academics* – including access to knowledge about college preparation.
>
> (Oakes, Rogers, Lipton and Morrell, 2001, p. 108)

Similarly, the relationships and structures that the program builds across multiple constituencies – families, neighborhoods, educators, and scholars determine the success of an outreach program (Tierney & Jun, 2001). Integrating all of these factors together, especially in the face of budget cuts and financial restraints becomes a challenge.

Issues of support and funding

Reports (Swail & Roth, 2000) have indicated that university officials and policy makers have a better understanding of the role of outreach programs. This understanding has resulted in an increase in support for outreach programs that serve economically and academically disadvantaged students. Support however, is often misinterpreted to mean financial support. While money has been spent to close the education gaps, sufficient attention has not been paid to the steps required to be academically, socially, and psychologically ready to enter into college (Swail & Perna, 2002). Even some of the nation's largest and most strongly funded outreach programs, such as TRiO and GEAR UP programs are serving only approximately 10% of their eligible clientele because of challenges to financial resources (Swail & Roth, 2000). It has been argued that better participation in outreach programs could be captured through prioritization of resources, including better investments at the state and local levels, continued support in the form of research, and effective assessment (Tierney, 2000; Swail & Roth, 2000), thus, indicating a discrepancy between support generated from outreach programs and researcher suggestions and what is actually carried forward in the form of financial support (Tierney, 2000). While financial support is lacking considerably, the increase in understanding has raised awareness of the need to expand outreach programs to include younger students, Latino youth, and parent populations.

Outreaching to expanded populations

Most outreach programs focus efforts on high school students; some focus on middle school students. However, recommendations from researchers and practitioners indicate that the earlier the outreach begins the better. Outreach should begin no later than the upper elementary grades, because students begin forming college-going aspirations at early ages (Auerbach, 2004, Tierney, Colyar, & Corwin, 2003; Perna, 2001). Additionally, first-generation students and their families often need guidance about courses, college choices, and application deadlines (Tierney, Colyar & Corwin, 2003). While first-generation students, specifically Latino first-generation students, may desire to attend college and have positive encouragement from their families, they often receive negative or low expectations from teachers and others. Moreover, these students often lack the resources to gain accurate advice (Martinez, 2003). Further research (Holman, 1997; Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995) has indicated the importance of outreaching to Latino populations as they differ in many of their needs, needs that are specific to immigrant Latino families in the United States. Latino students participating in a study conducted by Martinez (2003) regarding their academic potential and instances of inequity in high school, indicated that their outreach counselor and pre-collegiate program experience was a wonderful opportunity to be introduced to college work. This guidance from outreach personnel was crucial in preparing them for their collegiate experience. An essential component in outreach programs, especially with Latino students, is the inclusion and incorporation of parents and families.

Family Involvement in Outreach Programs

A range of research and case studies have shown the importance of parental involvement in outreach programs and the need to increase parents' social and cultural capital (Tierney, 2002; Jun & Coylar, 2002; Auerbach, 2004; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995). However, there are many factors to consider, such as the appropriate ways to engage parents and families in outreach programs, understanding families' own levels of education, providing specific information tailored to the needs of individual families, and language barriers.

A fundamental factor in an effective outreach program is the inclusion of family engagement. Parents and families can either serve as an obstacle or an ally for their students (Tierney & Auerbach, 2002). Data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study indicated that parental encouragement, parental involvement, and school personnel encouragement increased the likelihood of college enrollment for white students but was unrelated to college enrollment for African American and Hispanic students (Perna, 2000). This indicates a need to properly engage and involve parents in their children's educational process. Researchers (Tierney & Auerbach, 2002; Jun & Colyar, 2002) have provided concrete strategies for actively engaging parents in the college process. They suggest that outreach programs not only need to provide family education about college awareness, but help guide parents through the actions that are needed to gain access to college. This can be done through a variety of ways: personalized information focusing on steps in the pathway to college and how parents can help, beginning in elementary school, expansion of family social networks related to college options to include

educators, alumni, and families like themselves, reinforcement of parents' sense of self-efficacy, gathering with other families for support and fellowship in instrumental steps on the pathway to college (Tierney & Auerbach, 2002).

Recognizing and understanding cultural differences among families and parents are a critical aspect of successfully engaging them in outreach initiatives. When referring to cultural differences among families, maintaining cultural integrity become essential. Approaches to cultural integrity include viewing education in culture not simply as a process of teaching facts and figures to a faceless population, but interacting in a process of identity and community development (Tierney & Jun, 2001). Additionally, cultural awareness encourages that programs be culturally specific rather than translated or culturally adapted (Tierney, 2002); and engage the entire family and community in college preparation, utilizing peer groups, utilizing cultural resources. Finally, by formally bringing culture into the program (Tierney, Colyar, & Corwin, 2003) cultural integrity can be maintained. When working with one particular segment of an ethnic population, for example Mexicans, maintaining cultural integrity also means understanding their cultural history and struggles. In the case of Mexicans, their cultural background includes a long, historical struggle for control of their labor and resources, and for economic security (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 2005). Cultural histories should not be ignored when attempting to embrace cultural awareness and integrity. Maintaining cultural integrity must be a focus in educational programs and policies to offer equitable support to all families because as illustrated previously, college enrollment rates for

under-represented populations, including African-American, Hispanics and low-income,

continue to remain meager (Perna, 2001).

Parental involvement plays a key role in navigating the college attendance process

for under-represented students. Perna (2001) examined the role that parental support and

encouragement and the knowledge and information about college and financial aid

played in college preparation for under-represented populations. Perna (2001) concluded

that middle-school educators have the power to directly affect the role that parents have

in their children's college preparation, the amount of information about college costs and

financial aid that is distributed to families, and finally, the encouragement and promotion

of academic preparation. However, challenges to engaging under-represented parents are

many and include factors such as language and an erroneous view of parental lack of

interest.

A program at the University of California, Los Angeles, attempted to address

many of parental involvement misunderstandings through "Futures & Families" (F&F).

F&F was the parent component of the small, college access program, The Future Project

which attempted to promote certain forms of college-relevant cultural, social and critical

capital. (Auerbach, 2004). The program was grounded in the belief that under-represented

parents needed opportunities for dialogue and safe spaces with educators in order to learn

and engage in educational issues (Auerbach, 2004.) This program was the subject of a

case study conducted by Auerbach (2004). The study included 15 Latino parents who

were extensively interviewed and observed. Auerbach (2004) found that in general,

parents began to understand the notion of steps in the college pathway, the need for their

involvement and began to expand their college-based social networks. Parents were receptive to the program because they saw the Future Project as sharing their aspirations for and caring for their children (Auerbach, 2004). This finding is critical to understanding the relational approach that is needed when working with under-represented populations.

In a study that focused on the impact of an outreach program (Parent Institute for Quality Education) for immigrant parents and how the outreach program affected their sense of place in their children's education, pre and post surveys revealed that parents' roles evolved as they were provided with new information at the classes and as they attempted to implement these roles and techniques at home and school with their children (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). Under-represented parents, particularly Mexican-American parents, are very interested in their children's education; however, barriers such as a negative view of the school system, past negative experiences, and language barriers affect their levels of engagement (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995). Oftentimes, the school environment reminds parents of their own negative educational experiences including discrimination and humiliation for speaking Spanish (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995). Limited English language proficiency may make it difficult for parents to help their children with homework. Hispanic parents may experience feelings of inferiority when interacting with school personnel (Holman, 1997). Holman (1997) encouraged administrators to assist newly immigrant families with their transition to school, including encouraging administrators to understand that these recently immigrated

parents might have substantial formal education in their native countries, and to take the time to listen and respond respectfully to these parents.

Creating a successful outreach program is contingent on multiple factors from interpreting policy and research recommendations into tangible programmatic and financial support to expanding outreach initiatives to the populations that need it most desperately. This of course, leads to additional challenges when incorporating culture and family, addressing needs of language barriers, and approaching the program from a model that is supportive, receptive and incorporative of culture as opposed to viewing it as a hindrance or as a deficit. If the goal of outreach programs is to include parents, it becomes crucial that parents are not perceived as adversaries or sources of disruption (Lott, 2001).

While incorporating parents in the outreach process is crucial, Valdes (1996) argued that some intervention programs (although well-intentioned) are grounded in mainstream values and result in more harm than good. She explains that many of these efforts to involve or empower families are based on an ideology about education, opportunity and merit that discount the structural inequalities and attributes success or failure to individual effort. She argues that these programs do not show respect for deeply ingrained family values, the cultural capital that immigrant parents bring with them from their home countries, and that programs devalue the social and linguistic competence of immigrant parents and their education (Valdes, 1996). Valdes (1996) argued that intervention or outreach programs oftentimes work from a deficit model and only address issues on a micro-level and that all types of intervention involve a power-play between

the strong and the weak, between the knowledgeable and the uninformed. What Valdes has described is a historical approach in which programs and policies enable students and parents to overcome either insufficient funds to pay for college, insufficient academic preparation, or insufficient understanding of the world of higher education (Hagedorn & Tierney, 2002). These programs and policies assume a cultural deficit because students and parents fail to understand the importance of education (Valencia, 2002). Unfortunately, the result has not been the expected dramatic positive increase in college attendance. First generation African American, Hispanic and Native American youth continue to have lower college attendance rates than their white and Asian American peers (Valencia, 2002). Examples of deficit thinking and the use (whether intentional or not) of deficit model is evidenced in the following studies.

In a study conducted by the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, Tornatzky, Cutler, and Lee (2002) examined the role that parents play in helping their students navigate through various milestones and prerequisites when transitioning into college. Tornatzky, et. al coined this information, "college knowledge." By utilizing both telephone surveys and case studies, the researchers found that Latino parents had definite deficits when tested on their college knowledge. They also found that families lacked higher education experience and the media became the avenue of gaining college knowledge. Finally, they found that language barriers presented a large negative factor in the acquisition of college knowledge. This barrier was found across various communication channels and sources: face-to-face interaction, written materials, and participation in information events (Tornatzky, et. al, 2002). While it is important to understand the college knowledge that

parents lack, findings were primarily focused on the "definite deficits" as opposed to also uncovering the college knowledge that parents had either already acquired or brought with them from other experiences. These deficits play into the approach that programs adopt when working with students and parents in attempting to correct their deficiencies or cultural differences, oftentimes explained as increasing their cultural capital (Boyd, 1991). Critiques of this approach not only include critiques of outreach programs for middle and high school students (Valdes, 1996) but preschool and compensatory education programs such as Head Start (Boyd, 1991). An alternative to a deficit model is to approach the program in more of a relational manner, one that maintains cultural integrity, and builds upon families' funds of knowledge.

The intent of this research is to incorporate previous literature with findings from this study to address the gap that exists between the many recommendations to incorporate parental involvement in the school systems and in outreach programs and the practical application of doing so. Additionally, this study will highlight the educational ideologies and funds of knowledge of families to better understand the development of educational philosophies, processes, and lessons that families progress through.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted as embedded case studies of six families/household clusters. Embedded implies that the study consists of more than one unit or object of analysis (Scholz & Tietje, 2002). The families/household clusters are considered the units of analysis in the current study. The data gathering method consisted of oral history interviews and semi-structured interviews conducted pre and post the Parent Outreach Program. In addition to the interviews, observations of the home, community, and families were also documented. The interviews allowed for special attention to be paid to the funds of knowledge and educational ideologies of families participating in the Parent Outreach Program. A total of five to seven interviews were conducted with each family: one pre interview, one post interview, and three to five oral history interviews.

I also drew upon a second, archived data set of 27 interviews conducted with parents pre and post during the pilot years of the Parent Outreach Program. The purpose of utilizing the pre-existing data set was to draw on a contextualized (i.e. similar programmatic and family context) foundation of social and cultural capital and, educational ideologies of Mexican-American families in order to better understand the six case-study families that were part of the current study.

The current study addressed the following research questions: What funds of knowledge are present and utilized by families? What influences the development of families' educational ideologies? How might educational ideologies influence future

college access? How do parents interpret the college information they are receiving from the Parent Outreach Program? How do parents utilize the information they are receiving from the Parent Outreach Program?

Site and Sample Population

The families chosen for this study were done so because of their participation in the Parent Outreach Program. The Parent Outreach Program is coordinated out of the University Outreach Office[3] at a large, Research I university located in the Southwestern region of the country. The city in which the university is located is just one hour from the U.S./Mexico border; nearly 36% of the metropolitan area's population is Hispanic/Latino. As a relatively open access (accepting the top 25-50% of the high school class), land grant institution, the university has some departments that work to recruit and outreach to the student population in the state. This particular outreach program was the product of a partnership between the University Outreach Office and elementary schools in one school district in the city. The school district is located south side of the city, consists of primarily Mexican, lower, working class, and lower-middle class families. In 2003, the school district reported that 87.3% of the students were Hispanic, almost 85% of students were on the free and reduced lunch program, and only 13.8% of students graduating from high school enrolled directly into a four-year college or university.

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3 In order to maintain anonymity, "University Outreach Office" will be utilized as a pseudonym.

These statistics were reported five years ago, but the percentages have remained much the same.

The University Outreach Office is committed to increasing the number of ethnic-minority, low income, and first-generation college-bound students who are eligible to enter a degree program at a university. The office works to plan, implement, and evaluate outreach strategies to prepare students for a college education and increase diversity at the university level. The Parent Outreach Program was created for parents of elementary school students from kindergarten to fifth grade level, to help parents understand current and future academic expectations, improve communication with schools, increase parental involvement, and prepare students for a college education. This program was created without the addition of new financial and/or human resources. The University Outreach Office felt strongly about the need to offer such a program and did so by pulling resources from the Office's existing programs. Over the course of five years the number of full-time staff members (1.5) has remained the same. Student staff assist with one component of the program, but any additional human resources are strictly volunteer. While the University Outreach Office has seen an increase in funding due to the incorporation of a Gear Up grant, financial struggles remain as the Parent Outreach Program continues to grow and this year (2008) is serving twice the number of schools and families than in the past (growing from approximately 85 families per year to 160 families per year).

The program consists of weekly, two-hour workshops held over a ten week period. Workshops are presented both in English and Spanish and cover the following

topics: expectations and fostering college aspirations in students, understanding academic expectations and preparation strategies, college admissions information, financial aid and scholarships, understanding the importance of English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language and Fine Arts classes, the parent's role in education, and finally, school communication and relationship building. An important aspect of the program is the concurrent children's workshops structured around the same topics that parents are learning.

The Parent Outreach Program is modeled after the Parent Institute for Quality Education Program (PIQE) based in San Diego, California. PIQE began in 1987 when its founders, a retired pastor and community activist and a university professor and community activist, invited parents to discuss concerns about the local schools, the low academic achievement of their children, and their social conditions. The school district where PIQE began was comprised of 99% Latino students and was ranked at the bottom of the elementary schools in the district. This initial gathering evolved into eight weeks of two hour weekly sessions and quickly spread across the other schools (http://www.piqe.org/). The curriculum for the Parent Outreach Program was developed from various research articles, the Parent Institute for Quality Education Program, and advisory committee suggestions, and is designed to provide parents with the educational knowledge and the social and cultural capital needed to navigate through the college-going process.

Sample Population

The Parent Outreach Program serves about 85 families a year, approximately 40%

of whom are primarily English speaking and 60% of whom are primarily Spanish

speaking. The majority (approximately 85%) of parents identified as Hispanic, although

it is unclear if they identify as Mexican (having been born in Mexico and immigrated to

the United States) or Mexican-American (having been born in the United States). As this

particular program works with families from the school district detailed previously, the

majority of families in this study were lower to lower-middle class.

The sample selected for this research consisted of six Hispanic (Mexican),

English speaking families. For the purposes of this research, families are defined by the

parent(s) or guardian(s) participating in the program, children participating in the

program, as well as other siblings, extended family that either live in the same household

or frequently visit, including grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Families will also

be referred to as *household clusters*, as I am referring to extended family and friends

beyond the nuclear household (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 2005). These family units and

their respective cluster households are the units of analysis. Each unit of analysis will be

treated as a case study and I have reviewed across the six case studies for common

themes.

The families represented nine of the schools participating in the program during

the spring of 2007. Families were recruited at the Parent Outreach Program orientation,

where I explained the study and asked parents and guardians to volunteer their

participation. Because of my limited conversational Spanish, I presented the study only to

those families whose preferred language was English. All participants in this study chose

English as their primary language. The final sample of six families was constructed to

ensure variation in the configuration of family units (i.e. single-parent homes, multiple

generation homes, number of children in the household, etc.). Of the six

families/household clusters participating, two included two-parent homes; one included a

single-parent, mother home; one included a singe-parent, father and his friends, home;

one included a three-parent/guardian, mother and grandparents, home; and one included a

single-parent, mother living with her mother and sister, home (see the Household Clusters

Chart in Table 3). I also attempted to include parents with various level of education

(some high school, high school, no college, some college), as well as various income

levels. Finally, I worked to ensure that these families represent the diversity of families

participating in the Parent Outreach Program. Within the sample I included a family with

adopted children, a biracial family, a family who was not originally from the local area,

as well as families who had been in the local area for multiple generations. Although I

observed the entire household cluster and sometimes spoke briefly with other members of

the family, the interviews were conducted primarily with parents. In all cases but one,

interviews were with individual parents. And in all but two cases, interviews were

conducted with the mothers.

Interestingly, each of these families lived off of one major road in the south side

of the city; as one travels east to west along this major road the housing changes, the

stores change, and the neighborhood changes. Traveling along this road illustrates the

various income levels in just one part of the south side, and is representative of the

varying income levels of the families participating in the study.

Data Collection

As previously detailed, I conducted an embedded case study with six families and

their household clusters. Case studies oftentimes are representative of a single subject as

the focus of study. By adopting a case study approach with six families in the Parent

Outreach Program, I was able to build a comparative element, allowing for multiple

perspectives of funds of knowledge and educational ideologies to be explored. Because

parent outreach and involvement, as well as funds of knowledge are complex entities to

understand, a case study approach is highly valuable. In fact, the case study approach is

quite effective when problems are more complex and contextualized, and especially when

studying educational sciences and community sociology (Scholz & Tietje, 2002).

Although the term household clusters are used to describe the entire family unit, data

collection consisted primarily of interviews with individual family members. The

majority of interviews were conducted with one or two parents. In a few cases I was able

to also speak with other members of the household cluster.

I had to consider the feasibility of completing this type of in depth approach with

a large sample. Ultimately, I chose a smaller sample size (six families) in order to

preserve the richness that comes from an ethnographic approach. Small (2005) explained

that the "strengths of qualitative work come from understanding *how* and *why*, not

understanding *how many"* (p. 8). Had I decided to use a larger sample size, I suspect that

the data collected would have been more superficial and less representative of the funds of knowledge present in the households.

Case studies should include multiple sources of data collected (Scholz & Tietji, 2002). For the purposes of this research I used semi-structured pre and post interviews combined with open-ended oral history interviews that allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the funds of knowledge and educational ideologies possessed by families. Pre and post face to face interviews with families occurred twice over the course of the program, once prior to the beginning of the program and once after the conclusion of the program. The focus of interview questions was on social and cultural capital, program expectations, and educational ideologies (see appendix B1 and B2) and I conducted the interviews in participants' homes and local community sites like parks and libraries. The goal of the semi-structured pre and post interviews was two-fold – to gather data and to create the relational aspect of the research. Interviews allow for researchers and participants to develop a personal relationship. This element is critical in understanding participants' perspectives when employing more of an ethnographic approach to the case study (Mertens, 1998). By preparing structured questions for the interview it allowed for purposeful open-ended dialogue with direction for the scope of the discourse, combined with building rapport with participants (Mertens, 1998). As indicated in the original funds of knowledge study, a primary goal was not to elicit information, but to "foster a relationship of trust with the families so they can tell us about their lives and experiences" (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, p. xi., 2005).

I utilized an ethnographic approach to both the pre and post interviews, as well as the oral history interviews. Ethnographic research methods are designed to describe and analyze practices and beliefs of cultures and communities (Mertens, 1998). Ultimately, an ethnographic approach of this sort draws from anthropological methodologies as the researcher becomes part of the actual of the participants and is able to reveal the cultural knowledge of that world. In her chapter on the concept and history of "culture", Gonzalez (2005) documented the evolution of concept and explained that definitions of culture have shifted. Culture grew into a concept that was (and is) used to explain human behavior and beliefs, in some cases, serves as a mechanism that allows for groups to survive in various environments, and in other cases, is viewed as a system of ideas and codes of meaning. For the current study, culture is also the lived experiences of Mexican-American families. Thus, studying participants' cultures and communities from an ethnographic approach grounded in anthropological perspective is quite appropriate.

This approach also allowed me to partially mimic the original funds of knowledge research conducted by Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005). The original study also utilized an ethnographic approach with oral history interviews. The guiding oral history questions for the current study were built off of the questions used in the original funds of knowledge study. They key difference between the two studies were the units of analysis. The original study focused on the families of K-12 children of classrooms (the teacher served as researcher). As stated earlier, I focused on the families of K-6 children in a university outreach program for the current study. It is hoped that by partially mimicking the original study findings will contribute to the elaboration of the original theory.

Oral history interviews were scheduled approximately four to five times with each of the parents while the program was in session and were conducted in participants' homes or local community sites like parks and libraries. Oral histories are characterized as inspiring participants to begin the act of remembering the past and how that has led to the present (Mertens, 1998). This approach was appropriate for these case studies as they allowed both the participants and I to make meaning of experiences and relationships (Mertens, 1998). The oral history interviews included loosely structured interviews, unstructured observations, conversations and audio recordings of the families. It is important that the oral histories were not limited to just the parents as extended family members contribute greatly to the funds of knowledge of the household. Thus, each oral history included different participants depending on the household members present during the interview. Additional household members included friends, older siblings, the children, and grandparents. Conducting oral histories allowed for a deeper understanding of the social history of their households and how knowledge is taught and received in their households (see appendix C). As was adopted in the original funds of knowledge research, the oral history interviews were an exchange of views, information and stories, characterized by respectful conversation between myself and the families (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005). In total, 12 participants were included in this study, 9 of whom were adults and 3 of whom were children. Ten females and two males participated in the study. As previously mentioned, the majority of interviews were conducted with parents along with other household members (friends, children, aunts, and grandparents)

interjecting at various points during the interview. One entire post program interview was conducted with a mother and her two adult daughters.

Although the interviews took place primarily with the parents, I included the informal conversations (with the children or other members of family after the official interview had been conducted) in my observation notes. These informal conversations were not recorded, nor were they transcribed and analyzed. It was also beneficial to include the families' neighborhood and community as part of their oral histories. Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti (2005) referred to the importance of observing the neighborhoods, the surrounding areas, and any external markers present in the community. Detailed observation notes were taken describing the informal conversations, homes, communities, and neighborhoods where families lived. Understanding the context of where families live was important as exchange relations often take place within the social networks in the community. An individual's sense of belonging with communities and neighborhoods can nurture social capital and reciprocal relationships (Portney & Berry, 1997).

Finally, a second data source, an archived, pre-existing set of pre and post program interviews was utilized in order to understand changes in participants' social and cultural capital as well as, educational ideologies. These interviews were conducted with 17 parents (27 total interviews) who completed the Parent Outreach Program during the first two pilot years (2004 and 2005) of the outreach program. The interviews were conducted as part of a larger evaluation for the Parent Outreach Program where over 50 parents were interviewed. Of the 27 interviews utilized in the second data source, I

conducted 18 of the interviews while a colleague conducted the other 9. All interviews in the second data source were conducted with English speaking parents. The purpose of utilizing the pre-existing data set was to create a foundation and understanding of social and cultural capital, as well as educational ideologies of Mexican families in the Parent Outreach Program in order to better understand the six families that were part of the current case study. This data source was also utilized as a comparative element in order to understand how and if examples of funds of knowledge, educational ideologies, and parental involvement were different among pilot program parents and those parents in the current study. Finally, the second data source allowed for me to test, review, and revise the original interview protocol. The updated protocol (and specifically the oral history interview protocol) was built utilizing specific funds of knowledge examples found in household clusters in previous studies.

Data Analysis

Data gathered from pre and post interviews, as well as oral history interviews were transcribed verbatim. Transcriptions were compared to written notes from each interview. Both inductive and deductive processes were utilized to develop a coding scheme. Prior to conducting interviews, a deductive process was utilized to anticipate themes. Such themes included social and cultural capital, and views on education. Additionally, anticipated funds of knowledge themes included construction skills, planting skills, automobile repair skills, personal accounting and finance skills, first-aid or medicinal skills, religious beliefs, and childcare skills (Moll, Amanti, Neff, &

Gonzalez, 1992). By coding the transcriptions I was able to identify new themes utilizing an inductive process. These new themes were organized into three primary categories: funds of knowledge, educational ideologies, and parental involvement.

While the entire study was guided by a fund of knowledge framework and coding was constructed based on the funds of knowledge examples listed above, the new funds of knowledge themes were linked specifically to education. I began coding for each time examples of non-traditional educational practices were addressed; specifically, the codes centered on educational practices that were not encouraged by or recognized by the school systems. I also coded for social networks that connected families to the school systems or school resources. And finally, I coded for college knowledge – this included knowledge of various institutions, the college-going process, and college experiences.

Educational ideologies consisted not only of educational expectations for families, but where the information came from and the factors or experiences that shaped those ideologies. Codes were established for ideologies that helped or motivated the children and for ideologies that held back or limited the children. Finally, I also coded for examples that illustrated how successful ideologies were measured (as defined by the family).

The final primary category was parental involvement in k-12 education. I began coding just for examples of external and internal involvement but quickly realized that there were a number of examples that also included both formal and informal processes as well. Additionally, non-traditional involvement was developed as a code and represented involvement that did not fit into either external or internal involvement.

Each primary theme was comprised of sub-themes. The sub-themes for funds of knowledge are: daily educational practices, extended family and social networks, and pre-existing college knowledge. Sub-themes for educational ideologies include: sources of college information (social networks and cultural symbols) and college aspirations and limitations, shifts in educational ideologies and perceptions of success. Finally, the sub-themes for parental involvement are: external involvement, internal involvement, non-traditional involvement, and *where* mothers work matters.

Positionality

It is important in qualitative research to understand how the researcher's perspectives may influence the study. This includes understanding that framing questions, analyzing information and interpreting data from my own cultural bias and experiences may present a problem and must be recognized. Conducting this research from an objective point of view became an unrealistic expectation. It is true that with qualitative work a level of subjectivity is expected, however I found myself becoming a part of these families' experiences and them a part of mine. I was beginning to understand my own identity as a scholar, but even more importantly, as a daughter of working-class, Mexican parents. Separating myself from the experience was difficult and something I ultimately could not do completely, and drew on the resources of my committee and peers to help achieve some objective distance from the peoples whose lives I was becoming engaged in. The following section represents my positionality, both as a Mexican-American student and as a researcher.

I never expected to develop the level of relationships that came out of my time with these families. I had hoped to establish a strong rapport and sense of trust, but it became more than that. I do believe that this strong sense of relationship and trust allowed for our conversations to flow in much more meaningful ways than otherwise would have happened; this occurred even though I only met with each family five or six times over the course of the semester. There was one mother in particular (Valerie Tabers) who had recently lost her significant other (and father of her daughter). I would leave our sessions feeling like I had been serving as her counselor and was amazed at how much she would actually tell me. My husband (a school psychologist) helped me realize that I was far enough removed from the situation yet had a strong enough sense of trust with her, that she could honestly open up to me about these personal feelings. I still keep in touch with a couple of the mothers as they send me updates of their children and forward me chain emails. Just as they incorporated me into their household clusters, I incorporated them into my own identity.

Perhaps the most difficult part of this research experience is the emotions that have come with it. I believed that I had a strong sense of self and identity before the research began. I did not realize that my identity and place in my own family would be challenged *and* explained by the experiences I shared with the families in this study. I am the first person in my family to obtain a bachelors degree, and the first in my extended family to obtain a masters and now a doctorate degree. As I began writing articles, applying for faculty positions and eventually, writing my dissertation, I could not understand why my parents did not seem interested in the process. There is an enormous

sense of pride and support from my family, but I wanted them to be as engaged in my scholarly work (and want to read it) as much as I am. This research process has helped me to realize that they can be engaged in my scholarly work without completely understanding it. They have laid the groundwork for me to exceed and surpass their own education and just as the families in the study experienced a shift in educational ideologies over generations (see chapter 4) so has my own family. I just happen to be in the middle of one of those shifts.

The families in this study have also helped me to understand the shift in funds of knowledge to forms of capital that I am experiencing. I can easily document the funds of knowledge I experienced growing up and shared some of those examples in chapter 1. However, I see now that what my husband and I are developing and tapping into are different forms of capital. We are beginning to understand (and be comfortable with) the rules of the game and consciously activate our cultural and social capital for future gains. I often wonder if I will lose my funds of knowledge completely and if I can teach my own children in the same ways that I was taught or if my children will simply have access to new sets of capital because of my profession and socio-economic class. I pose these same questions in chapter 4 as I once again see my experiences with funds of knowledge and capital reflected in the families in the study. Even though I was never able to objectively represent the families, their funds of knowledge, and the findings, I believe that because I too experienced many of the same processes, the end result is that much richer. I too am richer because of it.

While my own Mexican background allowed for me to establish a good rapport and a sense of trust with the families, it could also be seen as a limitation. My own cultural experiences as a Mexican American woman could have influenced the direction of questions and ultimately the interpretation of the data. Additionally, it would have been ideal to be able to interview both English speaking and Spanish speaking families in order to gain a more well-balanced understanding of their experiences. Unfortunately, because of my limited Spanish-speaking abilities, I was unable to do so. In this sense, I was unable to linguistically relate to the participants who were bilingual and my study did not target parents in which Spanish was the preferred language, a clear limitation.

I believe that the research I conduct can serve a larger purpose. I hope that my research will lead to societal changes and not merely serve as an opportunity for personal advancement or add to the examples of academic colonialism, a term that represents the process of more powerful groups that often view people as subordinate to them (Hill Collins, 2000) and where social power is tapped into as opposed to political or economic power (Mehl, 1969). The research that I conduct is never solely about personal gains or for "benignly exploiting for our own purposes"; there is always an element of giving back to the community (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 459). However, I found it necessary to distinguish between conducting research for understanding versus conducting research for advocacy (Mehra, 2001).

As a social justice advocate and advocate for under-represented populations in general, I was worried that the line would be easily blurred, although ultimately there is an element of both in the work that I do. In order to understand my own position as part

of this research, I created a research journal and logged my own perspectives throughout the study. This journal allowed for me to track my own progress and keep in check how my perspectives influence the outcomes of the study (Mertens, 1998). I was able to pose questions while writing in the journal that possibly influenced my interpretation of the interviews and observations. In that sense, the journal also served a secondary, equally important purpose. I also kept the journal as a way of documenting my observation notes. After each interview I would document my thoughts, observations, and questions in a journal created for each family. Throughout the process I also discussed my preliminary findings, observations, and questions with peers and members of other research teams. This process allowed for me to work through some of my own biases and emotions when objectivity became difficult.

Finally, one of the most difficult challenge as the researcher was allowing the limiting factors that families sometimes imposed on their children regarding education to also be exposed. I understand that my position is one of a researcher attempting to study and represent families from a non-deficit perspective. It was and still is my intent to paint a positive picture of the families involved in this study and to dispel and challenge current literature that critiques levels of family involvement and engagement. However, it is also important to recognize (and has been a challenge to do so) that limiting factors do exist, often influenced by family finances, outside responsibilities, perceptions about education and sometimes just a lack of understanding. These limiting factors can have an impact on the future college-going actions of their children. These families reflect the values and experiences of my own family and mirror the difficulties, triumphs, and

limiting elements that my own family has worked through. As the researcher, it has been

a challenge to separate myself from them in order to fully understand, interpret and tell

their story. On the flip side, it has also been an incredibly important asset to share in

many of these experiences. I was able to relate with family members in intimate ways

because we shared similar experiences. I believe that family members opened up to me

because I was also willing to disclose some of my own family stories and struggles as it

related to our conversations.

Validity

Trustworthiness

Interview protocols: The highest level of trustworthiness was attempted with this

research study. Special attention was considered when constructing the interview

protocols. The protocol utilized for the pre and post program interviews in the current

study was consistent with that of the original pilot study and interviews. The original

interview protocol was created and edited by two senior members (and tenured faculty)

of our research team. Based on preliminary analysis of the pilot interview data, I updated

the protocol to also reflect specific funds of knowledge examples and terminology. These

changes were implemented in the protocol for the oral history interviews. Additionally,

the pilot interview data revealed that a one hour interview was not providing the research

team with the in depth understanding of funds of knowledge that we were expecting.

Thus, I decided to incorporate three to five oral history interviews with each family in the

current study guided by the updated interview protocol.

Member-checking & transcript review: I offered study participants the

opportunity to read over their interview transcripts. This allowed for them to make

corrections, add new information, and critique specific questions if they did not feel the

questions were appropriate. I also offered families the opportunity to meet again should

they feel as though the transcripts were missing information or needed to be edited. The

process of providing transcripts to family members served as a member-checking tool.

However, none of the family members took advantage of this opportunity and I received

no follow-up questions from family members.

Researcher bias: To reduce bias in the analysis of this data, I consulted with other

members of the College of Education / Parent Outreach Program research team and a

faculty member whose research is very similar, to review findings from the pre and post

interviews, as well as the oral history interviews. Peer review helped to verify the

existence of patterns and themes and offered a critical perspective when my own cultural

biases were influencing the nature of the questions. The peer review process also aided in

the interpretation of data. Finally, these meetings and presentations of my work also

helped me to work through many of the limitations that had not yet been considered.

Human Subjects

Finally, as is the case with all research, the study was reviewed by the Human

Subjects Protection Program at the University of Arizona. The study was initially

approved on December 6, 2006, and later re-evaluated and approved to include the

conversations with children. This second approval came on April 12, 2007. Thus, consent

forms for the adults in the study and minor assent forms for the children in the study were completed for every participant. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant, family, and program in the study.

Limitations

This study consisted of six families. An obvious concern might be the small number of study participants. Although it could be argued that a small sample size may not yield significant findings or contribute to the research, I would argue that by conducting six in-depth case studies, utilizing multiple research methods I was able to interpret individual experiences and compare across experiences at a level of depth I could not otherwise have achieved. Research conducted from an anthropological perspective, particularly ethnographies provide an opportunity to understand participants from a cultural perspective and based on the participants' experiences that shape identities, knowledge, and ideologies (Yon, 2003). Granted, the sample does include only six families from one outreach program at one institution. The implications outlined are not applicable to all institutions or outreach programs, nor do the findings represent all Mexican-American, working-class families. However, as Yin (1993) described, qualitative research with small samples are not necessarily meant to be generalized across populations, but to build theory and have analytic generalizability.

By utilizing different methods to gather data I was able to more fully understand the experiences of Parent Outreach Program families. However, in the oral history interviews there was always the possibility of being seen as an intruder in their

experiences. Although I do not suspect that this was an issue, this feeling of intrusion may have lead family members to not share as openly about their experiences, feel intimidated by the questions asked, or feel as though they were expected to answer in certain ways and provide a "correct" answer. Although every attempt was made to gain the trust of the families before intruding into their personal lives and causing a feeling of disruption, the trust was not always a guarantee. I attempted to do this in a number of ways which included meeting with families in locations where they felt most comfortable, and beginning each conversation not with an interview question but with questions about their family and experiences that week. I also kept in contact with families outside of the formal meeting times through email and phone.

Additionally, the opinions, perspectives, and knowledge captured through this study were based solely on those of English speaking parents. The majority of parents (approximately 60) participating in this outreach program were Spanish speaking parents whose experiences with barriers and familial resources surrounding language were not even explored. Hence, a significant limitation of this study was the fact that I did not include Spanish-speaking parents as part of my sample. It was an intentional decision on my part not to conduct interviews in Spanish. I am not fluent in Spanish and did not feel comfortable conducting interviews the language, particularly those that are meant to capture the true nature of families through their stories. Likewise, I did not intend to have a translator present during the interviews as it would have disrupted the process and the trust and relationship that is crucial to a research design such as this one would have been lost. Therefore, I am sure that there is another story to tell – that of the Spanish speaking

families in this program. I hope to someday connect with these families and better

understand how their experiences can shape practice, theory, and advocacy.

As described in chapter 4, the sample of families who participated in this study

were actively involved in their children's schooling and educational processes at home.

The English speaking parents (both in the first year of the pilot study and in the current

study) are a select sample of families who want to go to college. This is evident in their

participation in the Parent Outreach Program and in their willingness to be part of this

research study. Thus, I am missing those families who are not actively engaged and

involved in the school system. Likewise, I am missing those families who are perhaps not

actively pursuing a college path for their children, are not interested in college, or do not

believe college is available to their family.

Finally, funds of knowledge is an approach meant to highlight survival strategies,

familial competence, and resources that are inherent and valuable in household units. It

generally does not take into account the limitations present in families. It was not

possible to conduct an in depth study of families without realizing that limitations do

exist. By representing the true nature of families in this study I captured both the funds of

knowledge, complete with a strong value and pride of education, and the limitations

around the educational process that were present in the families. Stepping away from this

experience and allowing both of these occurrences to present themselves was not always

an easy process. An additional critique or limitation of funds of knowledge is in its

practical application. The framework provides an obvious benefit and connection to

families for the teachers and schools that have successfully incorporated funds of

knowledge into their curriculum. But there is a cost. Truly adopting a funds of knowledge framework is time-consuming and requires teachers or practitioners to know enough about students to incorporate their own knowledge and resources into the curriculum. Although I believe outreach programs can make great strides towards this approach, it will require more time to design the program and curriculum, and more institutional support in the form of human and financial resources. Given the continued budget restrictions that state institutions continue to face, I am not sure if this approach is a realistic one.

CHAPTER 4:

FINDINGS

In this chapter I begin with profiles of each family, constructed in part by their own descriptions and in part by my observations. I also share the experiences of households and families as they relate to three primary themes: familial funds of knowledge, educational ideologies, and parental involvement. While the findings reveal the values and resources inherent in the household along with the parents' thoughts about education, they are counter balanced with examples of times when families may pose limiting factors in the pursuit of education. In presenting the findings I attempt to honor and respect families' voices and treat their experiences and stories as valuable learning resources for researchers and practitioners (Auerbach, 2002). However, I seek not just to report. I seek to analyze the data in ways that yield insight into the lived experiences of my sample of household clusters, in their funds of knowledge, their educational ideologies, and their forms of parental involvement in their children's education.

As with other studies of funds of knowledge in households, the families in this study exhibited many forms of knowledge. Children learned to do home repairs from their parents and grandparents. Family routines were established in regards to cooking and chores in order to help work through busy weeks. Extended family members were tapped into to help with childcare, information resources, and car repair. However, I have chosen to focus on three key areas within funds of knowledge that relate directly to educational practices and college knowledge. The funds of knowledge section will

highlight daily educational practices within the household, extended family and social networks, and pre-existing college knowledge.

Educational ideologies are often influenced by the school systems, media, and those closest to us who have various educational experiences. The families in this study developed their educational ideologies in diverse ways. The first section within this theme explores the sources of college information and how those sources contributed to the development of educational ideologies. While social networks certainly played a role in shaping educational ideologies, academic cultural symbols also were very influential in creating families' perceptions and expectations about college. What follows is a section on the college aspirations and limitations present in participants' homes. Examples illustrate that even when families' have high educational hopes for their children, financial situations, work situations, and in some cases, a lack of understanding can limit those college aspirations. Educational ideologies are dynamic and shift over time in distinctive ways. The next section, shifting educational ideologies, presents shifts in ideologies both across generations and over the course of the Parent Outreach Program. Finally, the section ends with a description of ideologies of success and perceptions of what success is, who education is for, and how success is measured.

As described in the literature review, parental involvement is linked with enhanced academic success in children. The section on parental involvement attempts to reconstruct traditional notions of involvement. While both external and internal examples of involvement are presented, the section also provides examples of non-traditional involvement. Such involvement is based on families' characteristics and experiences and

is not necessarily accepted or documented in the current parental involvement literature. For example, what is provided in the literature describes the negative impact that full-time working mothers have on involvement. However, two mothers in this study illustrate how working full-time at their children's school can be a positive influence on involvement as opposed to a negative influence, revealing the importance of *where* mothers work, not just whether mothers work. Before presenting the findings I would first like to introduce each family.

Family Profiles

I choose to open each family profile utilizing the definitions and stories of family as characterized by the families themselves. My observation notes will supplement their own definitions as will the chart (see Table 3) outlining each family member, their ages and occupations, level of education, and school attended.

All too often societal definitions of family are narrowly represented as ideals or "normal". A normal family is seen as never-divorced, two (opposite sex) parents with two children. In reality, fewer than one-fourth of family units are captured in this definition. Because of the continued ideal family-type perception held by school administrators and others within dominant groups, hegemonies of family are created and can lead to negative judgments and self-perceptions about family units (Heilman, 2008).

Definitions of family are also constructed differently between cultural groups. Both biological and non-biological members may be considered family, siblings, kin, and the like. Thus, issues of culture, language, and subjectivity in individual family

definitions become important (Heilman, 2008). It is for these reasons that the use of

household clusters (Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg, 2005) to define the families within this

study becomes more appropriate and culturally sensitive.

I began the first oral history interview with each family with the following

question, "How would you characterize your family?" I prompted parents by asking them

to talk about both their immediate and extended families if they were not initially

mentioned. I was struck by how different each of the answers were, the various salient

factors in their answers, the anecdotes that accompanied each answer, and how one

question would often carry the majority of the conversation. Each family member

(including the children) was allowed to choose their own pseudonyms; first and last

names, and the name of schools have been changed to maintain confidentiality of the

participants. Family profiles are presented below in alphabetical order.

The Borquez Family: Educational lessons learned from sports

Oh, with my kids, it's like, some of my friends tell me I'm kind of hard on my

kids, and I said no, I'm not hard. I go, I'm a single parent. I don't want them

taking advantage of me. Because the older they get they're gonna try to be more

slick. They're gonna try to lie more. They're gonna try…

I was brought up by my grandparents most of the time, so grandparents are more

strict, you know, do this, do that, you gotta earn this. And then me being in the

military, I have that mentality of no, you've gotta do this right. I'm teaching you

once. If you keep messing up, I'm punishing you. I'm taking this away from you.

(Will, Army veteran and student, daughters ages 9, 11)

Sports. That is the single, central theme in every conversation that I had with Will Borquez, a single father, age 34, who is an Army veteran and a current college student at the local community college. Will was raising his two daughters, Veronica, age 11, a 5th grader, and Jennifer, age 9, a 3rd grader, both enrolled at Los Nidos Elementary School. While his relationship with their mother was a respectful one, she was not considered part of their household cluster. However, there were two other family members living with Will and his daughters. Will's best friend from the Army, Rodrigo, age 30 and his girlfriend, Aracely, age 20, both contributed to the household income, chores, routines, and caretaking.

When you walk into Will's home you immediately notice two things – the first being the food that was almost always cooking. Will's oldest daughter loved cooking and finding new recipes and we had many conversations about Rachel Ray and her 30-minute meals. You often could smell the beans cooking before you even entered their home and before we began our official interview I was always offered any of the food that I wanted. The second thing that was evident was the amount of sports memorabilia in the living room. There were two tall bookshelves against one wall. One of the shelves held all of Will's football pictures, trophies, and the like. He was very proud of his days playing football for a community college in Arizona. The other shelf held all of his daughters' football pictures, cheerleading pictures, and trophies. They were as much into the game

as he was. There was always a football or basketball game playing in the background and if it wasn't on TV it was an Xbox sports game that Will and Rodrigo were playing as I walked in.

Another wall housed Will's medals that he received for his wheelchair sports. While home from the Army Will was in a car accident and thrown from his Jeep. He is paralyzed from the chest down but has continued to be very involved in sports as a volunteer football coach at the high school and competing nationally in various wheelchair sporting activities. Sports was not just a hobby for this father, he took the lessons learned from coaching, competing, and playing and turned them into life lessons for himself and his daughters. His daughters were taught early on to be independent and Veronica acts like the little mother. In addition to cooking, she is always watching Jennifer, cleaning and doing chores. Will expressed that he never wants them to have to depend on others for anything and that he never wants them to take life for granted. His daughters are certainly learning independence, but there is a lot of pressure put on Veronica to act as the caretaker of the family. Although Veronica enjoys learning about cooking and new recipes, there is a tremendous amount of responsibility placed on this 11 year old, a topic that will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter.

Of all of the families Will had the most first-hand knowledge about college. He had been enrolled in various community colleges in Arizona and California and was currently enrolling at the local university. He was frustrated (and offered a lot of feedback) with how information was presented in the Parent Outreach Program. He felt that the program did not value those parents who came in with college knowledge. Will's

experience was valuable, but there were key factors about the college-going experience that he had not yet grasped (although he presented himself as the expert). Thus, when Will called me to inform me that he was leaving the program I honestly was not surprised. He did however continue to meet with me.

During our last interview I was fortunate to meet Will's mother. She is a wonderful woman who lives nearby and wants to help Will and the girls more than he will allow. When she walked in she seemed to know who I was and all about the conversations Will and I had had over the last semester. She was very interested in joining our conversation and I ended up staying and speaking with both of them for quite a while about the negative portrayals of Mexicans on the south side of town. She was a great person to be able to meet as part of Will's household cluster.

The Johnson Family: Creating the cycle

Well as you can see we are a mixed family. I am black, and the kids' dad is Mexican so the kids ask some crazy questions like, "Mama, are you black? And are we black?" So we try to tell them you are both. "You are not just black. You are not just Mexican. You are both." My family they are far away so they are in Florida. They barely see them. My husband's family they are just down the road from us so they spend a lot of time with them. They are not bilingual. My husband does speak Spanish but not to the kids. I don't know why. Even the grandparents they really don't to the kids as much. The younger two siblings of

my husband don't speak it at all so I guess the grandparents just wanted to teach

their kids English is all.

(Danielle, corrections officer, children ages 6, 7)

Danielle Johnson, age 27 worked full-time night shifts as a corrections officer.

Danielle was the only person from this family with whom I had conversations and

interviewed. Her husband, Ricardo was age 28 during the time of the interviews and was

currently enrolled in online courses through the local community college. Both had

served and met while in the Army as chemical specialists. Together they had two

children, John who was in the 1st grade and Yvette who was in kindergarten; both

attended San Clemente Elementary School.

It is interesting that Danielle is the only parent in the sample to address identity

issues of race or ethnicity when describing her family. Perhaps it is reflective that all of

the families knew I was studying Mexican families or perhaps it had more to do with that

she was the only parent that had to address issues of bi-racial identity with her children.

Nonetheless, it was a salient point for Danielle and one that we discussed from time to

time when she felt that it was relevant to the conversation.

Each of the conversations with Danielle took place in a library. Our initial

meeting took place one afternoon after the children finished school. We decided to meet

in the school library and I found Danielle to be very polite and somewhat quiet. Likewise,

her children were very polite, quiet and actually put their heads down on the table to

sleep during the entire first interview. My first thought was that these children were the

most well-behaved that I had met during all of the different interviews. Danielle expected

that her children respect the adult conversation with quiet, and the children responded accordingly. The interviews that followed took place at the local community library. Although I thought our relationship was always a bit formal, during the last couple of interviews I realized how much Danielle was opening up and excited to learn about what I was writing and finding. She began asking many questions during the final interview and was engaged in the process in a way that the other families were not. She was using this experience to create what she called, the "cycle of education" in her home.

Throughout each of our conversations Danielle talked about wanting to go back to school and became more excited about it as the outreach program progressed. In fact, she was one of the parents to win a refurbished computer because of her perfect attendance during the Parent Outreach Program. To get her computer she had to attend a class about how to use a computer, install software, hook it up to the printer, etc. She left this class with a new feeling of empowerment and commented that she did not need her husband to help her put together the computer. It was during this conversation that she mentioned that in order for her children to seriously think about college, she needed to do it too. She saw the cycle created with her cousin, her cousin's husband and their daughter. Both parents went to college and the cycle was created for their daughter to attend as well. She wanted to create that for her own family. By the time we conducted our final interview she had enrolled in classes at the local community college.

The Lopez Family: Working to create a new community in a new place

> Well, his parents – his family is all from California. We are all from California. My parents were from California, too. They just moved here seven years ago – so we are California people. It's a lot different from Tucson.

> We are a blend of family. Both of us had a child before we got married, and then we had a child together so we are what people called a blended family.
>
> (Janice, insurance biller, daughters ages 5, 12, 14)

When I first began meeting with the Lopez family they were still trying to find their place and community in Tucson. Janice, age 29, an insurance biller, explained that they had moved from California to be in Tucson with her parents as her father was ill. Both Janice and her husband, Isaiah, age 39, a painter and DJ, felt that home was still in California. All of their friends and extended family, as well as Janice's daughter from a previous marriage, Vanessa, were still in California. Janice and Isaiah have two daughters, Virginia, who was in 7th grade at Champion Middle School is Isaiah's daughter from a previous marriage. Their other daughter, Veronica was in 1st grade at San Clemente Elementary School. The entire family was welcoming and friendly.

Almost every interview began with Veronica (age 5) talking to me about what sport she was preparing for, how school had been, and what event they had just come from. Janice was always in the background getting dinner ready and showed me how every weekend she would prepare and freeze food for the entire week. During one of the interviews she pulled out homemade French bread pizza; she also had enchiladas and

lasagna ready to be popped in the oven on another night. Our interviews always took place sitting at their dining room table and all but one included both Janice and Isaiah. Their home was very comfortable with animals and children running around. Like other mothers in the study Janice was more comfortable with children coming to her house than letting her daughters go to someone else's home. As I left their home late one evening I was greeted by a yard full of girls who performed a cheer for us while I walked out of their driveway.

As the semester continued I observed the ways in which Janice and Isaiah were integrating into their new community. Janice was becoming more active in their church, attending Lenten classes on Thursday evenings. Isaiah was now coaching their youngest daughter's t-ball team and was busy with practice almost every evening. In fact, we began one of our interviews at the softball field where it was evident that this was a central gathering place for many young families in the community. By the time our interviews ended Janice and Isaiah were talking about starting an ASA softball team for teenage girls in the area since none of the competitive teams or leagues were located in the south side of the city.

Although Janice and Isaiah were becoming more comfortable with their new community, it was evident how much they missed "home" (California). They often talked about the next visit home and how much they missed their circle of family and friends. Both Janice and Isaiah were still struggling to understand the differences in the school systems, their neighborhood, and just the city in general. While they were grateful that

they were able to purchase a home here, an unrealistic dream in California, they were not yet quite ready to call the city home.

I became very close with this family and it was easy to observe and document examples of funds of knowledge. Because of Isaiah's work as a DJ and painter examples of reciprocity were plentiful. One evening they told me about their wedding and how they did not end up paying for anything but Janice's dress. Everything was covered by family and friends who were returning the favors of Isaiah's DJing for them. One contributed food for the wedding, another DJed for them, and so on. I never (foolishly so) expected these examples of reciprocity to show up in my own relationship with them, but in fact we developed such a level of trust and friendship that they did. They were in need of a used car and I helped them connect with a couple of people who I knew were selling cars. I was in need of a DJ for our summer program and Isaiah happily agreed to DJ two events for me at a very low price. The relationship that was created with the Lopez family was incredible and I hope to continue it in the following years.

The Murrieta Family: Like a school of whales – individuals belonging to the same group

> I always say we're very united, and we're very crazy, we're very social. We get together all the time. My aunt is married to a white guy, and he says, he describes us as whales, because he says, "Whales don't need to know that they're gonna get together; they just do." Because like we'll just be at my house and all of a sudden everybody's there, like on a Sunday.

We're very supportive of each other. I think we have a good family, and we don't

– we just look out for each other all the time, and we know we can rely on each

other for different things.

(Tanya, OB technician, children ages 6, 9, 11)

Tanya Murrieta, an obstetrics technician (age 30) has by far the largest household

cluster of all the families in the study. Tanya is single mother raising three children, Sal,

5th grade, Selena, 3rd grade and Alex, kindergarten. However, Tanya, the oldest of her

own siblings, also serves as a primary caretaker for her sisters' and brother's children.

Tanya lived with her mother in a modest trailer on a small piece of land about twenty

minutes from the south side of town. Within the actual physical household lived Tanya's

mother, Ernestina, age 52, a housekeeper; Ernestina's boyfriend, Antonio, a janitor;

Tanya and her three children; Tanya's younger sister, Laura, age 20, an administrative

assistant; and Laura's daughter, Beatrice, age 2. The house was always bustling

especially when you consider the entire household cluster. Tanya was very close with her

siblings, all of whom spent family trips together, served as caretakers of one another's

children, and kept each other's needs and concerns very close. The remainder of the

household cluster included Tanya's sister, Maria, age 27 and her three children (ages 7, 6,

and 2) and her brother, Carlos, age 29, and his three children (ages 10, 6, and 6 months).

Because Tanya worked night shifts at the university hospital as an obstetrics

technician, we met at locations that were convenient for her work schedule. Interviews

took place at a local bagel shop, in the cafeteria of her place of work, as well as in her

home on her days off. Her children were often present during the conversations, but they did not contribute to the conversations like some of the other children in the study. Instead, they were more interested in getting my attention with regards to their books and toys. It was evident that each child, whether they were Tanya's own children or those of her siblings, had a specific role. Tanya's daughter, who was one of the oldest, was in charge of making sure that each of the younger children were cleaning their designated areas. Each knew they were in charge of watching out for the other.

Unfortunately, Tanya's family had their share of difficult times and a history of abuse. However, it was because of these circumstances that the family drew strength from one another and kept each other so close. They were not just caretakers of the family, but protectors as well. This sometimes led to frustrations as Tanya expressed a desire to move out of her mother's home on a couple of different occasions and her mother would convince her otherwise. Their family became a source of support but also made it difficult to wander too far. Tanya's own children do not have a close relationship with their respective fathers but their extensive household cluster certainly provides a number of positive adult role models.

The flurry of activity always present in Tanya's home is reflective of the amount of activity in her own life. In addition to working full-time and serving as a central family caretaker, Tanya was also taking community college classes part-time and had aspirations of starting her own party planning and decorating business with her sister. Tanya's life was busy, her home was even busier, and I worry that when it comes time for her children to sit down in a quiet space they may not have that space available. Even among

all of the activities and sometimes chaos, she (like many other families in the study) went out of her way to make time to meet with me. We immediately had a connection as we had both worked with the same people in the obstetrics department at the university hospital. There was never a shortage of topics and stories for us to talk about and she did not hesitate to share both the good and the bad parts of her family's life.

The Rodriguez Family: Achieving the impossible – accessible education for special-needs children

> I want to say that we have been here since – I went to school here so it would have had to have been before I went to first grade or kindergarten. I am sure they had first grade and not kindergarten back then. Because I remember I only used to speak – I used to stay with my grandmother while my parents worked, and she only spoke Spanish so I only spoke Spanish, and it was really hard when I went to school because I had to learn to speak English. We had lived in California in Oakland for a while, and then we came to live here and so I spent most of my time with my grandmother, and that's all we could communicate so it was really hard to learn to speak English and then try remembering the Spanish. It was really weird.

> We were always very close as a family. We did mostly everything together. Everything was like a big celebration. My mother's brothers and her sister were

together, and we would celebrate everything over and over. It would be like you

would haul presents to one house and all that stuff and come back.

(Linda, administrative assistant, children ages 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15)

If I had to choose a description of the Rodriguez family it would be unbelievable

balance. Linda, age 50, an administrative assistant and mother of eight children is a

modern-day version of superwoman. She has two biological daughters, Sylvia, age 29

and Elisa, age 26. Linda also has six adopted children who all have various physical,

learning, and behavioral disabilities. Her children range in age from 6 to 15. The whole

notion of parental involvement and college-going is reframed for this mother because of

the amount of responsibility necessary for her to ensure success for her children. The idea

of success is also reframed because unlike most families whose aspirations are set at

college and beyond, Linda works to ensure her children make it through the day, have

proper accommodations at school, meet with doctors and therapists, and the list

continues.

Her parents, Pedro, age 77, a retired head custodian at a middle school and Olivia,

age 69, a retired factory worker, also live with her and are the adopted parents of two of

the six children. Perhaps these children are the luckiest of all because they have four

parents (Linda, her parents and her daughter) all serving as caretakers and role models.

Her oldest daughter also lives in the home. Both English and Spanish are spoken in the

home among the adults and especially in the telenovelas that the grandmother watches

every evening.

Linda shared with me that she leaves work every day by 1pm so that she can spend the afternoon at the children's schools. It is there that she meets with teachers, therapists, and principals to ensure proper accommodations for her children. Linda is an advocate, not just for her own children but for every child with a disability. During our final interview, I was sitting on her living room floor playing with her daughter's 3 month old son. Linda was sitting with me as were her two oldest daughters. Her oldest daughters started telling me that Linda had been asked to speak at various functions for organizations that work with foster children. They were so proud of their mom (Linda was a bit embarrassed) and so excited to share these stories about her. She expressed that she has learned to not take no for an answer (sometimes to the dismay of school administrators) and is determined to provide her children with every opportunity possible.

My conversations with Linda took place primarily in her home, in which she and her parents were painting and installing tile throughout most of the semester, and in her van. The walls of Linda's family room were filled with movies from top to bottom; coloring books, crayons, and educational toys were also found in various locations of the house. Her van was an extension of her home. We met one afternoon at her daughters' ballet practice. While one daughter was inside in practice Linda sat in the van with her two others daughters and had them complete their homework while waiting for their practice to begin. We conducted the interview sitting in her van. I was impressed that each compartment had something else the girls might need – books, homework, movies, food – it was all there for them in the van.

While I know that at times Linda was frustrated because the Parent Outreach Program did not cover college-going information for students with disabilities, she was also incredibly grateful because for at least one of her daughters it provided a new set of experiences and confidence. Linda actually called it life-changing for her daughter who attended Math Camp during the summer and was becoming involved at school. She credits this change to the program. I honestly learned more from this mother than I could have ever shared with her and left each interview in awe of her perseverance and dedication.

The Tabers Family: College Conversations & Moons over my Hammy

I have tons of aunts and uncles…My dad is the oldest of nine, and I believe that one uncle is the only one that went to a college or university. I have a couple of uncles who went through the Marines. One actually retired from the Marines. The other one is now out and doing something else. My dad and my mom they – I think what they told me is they did go to college. They started with it but they never finished it. They chose to have a family versus having careers.

My sister she went to the [local university] for a while after high school…So I think she was only there for a year, but she did like what normal every freshman did and had a full blown schedule so she kind of got caught up in everything.

(Valerie, accounts receivable representative, daughter age 7)

"Moons over my hammy" (a breakfast plate with eggs and ham served at Denny's) might seem like a funny title for interviews with families but it is actually quite appropriate for the conversations and relationship that I developed with the Tabers family. When I first asked Valerie Tabers, a single mother, age 25, an accounts receivable representative, where she wanted to meet she chose to meet at the local community library and expressed that she was embarrassed for me to see her house. I later learned that she was selling her small trailer because of termite and water damage. We ended up instead at the local Denny's restaurant because the library closed early on Friday evenings. Denny's became our spot and we had dinner together (along with Valerie's daughter, Aracely, age 7) almost every other Friday for most of the semester. As we began our first conversation I ordered club sandwich and fries (which I shared with Aracely) and Valerie ordered "moons over my hammy" and our college conversations began.

Education was a central value in Valerie's family. In fact, her great-grandparents actually created a scholarship for family members to attend the local university (all tuition and fees paid). Only a couple older cousins had utilized the funds, and Valerie hoped to return to school at some point. Unfortunately, the pattern of starting college but not finishing was common for Valerie's family. So far she was unable to do so because the scholarship stipulated that students must be enrolled full-time. Valerie was working full-time and taking care of her daughter, financially she could not afford to give up a full-time job for school. About halfway through the semester Valerie moved in with her parents, Francisco, age 50 and Alexis, age 40, both customer service representatives, in

order to save money towards purchasing a new home. She was able to buy a small piece of land in a town east of the city and was excited to live there because she knew the school district was much stronger and because Aracely would have access to her own computer while at school. Valerie's older sister, Veronica, age 28 and her two children, Josiah (age 7) and Josephine (age 6) were also part of her household cluster. Valerie and Veronica would take turns watching the kids. Veronica was in charge of picking up all three kids from catechism each week and on Valerie's days off she took all three kids to the local parks and such. Every Thursday after catechism the family would get together at Valerie's parents' home for dinner and then the three women would sit and watch *Grey's Anatomy* together. It became their weekly routine that Valerie always looked forward to.

Aracely became the most active child in the entire research project and shared many of her own opinions about school, family life and the fun activities she would do with her mom. One of their favorite things to do on warm evenings was to ride their bikes through the park. We decided to meet at the park for our last interview so that Aracely could ride her bike while we talked. It was there that Valerie shared with me how Aracely's father had died less than a year prior. He was mentioned often during our conversations and it was evident that Valerie was still working through the grief. They had Aracely soon after finishing high school and were no longer together, but Valerie still looked to him for friendship and support. Aracely did not know that her father had committed suicide, she only knew that he was now in heaven.

Like Danielle Johnson, Valerie was the recipient of one of the refurbished computers offered to parents with perfect attendance during the program. Both Danielle

and Valerie mentioned each other and how much they connected during their computer class. Both women were leaving the program with a new supportive friend, a new computer, and excitement about college for themselves and their children.

As illustrated, multiple examples of funds of knowledge are present in these families. Examples are presented in the family profiles and in each section of the findings. However, the following section is dedicated solely to familial funds of knowledge and their relationship with education.

Familial funds of knowledge

Funds of knowledge have been part of Mexican families and their experiences long before researchers began recognizing and documenting their survival processes. In some K-12 classrooms these funds of knowledge are becoming effective pedagogical tools. Funds of knowledge were found in numerous areas within the families in this study. Funds of knowledge included: information transfer about education and life lessons, household maintenance and repair, caretaking, examples of reciprocity in services such as DJing, car maintenance and babysitting, and learning financial responsibility through family business. For the purposes of this study, I expand upon three key areas of funds of knowledge that focus primarily on educational practices and access to educational resources: daily educational practices within the household, extended family and social networks, and pre-existing family college knowledge.

Daily educational practices within the household

       Commitment to education is illustrated in non-mainstream forms of teaching, from *consejos* (advice-giving narratives) (Valdés, 1996; Valencia & Black, 2002) to the use of funds of knowledge (Vélez-Ibáñez, 1996; Valencia & Black, 2002). Like forms of social and cultural capital for Mexican families, educational ideologies stretch beyond the conventional ideas of encouraging students to further their education, helping students fill out college applications, and encouraging college visitations. While some of these behaviors are in fact exhibited in Mexican families, one also must recognize how educational ideologies and practices take on alternative forms. Unfortunately, most educational institutions (including secondary and post-secondary, outreach programs, and educators) do not recognize the non-traditional educational practices of under-represented families. Likewise, the families themselves have difficulty connecting their daily practices to educational goals and outcomes. Families in the study often talked about how much they did not know in regard to education and the college process. Throughout the course of this study I observed and heard many stories about a number of different educational practices present in the households, but when asked what families did in the home to push their children a little bit further outside of the classroom I received the following answers:

       At home every now and then she is actually on the computer playing the Curious
       George game that we have which has like math in it, has reading in it, has writing
       in it. It is like a whole phonics type thing on this game. She does that. She reads.
       We play a lot of board games. I know we generally play War a lot, too. I mean I

don't know if that is part of school work, but we play a lot of board games and a

lot of fun games.

(Valerie, accounts receivable specialist, daughter age 7)

While this mother did mention a number of key educational practices, she was unsure as

to whether or not they officially counted as helping with school work. There was not

recognition that the computer games, board games, and card games were teaching her

daughter (Aracely, age 7) about important logic, strategy, and computer skills. The same

mother provided another example of her daughter learning how to type on a keyboard.

Valerie: She actually goes on Word and pretends to type.

Interviewer: How funny.

Valerie: Because she sees me typing with all my ten fingers, and you will

               see her sitting there like this.

Interviewer: I bet she can learn pretty fast.

Aracely: I just go dee-dee-dee.

Valerie: Of course it is just mumbo-jumbo but hopefully soon she will put

               in words.

This example is critical because Aracely is experimenting with new educational practices

on the keyboard. Ultimately, this will allow for Aracely to gain confidence and

knowledge for when she begins learning how to type at school. When asked the same

question another mother, Danielle gave the following response, "Just homework, that's it.

That's all I know so that is what I go over." Yet, during another portion of the

conversation she explained in detail how she created spelling quizzes for her son each week,

> Like for his spelling test. I am not home the night before his test – usually they are on Fridays – so I am always calling in the mornings and have a little quiz for him so he makes his grades.
>
>   (Danielle, corrections officer, children ages 7, 6)

Finally, one mother expressed frustration in not being able to see her daughter's textbook. She felt limited because she did not know how the teacher wanted her to teach her daughter when she was at home and felt as though her own knowledge about the subject matter was wrong and hindering her daughter.

> Even now her teacher, Ms. Castro her math teacher, I went to parent-teacher conference and they don't let kids take school books home. She gave me all the curriculum books because I made her get an F in her first like homework packet because I helped her do graphs, and I helped her do them wrong. So I was showing her how I remembered it being done. So when I went to Ms. Castro I said "I don't have your textbook to refer to how you want me to teach my daughter."
>
>   (Janice, insurance biller, daughters ages 14, 12, 5)

 It is evident that the families' definition of working with the children at home meant working through homework problems associated with the textbook and she felt very frustrated when her own knowledge limited the way in which she helped her daughter. Fortunately, this mother felt comfortable enough in sharing those concerns with her

daughter's teacher. However, it was clear that this family also engaged in a number of other educational practices beyond the traditional textbook homework problems. Janice later shared with me that her family had an annual pass to the zoo and that they enjoyed going to outdoor museums (like the Desert Museum and air shows). She also shared that her daughters would often go to the Disney channel website to practice math games and that both daughters had older computers in their rooms. Clearly, funds of knowledge demonstrating numerous educational practices are present in this household. Not only are the children learning about computers, they are learning about the climate, landscape, animals, and history of the city.

In order for families to begin realizing that these common everyday practices are linked with educational outcomes and have value for their children, it is important that we begin to recognize and validate these practices and teach families how to use these practices for academic advancement. Outreach programs have the opportunity formally integrate discussions on these types of educational practices. Advice on how to create new educational practices in the home should be addressed beyond just helping children with their homework. In fact, during a short break at one of the weekly sessions, one mother took the following advice from another parent. These conversations were the result of the new friendships and social networks developed during the program.

> I know the other parents that were in the classes gave me ideas like one of them
> had stated to basically give her her own little corner with a desk and just have an
> hour playing school instead of just letting her lay in her room or doing certain
> little things. They had that. Then another mom had mentioned that they set aside

at least 2 hours every day for just family time where they do whatever they want to do – play games, read books, and I thought of that – doing little things like that with her.

(Valerie, accounts receivable specialist, daughter age 7)

These important strategies were already present within some of the households. They did not come as recommendations from the program itself, but were encouraged and discussed during one of the sessions. Ideally, through these sharing opportunities educational practices will be linked to topics studied at school, future courses children might enroll in during high school and college, and ultimately, future career paths.

Extended family and social networks

Even during the early establishment of Mexican communities in the U.S. (1850's – 1900's) a pattern of creating social capital is illustrated. Working class people relied on the process of visitation and dropping by. These visits created household strategies that helped to soothe the impact of discrimination (educational, social, economic, and cultural) (Vélez-Ibáñez, 1996). It also resulted in community and volunteer groups. Families invest significant time and energy in social networks, utilizing them as ways of passing on knowledge and coping with complex situations (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). This practice is done through family rituals: holiday time spent together, birthdays, weddings, religious events and dinners (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). Less formal are those social interactions mentioned above, the visitations and occasions that allow one another to just drop by. Thus, familism and the rituals surrounding the

family serve as a central value and a central means for increasing life chances (Valdés, 1996).

Extended family and social networks played critical roles in each of the families participating in this study. These networks were deeply integrated in educational settings and experiences. A grandmother in the study shared how for generations her family had been tied to the local school district:

Well my children and myself and my husband have all been in the Southside school district. We're all Southside graduates. We're kind of picking it up by experience and then my sister works there and my mother volunteers there. We kind of know the schools and we know the principals, we kind of know what we're looking for. Now I know we're looking at a junior high next for the oldest, but we're also looking beyond that to a high school. Now I know what high school I'd like to put him in, but that's not the high school he would like to attend. He wants to go to a Catholic school, so right now I'm kind of looking at that also. That's normally how we base our decisions, what we hear, what we see, talking to one another. As far as friends we have that work in the schools – how good the schools are, how under control the principal has the school, that's very important to me.

(Perla, pilot interview, occupation unknown, grandchildren ages 11, 9, 8)

Perla's family's primary source of educational information is from family and friends that work within the school district. They are part of an extensive social network with first-hand knowledge about how the school district functions. However, while this family has

knowledge and networks at the middle school and high school level, it has not yet translated into college-going opportunities.

Another mother mentioned that she kept on top of important school information by checking in with her neighbors,

My neighbor yeah, her daughter is in the same class that Antonio is. So basically we get notes and we'll call each other and say, "okay, did you get this note? And what do you think?" So we touch base. And when I was picking him after school before I drove in, the moms all waited under the tree and compared notes and checked in and see what we thought.

(Ana, pilot interview, occupation unknown, son age 9)

Social networks are considered the means by which information is transferred or channeled from one member to another. Although sometimes these social relations are maintained for other purposes, they provide a means for new information to be acquired and new action to be performed (Coleman, 1988). Portes (2000) summarized that according to Bourdieu, social capital can be traded for other forms of capital and can seldom be acquired without the investment of resources and/or knowledge, which leads to the development of relations with others.

The important element within these families is that extended family and social networks already exist. Processes like "dropping by" allow for families to tap into those networks for educational information. These same networks must not only be tapped into for middle school and high school information, they must link families to other networks, thus enhancing and expanding their educational information, their social networks, and

social capital beyond high school. The same skills that families are tapping into to navigate middle and high school, can be used utilized to navigate a college setting as well. In fact, one father addressed the idea of social networks with the following:

> Teach them [parents] how to be a people person, not just towards students and peers and instructors, but the whole administration. Know who your dean is. Know who to go to if your instructor can't help you. Who do you go to next?
>
> (Will, Army veteran and student, daughters ages 9, 11)

In essence, he was recommending families learn how to activate their own social capital in a college setting.

Pre-existing family college knowledge

Oftentimes, parents from low-income and minority populations are perceived by school administrators and teachers as resistant to school efforts and uncommitted to their children's learning process. These erroneous beliefs about low-income parents ultimately discount parents' views and diminish the value that parents place on education (Lott, 2001). The basis of this deficit view is claimed to stem from the concept of "familial deficits" (Valencia & Black, 2002, p. 83). This claim argues that Mexican Americans do not hold education in high value, thus leading to inadequate familial socialization for academic competence, in turn, contributing to school failure for Mexican American children (Valencia & Black, 2002). Families in this study shared numerous examples of pre-existing college knowledge. This knowledge came from first-hand experiences, as well as the experiences of extended family members. In a conversation about college

costs and financial aid, one mother expressed that she was not concerned since she had

gone through the process with her husband who was currently enrolled in classes through

the local community college:

> Interviewer: How about understanding college costs? Do you feel like you
>
>   understand tuition?
>
> Danielle: I went through it with my husband so I never was scared about
>
>   that.
>
> Interviewer: Do you feel comfortable looking for financial aid and
>
>   scholarships?
>
> Danielle: Yeah. Even if they wanted a loan and pay it back when you are
>
>   done, it doesn't matter. It gets paid back.
>
> Interviewer: So the affordability piece –
>
> Danielle: It doesn't scare me.
>
>   (Danielle, corrections officer, children ages 6, 7)

Not only did the process not scare this mother, she was familiar with different types of

financial aid and knew that loans were available and could be repaid after graduation.

Another parent had been enrolled at numerous community colleges both in Arizona and

California and was dually enrolled in the local community college and university. He was

well versed in educational terminology, navigating the process of registering for classes,

placement tests, and advising. He offered useful insight on his own college-going process

and explained that he had offered advice to other parents during program session breaks.

Will: Parents themselves are already stressing. He (another father) was

                asking me a lot of questions. How much does it cost to go to

                school? And I tell him, well, this much but every subject – you

                don't know how much the books are gonna cost. You don't know

                what materials you're gonna need. You don't know until that first

                day and they give you the paper and say –

Interviewer: Yeah. Go buy a lab coat. Go buy this.

Will: Your expenses move up and what they're using – they're using

                averages. They shouldn't use an average. They just say, okay, say

                you're taking Geology 101. Okay. You need Geology book by so

                and so, plus you need the lab book, plus you need these materials.

                Give them an idea of each subject how much it's gonna be.

                                         (Will, student and Army veteran, daughters ages 11, 9)

His insight into the true costs of each course is an important one. Oftentimes, parents are

given current estimates of college tuition without knowledge of additional costs in each

course – books, lab fees, and supplies. Although it is difficult to provide the accurate

costs of each individual course, integrating some of this information into program

sessions could easily be accomplished. For instance, an important strategy would be to

teach parents how to read course syllabi and navigate college bookstore websites to

determine what supplies might be needed for certain types of courses. The same father

also offered college advice to his own mother as illustrated in the following quote,

My mom called and she goes I want to go to school I said mom, you know you

gotta take a placement test. She goes how come you didn't tell me before? It's

not fair for a parent to show up – hey, I want to register. Okay. Right away they

say, well, get your information, go upstairs, go take a test.

(Will, student and Army veteran, daughters ages 11, 9)

Will's example highlights another limitation sometimes found in families. Although

family members may have the encouragement and motivation to enroll in college, an

incomplete understanding about the necessary admissions requirements (such as

placement tests) may exist. Families in the study typically knew that an SAT or ACT

score was required, but they did not have knowledge about specific enrollment tests or

admissions requirements.

Parents enrolled in the Parent Outreach Program to find out more information

about sending their own children to college however, the college process was not entirely

foreign to them. Of the six families that completed extensive oral history interviews, each

family had at least one person who had enrolled in college classes. About half of the

families who participated in the pilot interviews had someone in their household cluster

that had enrolled in college classes. In some cases enrollment was at the local community

college, in other cases many of them had started at a university but did not (or had not yet

completed) complete a degree program. Again, this presents an opportunity for outreach

programs to highlight the important lessons and new questions that were developed from

families' collegiate experiences. In speaking with these families I was able to learn about

the financial aid process, the California State system, interesting places on the university

campus that one would not typically see during college tours, true costs of college classes, the role of academic advisors, and the list continues. Important college information does not need to come from the top down only. These families had first-hand knowledge and often, inside tips on how to navigate the process.

The funds of knowledge represented in these families extend beyond examples of reciprocity, children experimenting with learning the skills demonstrated by their families, and lessons learned from daily activities. These funds of knowledge are critically important and certainly present in families. However, the funds of knowledge that were presented in this section highlight those that are specific to education. Daily educational practices were illustrated in the households that connected directly to children's academic experiences, family and social networks provided key educational and college information, and many of these families demonstrated extensive pre-existing college knowledge. The educational information that families have along with their daily educational practices cannot be discounted. On the contrary, these funds of knowledge should be validated and encouraged.

Educational ideologies

It was evident in this study, as it is also supported in the literature (Valdés, 1996; Valencia & Black, 2002; Zarate, 2007), that Mexican parents placed a high value on education. This study presents additional evidence that families form educational ideologies in a variety ways and many times, those ideologies serve as positive

influences. Equally relevant, some of the families' ideologies also served as a limiting factor, although always coupled with a strong value of education.

A number of factors influence the development of families' educational ideologies. College artifacts and symbols are explored in greater detail, as is the role of social networks. The college process, including college choice and preparation, was constructed in non-traditional ways and often included an incomplete understanding of the process. A number of shifts in educational ideologies were found within each family. These shifts occurred across generations and represented ideologies about education that evolved with each new set of parents and children within the family. Ideological shifts were also found in the short time that families participated in the Parent Outreach Program. While the program did not change the value placed on education, it did allow families to see college as a more realistic option. Thoughts about educational choices were often found at two ends of the spectrum. Either families' college-choice process was limited to the local university or the local community college or they wanted their children to attend the most highly prestigious institutions. A few exceptions emerged where parents developed their college-choice ideologies based on a particular experience. Those examples will be highlighted in the next few pages. Finally, perceptions about educational success reflected the ways in which families project future educational aspirations for their children. This section is intended to shed light on both what educational ideologies are present in families and how those educational ideologies were formed.

Sources of College Information: Social networks, cultural symbols

Social networks. Conceptions of college were often formed by social and familial networks, and specifically by personal experience or immediate family members who had attempted college. In both the theories of social capital and funds of knowledge, social networks are considered the means by which information is transferred or channeled from one member to another. It is clear that these networks facilitate higher levels of productivity and achievement that would not be made possible without them (Coleman, 1988).

For example, a mother of two young boys was accepted to the local university after graduating from high school and explained,

> It was overwhelming to me the thought of it, and just money wise. I went to [the local community college] and then from there to a medical institute. I didn't even know where the university was when I graduated [high school].

> (Elsa, pilot interview, occupation unknown sons ages 10, 6)

Elsa went on to explain that her family was just happy that she had graduated high school and did not even realize there was college after high school. While education was a central value to this family, their conceptions of college were influenced by this mother's past experiences of feeling overwhelmed and served as a limiting factor in their development of college-going ideologies. Even though Elsa did take classes at the local community college that experience did not translate into higher levels of educational productivity for her or her family.

However, social networks also served as informational resources and provided families with concrete examples that they were able to aspire towards. One family had recently moved from California where their extended family still resided. A niece was attending San Jose State University and through conversations with her, the family learned about other institutions within the California State system. The mother also explained which campuses she preferred based on safety and size. Because of her niece's college experience this mother not only became aware of different institutions and had someone in college that she was able to ask college related questions to, but also understood the value of the experience of college as illustrated in the following quote,

> The great thing about it is this generation – not her generation but the generation before her – my nieces – they are going to college. Casandra is in her third year now. So hopefully when she starts showing interest, Casandra will be there to answer questions she might have and stuff. You know truly and honestly, Judy, if nothing else I want my girls to go to school and just experience life.
>
> (Janice, insurance biller, daughters ages 14, 12, 5)

A grandfather who participated in the pilot year of the Parent Outreach Program had extensive experience at the local university campus in his role as a vending machine repair man. He had this to offer, "I spend a lot of time there. We handle all the snack machines on campus. I'm down there quite often." This experience, although not a traditional university position, provided the grandfather with an understanding of the campus. He knew how to successfully navigate the physical campus. The grandfather's role as a vending machine repair man illustrates funds of knowledge in various forms.

His expertise in maintenance and repair fits the funds of knowledge framework as it demonstrates hands-on knowledge and strategies that can be taught within a family unit. When realizing that his role actually takes place on a university campus, one sees that his funds of knowledge extend beyond the household cluster and what may be considered a work-related or survival strategy creates an opportunity for his family to learn about an educational setting. Not only might this grandfather extend this knowledge to his family and introduce them to the educational setting, but the Parent Outreach Program could have easily been expanded upon that knowledge to help him and other parents navigate campus. In either case, the information was not being passed on to his family or to other families within the program. For example, a simple college tour could have been supplemented by the grandfather also showcasing spots on campus that are not frequently introduced to visitors. He often expressed that he could show me places on campus most people don't know about. Why not encourage the grandfather to do so? Such an act validates his role, builds confidence in his knowledge, and provides a concrete example of household expertise to the other parents.

Unfortunately, the link between knowledge of the physical campus and the translation into concrete college knowledge was not present. Although this grandfather did not know *how* to make college a reality he did know *where* to make college a reality. For some parents the physical campus itself serves as a barrier, accessible to only a select few. In this particular case the grandfather already had access to the physical campus, however, I am uncertain that he realized the access he was granted.

Building social capital among social networks of educators, parents, families, and community members provides positive outcomes. These outcomes are realized in the form of increased parental support and improved understanding of children's needs (Warren, 2005). I would add that social networks associated with educational experiences can also provide both improved understanding of the educational system and concrete expectations about future college attainment. However, if social networks are associated with negative educational experiences like a difficult transition from high school, taking courses and not finishing, or dropping out of college, one can also pass on educational ideologies surrounded by misinformation, fear, and lack of understanding. Perhaps this is best illustrated by the following example. Manuel was a participant in the pilot year of the Parent Outreach Program. He shared examples of the sacrifices he would make to ensure his sons went to college. Yet, he had a negative opinion of the program itself and the college information that was taught. Although I cannot say for certain, I attribute this to the negative experiences his wife had in attempting college and their assumption that because she attempted college they had much of the necessary knowledge to create a successful college-going experience for their own children.

> I kinda knew what they had to take in class to get in there [college], but I wanted more information on financial situations or maybe have some people there with like a college fund thing so we could start right now. They didn't have none of that stuff. That's kind of what I wanted more, more help financial wise – I really didn't care…They just dragged it on and on. The whole program I think was like 5 weeks too long.

(Manuel, pilot interview, occupation unknown sons ages 10, 6)

Academic cultural symbols. Symbols also played a role in influencing parents' and students' conceptions of college. Because this study does incorporate an anthropological approach, explaining the role that academic cultural symbols played is appropriate and key in understanding the ideologies of families. Symbols around the culture of education not only shaped the way in which families organized their mental worlds, but how they shaped their college-going realities.

For example, one mother offered the following when asked what colleges her son might attend, "Florida State. His dad has his ring and his dad says, 'Oh, my son's going to be a Seminole one day.'" While the mother was happy with any college choice, the father's collegiate experience and the symbolic role of the college ring had a significant influence in their son's educational ideologies. Another mother offered the following statement when asked if her son would go to college, "Oh he will. When he had his little cap and gown in kindergarten I said, 'Just three more to go'. So he already believes." The cap and gown served as symbolic markers on this family's college timeline.

One the most telling example of how cultural symbols shape educational ideologies is found in the following example, "the University of Michigan Story." I began the topic of college-choice by asking this father where he hoped his daughters would go to college. He responded with the following:

Father: My oldest one's already talking about Michigan.

Interviewer: Wow.

Father: She's had it, like, the last three years.

Interviewer: So how did she find out about Michigan?

Father: Play Station and me watching college football…. because

                 everybody just knows, oh, [the local university] because of

                 commercials, the news and everything. But it's true, if you watch

                 sports on the weekends, of another school, it's like wow. Because

                 you know, during the games, they give –

Interviewer: Right. They show little clips of the school.

Father: This is what you're going to get at this school. And when she saw

                 Michigan – first, the colors. Boom. But then I showed her, look at

                 the marching band because she's like me, "Oh, wow." And then,

                 she goes, "Let's look up Michigan," …. she just saw it and was

                 just like, "I want to go to that school."

                                   (Will, Army veteran and student, daughters ages 11, 9)

A couple of minutes into this conversation the daughter began playing the

University of Michigan fight song on her band instrument. The father interrupted the

conversation to explain to me what I was hearing. During a football game his daughter

had asked what the name of the fight song was for the University of Michigan. She

realized it was in her band songbook and began practicing the first four bars.

It is encouraging to see that this father and daughter have created such high

college aspirations. However, in all of my conversations with Will he very rarely

mentioned the steps necessary to achieve such aspirations. He understood college

entrance exams, how to meet with an advisor, and how to schedule classes, but did not address the steps necessary to complete the pre-college and college-choice process.

College sports as symbols played a significant role in another families' conception of college opportunities. As in the above example, I asked this mother where she envisioned her daughters going to college. She answered the question based on her oldest daughter's athletic abilities and current interest in softball.

> I don't know where – she's an awesome softball player. I truly, honestly think she's going to get called out by a college for softball. If that takes her to Tennessee, if it takes her Florida, if it takes her to Oklahoma, who am I to say, "No, don't go for it. Don't follow it," you know? I would like for the [the local university] to call her out for softball, but if they don't, they don't. Or UCLA's even closer than Florida, but whatever she wants to do. Wherever it takes her and it allows her to get an education, I'm going to be all for it.
>
> (Janice, insurance biller, daughters ages 14, 12, 5)

It is unclear in this example how much information the mother actually knows about each of the institutions mentioned, it is very clear however, that she is referencing some of the top collegiate softball programs in the country. Whether her daughter is good enough to play for a college team remains to be seen, the important aspect of this example is that this mother understands that there is a variety of choices when it comes to college opportunities. She may not have been aware of these institutions if her daughter were not a softball player.

These introductions to college campuses and the college-choice process are important because of their uniqueness and illustrate that there is no set definition of how parents in this study construct a conception of college. Educational ideologies and introductions to college do not follow a traditional pattern and certainly do not fit into what the literature currently says about the college-going process for under-represented students. These examples illustrate parents who are encouraging their children to attend out-of-state institutions (University of Michigan, ULCA, Florida State University, etc.) and ideologies that are formed out of college cultural symbols. As we help families navigate the college-going process we must not only teach families about college and the opportunities available (clearly some are already developing those aspirations on their own), but how to achieve those aspirations. We must help families build on their aspirations to understand the requirements of their choices and what their choices ultimately entail in terms of creating a path to college. Unfortunately, neither of these families completed the Parent Outreach Program. Therefore, they missed out some of the information teaching them about important steps in achieving their college goals.

The first example in this section demonstrated how a college ring could shape the educational future of a young child. The ring represented more than a piece of jewelry and became an educational goal, a physical place, an expectation, and an educational legacy. The second example illustrated a father tapping into his own funds of knowledge and love of sports. Watching football became a means to educate his daughters about college campuses. Not only did he take the time to use the Internet to introduce his daughter to the campus (again, based solely off of one short marketing clip during a

game) he also introduced her to the fight song. This allowed her to connect an abstract

idea about college with a concrete act of creating a college sound. Funds of knowledge

were successfully transferred from the father to the daughter and she has now

incorporated that knowledge into her own educational ideologies and created an

expectation for herself around a particular institution. The final example demonstrated

again, how love of a game (in this case softball) opened up out-of-state educational

possibilities for the family.

College aspirations and limitations

Barriers to college attendance: finances and choice. While all of the parents in the

outreach program aspired and expected their children to pursue a college education, their

aspirations were sometimes entangled with misconceptions and limitations.

Parents' educational aspirations for their children were often clouded by

anticipated financial barriers. When asked if there was anything that might stop their

child from attending college, many parents cited finances. However, knowledge of

potential financial assistance was often limited to scholarships. While parents did gain an

increased understanding of the costs of college through the Parent Outreach Program,

they did not have a complete understanding of the financial assistance available to them

and many left the program wanting more information about navigating the financial-aid

application process. Specifically, parents felt unsure about how to maintain financial aid

and scholarships. Although parents did not have complete information about the financial

aid process and felt that finances might serve as barriers, they offered examples of

sacrifice as to how they would compensate for those financial hurdles. These financial sacrifices took on many forms. One mother explained, "I've already decided that if I have to move back into a one-bedroom apartment, that's what I'll do." Another father stated that he was willing to scrub toilets on campus if it meant his sons would receive a tuition waiver. Financial concerns became just one more barrier to overcome.

However, there was one barrier to college that did not come with solutions. The most telling reason of why children would not continue on to college was due to, "their own choice." This barrier was referenced by most parents and it contradicted their commitment to the outreach program. When asked why parents decided to participate in the Parent Outreach Program, most mentioned reasons of gaining more college information for their children, and being able to help their children prepare for college, among other reasons. This contradiction serves as a limiting factor. Parents were enrolled in the Parent Outreach Program in an effort to ensure future college success, yet the decision was left up to the children whether they would attend college. In fact, one father offered the following regarding college expectations, "…and that's what I want for them, to be a good person. Education would be a bonus. That would be the icing on the cake." When considering the examples of college-going culture present in these families one sees that a contradiction has manifested. It has become the norm for many family members to attempt college and not finish, enroll in classes but have to drop out. We see that college expectations and ideologies were not integrated deeply enough into the families to be considered a given, natural next step. These examples unfortunately

illustrate family imposed barriers. The choice remained up to the children as is clear in the following two examples:

I think themselves will be their only barrier because we're very much encouraging them.... They would be their own barrier because I don't think that we would be like, "Oh, no," or "Oh, no."

(Janice, insurance biller, daughters ages 14, 12, 5)

As of now, no. That'll probably come to their choice. I'm not gonna stop them. I'll encourage them as much as I can, but I don't want to encourage them too much where they feel like that's too much pressure.

(Will, Army veteran and student, daughters ages 11, 9)

Additional conflicts between aspirations and limitations were evidenced around where students should attend college. Most parents in the study associated college either with the university that sponsored the outreach program or the elite institutions, as illustrated in the following four statements,

I want her to go to college so if she had the opportunity to go somewhere fantastic, better than the [the local university] – I don't know where that would be. Or if she wanted to do something – Harvard or Yale – as long as she keeps going to school.

(Maria, pilot interview, cafeteria supervisor, daughter age 10)

I mean wherever they go you know, I'll be happy – it's college. But of course I want them to go here. But they all have different ideas. My oldest wants to go

away for college, some want to stay here. My youngest might want to go to [the local community college], so it basically what they decide. But I'm going to encourage them to go to [here].

(Julia, pilot interview, administrative assistant to attorney, children ages 14, 12, 10, 8, 3)

No, I have always given her all the options. She is going to Harvard. She is going to Yale. She is going to Princeton. She is going to [the local U]. I think now she is more excited about going to the [local U] than anything else because I don't know too much about the other schools. I just know that they are far away so I am more leaning that she is going to be at the [local U].

(Valerie, accounts receivable specialist, daughter age 7)

He's a Wildcat. And in his mind after going through the campus, he's a Wildcat. His dad doesn't know that yet. I mean, I would be grateful for whoever accepted him wherever he applied, but our first choice is going to be the [local U].

(Ana, pilot interview, occupation unknown son age 9)

These mothers clearly valued their children pursuing a college education, however a few interesting limitations are presented. Not only are the mothers' college aspirations limited to the university that sponsored the outreach program and the local community college, but their knowledge of other institutions is only of names that are elite and media-hyped. Torres and Hernandez (2007) described this conflict as support

"provided for education, but not for changing the status quo within the family" (p. 570). This directly relates to families' uneasiness with leaving home and enrolling in a college or university that they were unaware of. The Parent Outreach Program was successful in establishing a college connection for families in the program. Families felt secure with and formed positive perceptions of the local university. This connection to the local university is key in the creation of their college path. However, families left the program with a strong loyalty to the sponsoring university and knowledge of the local community college, they had limited to no knowledge about other educational options.

Granted, there were exceptions as were previously presented, but those exceptions represented college knowledge that was already present in the parents' range of information. Outreach programs might begin to think about if the responsibility of the programs is to teach parents about the range of educational options or to serve as a recruiting tool for the sponsoring university. I believe that both can successfully be accomplished. Understanding of and loyalty to the sponsoring university will develop as part of the various on-campus experiences and university speakers offered through the program. This can also be supplemented with additional information about the range of college choices available.

Symbols as limiting factors. It is clear that cultural symbols are influential factors in shaping educational ideologies. One final symbol came to signify the Parent Outreach Program and was originally intended to serve as a resource and physical guide for parents. However, as is evident in the ways in which parents describe this symbol, it

unfortunately resulted in a sense of false security and dependence. The following

examples center on the "Red Book", a notebook given to parents during the Parent

Outreach Program containing college tips, handouts, websites, and various university

resources. Responses referencing the notebook typically were shared during two types of

questions, the first question addressed the content of the information parents received

during the program and the second question addressed how parents would find future

college information. One mother indicated that the notebook served as a refresher, "I

think the red book was pretty helpful. I read it every time I needed to refresh my memory

on things." She also understood that if she needed future college information she could

visit any of the websites listed, " …plus I would go back to the red book if it could help

me. I know there are a lot of resources in there as far as websites that I could go to."

However, most parents considered the notebook as *the* source of college information and

felt as long as they had the notebook, they had everything they needed for a successful

collegiate future.

The following quotes demonstrate the important role that the "Red Book" played.

As one mother mentioned, "I have it all written down in my notes, everything. It was

great that we had that notebook to keep up with the….if we ever have to go back to it it's

there." A grandfather explained to me,

> And I don't know where my wife has the notebook because I could bring some of
>
> that stuff up, but I don't know where she has the notebook. It may be in her
>
> satchel, she carries it around with her all the time.
>
> (Rogelio, pilot interview, vending machine repair man, grandchildren ages 11, 9, 7)

The "Red Book" served as a means to organize all of the important documents and information presented during the program. It is important that this grandmother mentioned that she keeps the college information with her. The college information has become part of her daily life. It is concerning however, that family members became dependent on the book and the people and information listed in the book. Parents often expressed concern about where to find information in a few years; they recognized that information changes, including the people serving in specific positions and course and admissions requirements. However, parents did not realize that although information and people may change, the concepts and ideas in the notebook remained the same and it was up to them to continue building it. The program gave the families a physical object containing college information and the beginnings of a social network. It is important to keep in mind that the program works with parents of K-6 children. Rightfully so, parents were worried that by the time their children entered high school and began the college application process the information would be outdated. The likelihood of this happening is high, yet the parents were not comfortable finding the information on their own once the information became outdated. Thus, a symbol meant to serve as a source of knowledge will ultimately turn into a source of false security once the information has expired and people have moved on from their current positions.

Shifting educational ideologies

Shifting generational ideologies: A common sentiment from working-class families is the notion of working hard so that their children can have opportunities they were never

afforded. Just as opportunities are hoped to be passed on by generations, ideologies about the nature of education itself has been found to shift by generation. Auerbach (2002) studied families that were participants in the Futures & Families outreach program. She found that oftentimes parents would measure themselves in comparison with less-involved parents from previous generations (Auerbach, 2002). A similar theme arose with families in this study as is evidenced in the following quote where Tanya explains the expectation that she has for her children to exceed her own education just as she exceeded her parents' education.

> My parents come from a small ranch in Mexico, and I think they didn't even finish elementary school as far as I know; it's something we never talked about. But I didn't feel that I was ever really encouraged or expected to go, even graduate from high school. That was just not something I was ever encouraged, and I don't think it was because my mom didn't want us to. She just – I think once we passed elementary we'd already exceeded beyond her level. So I just wanna make sure that my kids have as much support and encouragement, and that I can have all the information I need so that they're not doing it like I did.
>
> (Tanya, obstetrics technician, children ages 11, 9, 6)

She went on to share that she had not even marched in her high school graduation because it was not important to her family.

> I mean, as a matter of fact, when I graduated I didn't march, I didn't – because it wasn't important to anybody, so I didn't really care. So with them, I just make it a point to say like, "You are expected to go, and you will go."

(Tanya, obstetrics technician, children ages 11, 9, 6)

However, not only did levels of involvement shift by generation, ideas about the importance of education and the belief that education was a realistic opportunity for their families also shifted. Danielle, a corrections officer shares her perspective about her parents' ideologies and interest in her education.

No, I am from Florida but my parents were busy. They worked during the day, too. For whatever reason, I don't know, but they left learning up to us. We would show them our report card, but that was about all the involvement they had with us. Even when we got into high school, it seems like they didn't even care about looking at our report card anymore because they knew that we did well, but they left that up to us, but for my kids I wanted to instill in them that I cared about whatever grade they were in.

(Danielle, corrections officer, children ages 7 and 6)

Granted, it is unclear if her parents left the learning up to her and her siblings out of the necessity to work or the inability to become more involved because of their own educational levels. However, Danielle felt as though it was her responsibility to be more involved in her children's education. She described this as creating a cycle within her home. After the conclusion of one of our interviews as we were both packing up to leave the library, Danielle expressed to me that she was planning to take community college courses during the summer. She explained that in order for her kids to seriously think about college she needs to do it too. Sheepishly, she mentioned that she always says she's going to do something but never follows through and finishes, but in this case she needed

to set the example. She went on to share with me that she has a cousin whose daughter is in school and that both of the parents went to college. She believes that it's a cycle, the daughter followed because she knows her parents went to college. She wants to create that with her own children. Danielle has already established that cycle in small ways within her household. She works carefully with her son, the oldest of her children because he struggles a bit more with school. Because of the time she takes with him she feels that her daughter is automatically understanding the importance of education and learning and hearing the education lessons just as her brother does.

> With her [her daughter], like me and my sister – she was the baby sister – she learned because we were learning, and she was learning at the same time. So I am not really concerned about her as much as him because she always gets it.
>
> (Danielle, corrections officer, children ages 7 and 6)

The idea of generational shifts came up a number of times through out the interviews and interestingly, the following illustrates a family that relates the shift in ideologies more to careers than to the attainment of a college degree. Janice begins by explaining:

> I know us as parents try to be more involved than our parents were, and it just seems like there is so much more like extracurricular activities, and Virginia is in everything she can get her hands on after school. Back then we just went to school.
>
> (Janice, insurance biller, daughters ages 14, 12, 5)

While this quote is similar to the two previous examples, the following conversation with both parents, Janice and Isaiah, sheds a new light.

Isaiah: We say we are sending you to college, and you are sending your
            sister.

(This comment is similar to that of Danielle's, indicating that older siblings play a role in the education cycle.)

Janice: Yeah, we do. Even with their report cards – like the D and the F.
            It was like this is going to – you want to go to college, you want to
            get into a university, you are going to see this. We try. We
            mention it any chance that it is there. College, college.

Interviewer: And does she seem like that has been ingrained in her already as
            something she wants to do?

Janice: No.

Isaiah: No. I don't think she really –

Janice: I think we want it more than she does right now. When she is 18
            and she is not in high school anymore, she is going to want it or get
            a job. I mean we are not going to force them. Even if it is a trade.
            If she wants to be a cosmetologist – even if it is that – I just don't
            want my kids to ever just get jobs. I want them to get careers.
            Whereas I'm 30 years old and I'm in a job still. I don't have a
            career. Whatever the trade may be – computer software –
            whatever she wants to do. Just while we can and while we are

willing, before you get married and before you have kids, do something where you've set a foundation for yourself. If she wants to be a cook and wants to go to culinary, I really don't care, just something. She knows yeah, high school is done but that's not what is going to get you in the work force. I think we want it more than she does.

The experiences shared illustrate educational ideologies that shifted, evolved, and grew over generations. As the families recounted, their own parents were not involved in their education, did not check their homework, and college opportunities were not offered to them (generation 1). It is interesting that the details about their own educational experiences are described from a deficit perspective. The parents did not describe why their families were not engaged and involved, but their descriptions fit within the deficit model so often referenced in the literature. These families did not want that same cycle to continue and were incorporating themselves into their own children's education as much as they knew how, attending a college outreach program, attempting to be more involved in their children's schools, and trying to instill messages about careers versus jobs (generation 2). Ultimately however, as was previously described, the reality of college was still left up to their children to decide. Perhaps generation 3, as we have seen partially with Danielle's examples, represents ideologies about education that are so natural to families that there is not a question of attending college, it is seen as an automatic and realistic next step.

This finding leads to many more questions than can be answered at this time. I believe that the generational shifts are influenced by social class and ultimately, the social and cultural capital that accompany different class levels. When one begins to understand this from a funds of knowledge framework, it begins to have new meaning. Vélez-Ibáñez, and Greenberg (2005) explained:

> Succeeding generations often do not gain a complete and functional understanding of the funds of knowledge that their ancestors had unless they remain within the same class segment or are able to translate such knowledge into a new, rewarding labor arena (pp. 57-58).

As families advance in labor markets and social class, gain new capital, and gain access to new forms of education, are they ultimately losing various forms of funds of knowledge? Are the examples presented above highlighting generations shifting from valuable funds of knowledge to new forms of capital? It is clear that a particular value is placed on certain types of educational ideologies and involvement, especially when considering future access to college. However, questions remain. Are families losing funds of knowledge along the way; trading them in for capital? And can families learn to navigate both – switching between funds of knowledge and forms of capital when in different environments?

Ideological shifts during the Parent Outreach Program: Researchers studying Mexican families have long sought to debunk the myth that education is not a key value (Valencia & Black, 2002). Through this study and others before it, one sees the strong value placed

on education by Mexican families. It is interesting to note however, that for some of the families in this study, the one reason for participating in the Parent Outreach Program was to spend time with their family. For others, the program was a way to get over their own fears and work through their own questions about the educational process. Over the course of the semester as families learned important college information their reasoning shifted and realities about college-going were created both for the children and for the parents. In fact, many mothers referred to the Parent Outreach Program, and more specifically, the component that the children attended, as "college". The following stories highlight the shifts in thought as parents and their children participated in what was for many, their first "college" experience.

As detailed in the previous section, most of the parents in this study expressed a desire for their children to obtain a higher level of education than they had completed. For some, that was the driving force behind their participation in the Parent Outreach Program. For others, like Danielle, Valerie, and Linda, the program provided an opportunity to spend time with their children. In fact, Linda, an administrative assistant with six adopted children, participated only because her fifth grade daughter asked her to, "Mommy, come on; Mommy, come on." Danielle explained that the Parents Outreach Program provided her an opportunity to make good on her New Year's Resolution:

> So I had made New Years resolutions to do more stuff with the kids, and was like this might be good for us. So it gives us a chance to get out of the house, and if they have activities for the kids, that will be even better so I agreed to do it.
>
> (Danielle, corrections officer, children ages 7, 6)

Danielle later shared with me that the program was a way for them to do something together. Her reasoning was less about the information they were receiving and more about spending time with her family. She explained that the program allowed her to get to know a different side of her children.

For Valerie, ideologies about education were clouded by fear. In fact, most of our earlier conversations about her own educational experiences at the community college level were expressed with a level of fear or concern that she was not yet ready to work through. For Valerie, attending the Parent Outreach Program, although she valued it as the special thing that her and her daughter did together, represented a way for her to conquer how own fears:

> I actually wanted to start going back to school, and I had the biggest fear of not knowing what to do and how to do and so I thought that this would help benefit me in a way.

> (Valerie, accounts receivable representative, daughter age 7)

For these three mothers the program initially was meant to serve a different purpose than to gain more information about the college process for their children. It provided family time and information in a safe environment that allowed for one mother to move past her educational fears.

The difference in conversations between the pre interviews and the post interviews with these mothers clear and two key findings are worth noting. The first is the sense of empowerment that was instilled about the reality of college not just for the

children, but even more strongly for the mothers. The second was the use of language, in particular, the word "college". The word represented the opportunity that the program was enabling their families to discover, an opportunity that was becoming part of the educational path for their children. Both of these findings are also consistent with the experiences of families who participated during the pilot years of the Parent Outreach Program. The example below was shared after the families had visited the university campus for the first time. College became an immediate reality for this family.

Ana:　　Everything came together that day and when we were actually there hands-on and he went through the dorms and he went through student – that little area there that you guys hang out.

Interviewer:　The student union.

Ana:　　The student union, and he got to sit in a class with like a 100, 200 chairs. And what he did say that um, he wanted, he said, "mom, can I have $100 and draw a mustache on me?" And he was ready, he wanted to stay there. And again, part of me was like no, not yet. You know I'm thinking, "you're still my little boy and all of a sudden he's growing up." And the other part was, YES. Because all of this is what we're striving for and hopefully with all of this information he'll actually – now he wants to go even more. Yeah, that had to be my highlight. Uh huh, that was my highlight.

(Ana, pilot interview, occupation unknown, son age 9)

For most families (both in the pilot years of the program and the six who participated in the oral history interviews), the idea of college shifted from *if* to *when*. Julia, also a mother who participated during the pilot program, shared the following about her daughter's idea of college after completing the Parent Outreach Program.

> Yeah, she's more interested now. Her big thing now is, "well, when I'm in college. When I'm in college I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that." Which I heard it from her before, but now she knows, it's not just a maybe when I go to college. She knows, she's gonna go to college.
>
> (Julia, pilot interview, administrative assistant to attorney, children ages 14, 12, 10, 8, 3)

Valerie brought her own mother to the Parent Outreach Program graduation, a special ceremony held on the university campus to honor the parents who had successfully completed the program. During our last conversation together she talked in depth about her own desire to return to school and expressed that her mother had also hoped to return to school with the aspiration of becoming a horticulturalist. It was impressive to walk through the audience and see generations of family members celebrating education. For this family, it represented three generations of women and education. Valerie shared the following about her program experience:

> It was just me and her (referring to her daughter, Aracely). It was our thing. That was what I loved the most about the whole experience plus knowing that I am not

as afraid as I was before going to college or even her going to college, and I am

not that scared.

(Valerie, accounts receivable representative, daughter age 7)

Valerie's shift in educational ideologies are represented in a number of ways. She was

one of a few mothers to receive a refurbished computer for perfect attendance. Not only

did this provide her with a new computer, but computer classes as well. It was at these

classes that she interacted more with Danielle and the two formed a friendship. Both of

these mothers described themselves as either homebodies or introverted, but through this

program and additional classes had met someone with whom they connected on various

levels. Valerie also shared in detail with me how she would incorporate the daily

educational activities and recommendations that other parents had provided. She did not

speak in terms of fear during our last conversations but with a sense of optimism and

clear goals. By participating in the Parent Outreach Program Valerie expanded on her

social networks, incorporated others' fund of knowledge into her own, and experienced a

shift in her own educational ideologies.

Valerie, like other mothers in this study called the Parent Outreach Program,

"college". Valerie would explain to her friends that they were going to college and going

to study. By calling the program "college" mothers were able to get their children excited

about the program and gave it a sense of purpose. Linda and her oldest daughters (ages

29 and 26) shared the following with me about the concept of college and how it became

a reality for one member of their family, Daniela, who was in sixth grade:

Elisa: I mean they talked about college, because they knew that we went

to college, but it wasn't – I guess they didn't think they could go

college. I don't know, because they never put themselves like,

"After I get out of college." It was just always like, my sister's in

college.

Sylvia: They didn't understand it. It put them more – just a word you're

saying and we showed what it was, and then they knew that they

could.

Linda: And now she says more like, "After I get out of college, I'm going

to open a reading room for kids that don't have it and –" That's her

biggest thing is to open a reading room.

Danielle's family also signified the Parent Outreach Program by calling it college and

just like the changes in ideologies and beliefs experienced by Linda's family, experienced

a change in how she and her children perceived their education. It is clear from the

previous section that Danielle incorporated what she had learned into her own goals and

ideologies about enrolling in college. But here Danielle summarized why she initially

participated and how the program helped her to understand that it is never too early to

begin thinking about college for your children.

This is one of the reasons why I picked the program for me and the kids - to have

something to do together. So I enjoyed all our time like at [the middle school]

and even at the [university] campus because I get to see what they like and just

get to know them a little better because they never would have been – I mean in

time we would have – but I never really pushed it. What do you want to be? I

didn't start thinking of that because I thought they were too young and plus I

really don't know what I want to be still so I was like they will just change their

minds later. But it is good to get that in their heads.

During our last conversation Danielle kept expressing over and over that the program

"really made you think".

That it really made you think, you know. We always think as parents that we will

just do this when it comes up, but you don't. By then it is already too late. So it

gets your kids thinking about what they want to be, being serious in school, and I

learned so much more than my school or the kid's school wasn't telling me that I

should know about programs and stuff like that so. I learned a lot. It was tough

for me not just for them. I learned that going to college wasn't hard and wasn't

scary.

(Danielle, corrections officer, children ages 7, 6)

In the end, Danielle was the mother who tried every suggestion and strategy given so that

her children would be more invested and interested in their education. She learned how to

make learning fun.

I met with all of the families with the exception of one about a week or two after

the conclusion of the Parent Outreach Program. It was difficult for Linda and I to connect

for our final conversation, but we eventually did in September, approximately four

months after the program had ended. It is very interesting that during the actual program

she found herself talking to her children much more about college, but four months later
that same excitement and energy was not quite there.

> I think we talked about it more when we were doing it during the time frame. We
> don't do it as much now, I don't think. But I think it was just more that.
> Especially more with – when we would go to the [university], and then come back
> and then we would talk about it for a couple of weeks, and remember things more
> like that. I think it was more hands on, where you could actually physically see it.
>
> (Linda, administrative assistant, children ages 15, 13, 11, 10, 8, 6)

Her comment brings up interesting questions and ultimately, concerns. Had I conducted
all of the post interviews four or five months later would the families still be
incorporating the same strategies that they learned during the program? Would the
college conversations with their children still be happening? What if I had instead
followed up two years later when the children were in middle school and working
through social identity development in addition to academic requirements? These
questions will remain unanswered here; however, they serve as important points when
developing future research.

Perceptions of educational success

The final sub-theme presented in this section represents the ideologies around
educational success. The perceptions of educational success range from high test scores
to which high schools one should attend to which children are college material. Many of
these ideologies begin with educational success and extend into aspirations for

professions and careers. Although the previous educational ideologies sections also incorporate how ideologies are formed, this final section is devoted solely to exploring what some of these educational ideologies are. The section is structured into three categories: What is educational success? Who is education for? And how is educational success measured?

What is educational success?

Our occupational titles carry a certain status or description of who we are. Professional sports players bear a celebrity status, doctors and lawyers command the respect, and the blue collar, working class occupations are what our parents typically try to steer us away from. I share two examples of mothers who describe the potential future occupations of their children – what the children would like to be and what they consider successful paths for their children. Tanya's oldest son Sal (age 11) was into sports and his favorite reading material was *Sports Illustrated Magazine*. Here she shares her rationalization with him about why it is better to get a college education than aiming for a career as a professional football player.

Tanya:	He only wants to be a football player. And I try tell him like, "Yeah, but if you get conked on the head what are you gonna do?" I just tell him, "You need a backup plan, and you can't be a college football player if you're not studying something."
Interviewer:	Right, because even college football players have to go to class.

Tanya: So I just try to explain that, and I try to explain that it's not a real

feasible dream. I don't wanna make it sound like I don't believe in

him, but I tell him, "number 1, your size is always gonna be

against you.

(Tanya, obstetrics technician, children ages 11, 9, 6)

Tanya's understanding is that success comes from a college education. While it would be nice if that came with a career in football, she attempted to speak realistically with her children about their future success as college students. Valerie also wanted her daughter, Aracely (age 7) to go on to college, but she had concrete ideas about what Aracely's future might look like.

I told her you can go to college and be a cheerleader and go be a teacher. I think

her main one was cheerleader/coach type thing - teacher. From what it sounds

like it is always going to be teaching something. Teaching other people to do it,

and I am kind of saying, no, you are going to be a doctor. You are going to be a

lawyer.

(Valerie, accounts receivable representative, daughter age 7)

Although Aracely clearly enjoys teaching and often plays school at home, Valerie expects that her future will be in a profession that is perceivably more successful. She rationalized this by explaining that Aracely likes to argue, therefore a lawyer would be a better fit for her. All of the families had ideas about their children pursuing a college education, but who did they believe college was really for?

Who is education for?

Every family in this study believed that even with obstacles, college could be a reality for their children, with one exception. In my conversations with Janice and Isaiah Lopez there was often a disconnect between what they were saying about a future college path and what they really believed to be true. It was evident that they believed their oldest daughter, Vanessa (age 14) and their youngest daughter, Veronica (age 5) would go on to college, but they had a different thought about Virginia (age 12). This quote is pulled from our first conversation together about a week after the Parent Outreach Program began.

> She doesn't have the patience to sit still like the other kids and she never has in all 7 years of school. That's why we don't think she will go to college. If she does go to college, it's going to be like a trade thing to get a job. I want to encourage her to do it even if it is just an MA trade school or whatever it may be – just do something. I don't like her to be out there working at McDonald's and you know. But I don't think she will be like a career minded individual like oh, let's go get a 4 year degree. I don't think so. I don't know. She might surprise me. And see, I'm the pusher of college, and Isaiah's like if she doesn't want to, she doesn't want to.
>
> (Janice, insurance biller, daughters ages 14, 12, 5)

Janice later explained the significance of the Parent Outreach Program experience and emphasized that she now understood there are courses available to help her daughters prepare for college. Janice does envision her daughters going on to college, yet in the

next sentence describes what she actually believes will happen as her daughters reach college age. It is interesting to note that once again she indicates that Virginia probably will not go to college because she does not have the focus. It is unfortunate that even with additional information about the realities of college a prediction is made about her 12 year old daughter.

> Virginia doesn't have that focus, but she didn't have it from the beginning, and so – I just – but Vanessa still does, you know, and Veronica already says that she's going to go to college. But Virginia, my goal is just to help her through a trade school or something because I so don't want her to start – I just want her to find something that she can work with, and the same goes for your college, but get something that's going to get you a job, and you're going to be competitive out there and not entry-level position and then have to work your way up because it's exhausting.
>
> (Janice, insurance biller, daughters ages 14, 12, 5)

It is important to Janice that her daughters establish a professional career as opposed to a job, but it does not seem that Virginia will be expected nor encouraged to pursue a 4 year degree.

There were other students in this study who also did not have "focus". However, this was due to numerous learning disabilities. Their message, unlike the message that Virginia received, was quite different. Their mother, Linda, never let them believe that just because they had disabilities that college should not be a reality.

So I always tell them that their goal is when they are 18 that they either have to be

in college and have a part-time job and they can stay at home. If not, they need to

move out. You know, every time they say, "I'm a year older", and I say "is that

18?" And they are like, "no we are not 18 yet, and we are going to go to college."

They always say that. When people ask them, they say, no we can't get married

until we go to college first.

(Linda, administrative assistant, children ages 15, 13, 11, 10, 8, 6)

In Linda's home success is college and college is for everyone.

How is educational success measured?

For families participating in this study success was not only about what you

become and who can become it, but how that success is determined. Consistently,

families talked about test scores (both of the children and of the schools), grades, and

reputation of the elementary, middle, and high schools.

Janice and Isaiah had recently moved from California and they were very

observant of the fact that in Tucson, AIMS scores were important. Janice understood that

schools were measured by how students performed on their AIMS tests, that curriculum

was often driven by the AIMS test, and that it seemed to be the primary concern of school

administrators. Even though Janice expressed frustration with the constant focus on

standardized testing, she also believed that it was important for her daughters to score

high. On the other hand, Tanya was felt that it actually was not a true indication of her

children's academic potential. She explained, "I hate all those tests because I don't feel

that it's a real assessment of how my child is doing. I mean, you're putting them on the spot once a year to pick their brains." Aside from Tanya and Janice the other parents did not go into detail about standardized testing, but did express the importance of grades as key indicators of academic success. In the following quote Linda equates school to their job. If they are going to get paid they need to get good grades.

> And the homework comes first. I always tell them that. I tell them I go to work to earn money, you go to school to earn grades. If you don't earn good grades, you don't get paid.

> (Linda, administrative assistant, children ages 15, 13, 11, 10, 8, 6)

Grades were an important indicator of success for all of the families, however in the following conversation Will describes another piece of the puzzle. Here Will begins to question the role that the school played in his daughters grades who had recently transferred into their current school from another elementary school.

Will: Because I got their progress report, and they got a couple of C's. And I'm figuring, "Okay. When they transferred over during, like, halfway through the term." So I might – how are they counting – how are they counting their grades? Are they not counting what they did over there, including it – what their grade was, or they just including what they missed and then just add it on to what they've been doing? Because if it's – if that's the problem, then that's not fair to my kids because –

Interviewer: Right.

Will: It's not their fault that they were transferred during this time. And

if was going to affect their grade, then you could at least talk to me

and say, "I'll give you a packet of these assignments. Do what you

can with them. And then, we'll go from there with those grades,"

instead of saying, "Well, since you weren't here during this time,

I'm sorry. I have to give you no credit for it."

(Will, Army veteran and student, daughters ages 11, 9)

Will is describing a dynamic between the teachers, school, and children that is not solely

reflective of how his daughters perform academically. He is aware of the responsibility

that both the school and the children have in creating success. As mentioned in previous

sections, Will's understanding and comfort in navigating the school process is very

different from many of the other families; this often resulted in frustration with how

situations were or were not handled. Although Will often commented on the

responsibility that his daughters and the schools had in creating a successful academic

experience, he did not often go into detail about his responsibility in the process. It is

unclear what steps he took to ensure his daughters were up to speed with this new school.

The final way in which families conveyed their perception of how success is

measured was based on the school one attended. In Tucson there are a couple of key high

schools that are known for being the college-track schools, the schools where you do not

have to worry about students receiving college information because it is automatically

built in. One of these schools, Sanpointe Catholic High School, was known to be one of

the premiere high schools. Other schools, like those in the south side of Tucson, were

known to be less successful in getting their students to attend college. Valerie attended

Sanpointe, learned a great deal about college through her experience there and expected

her daughter to follow the same path.

Valerie: I think it is generally across the board I keep telling her she is

going to be going to college. I know for a fact she is going to be

going to Sanpointe. That's high school.

Interviwer: Because you were able to go to Sanpointe?

Valerie: Yeah. Mom and Dad they made it a point that me and my sister

went to Sanpointe because the high school that we would have

gone to is Cactus High School which is not from what I remember

much of a great place to be. And actually I went there for a

summer program, and I like way excelled over their class, and I sat

there like I'm so bored. And I think I was actually teaching the

people in the class who were going to Cactus instead of the teacher

teaching so it was not very good.

Interviewer: So Sanpointe is on her list of things to do then?

Valerie: Yes.

(Valerie, accounts receivable representative, daughter age 7)

In Valerie's mind, and in the mind of many other families, Sanpointe Catholic

High School represented an opportunity for future success that could not be found at

many of the schools in their neighborhood. Valerie believed that if Aracely was going to

college, she needed to be at Sanpointe.

The educational ideologies highlighted the most illustrative ways in which ideologies, particularly around the college-going process were formed. College information came from social networks, but also were formed by academic and college symbols that were part of families' everyday lives. Sometimes this information created limitations in families and symbols became restrictive instead of helpful. Despite the educational limitations in families the sense of college being a realistic goal and a true aspiration were also present. Educational ideologies also shifted both on a macro-level, across generations, and on a micro-level, over the course of the Parent Outreach Program. Finally, when examining some of the specific educational ideologies we found that there were differences in how educational success is defined, who college is for, and how educational success is measured. It is the ideologies around education, whether influenced by social networks, symbols, media, or the messages from schools themselves, that often influence the kind and level of involvement that families exhibit.

Reconstructing Parental Involvement

It is has become commonly accepted in parental involvement literature and among teachers, counselors, and principals that increased levels of parental involvement are associated with higher academic achievement (Lareau, 1987; Jun & Colyar, 2002; Tierney, 2002; Zarate, 2007). However, as previously stated, most definitions of parental involvement fit within a "traditional parental involvement paradigm" (Daniel-White, 2002, p. 32). Involvement within this paradigm is most often found as external (i.e. attendance at school meetings) and internal (i.e. family responsibilities such as ensuring

the children arrive to school on time) (Valencia & Black, 2002). Researchers argue that internal involvement is more representative of the parental involvement of Mexican families, as it often includes such actions as family stories, advice giving narratives, and family behavioral modeling (Valencia & Black, 2002; Zarate, 2007). While it is true that for families in this study both external and internal examples of involvement were evident, other forms of involvement – of which I am calling non-traditional involvement, were also found. Additionally, both formal and informal involvement were facilitated differently depending on mother's employment status. This differs from literature which states that mothers who work full-time are less involved in the school than other mothers (Weiss, Mayer, Kreider, Vaughan, Dearing, Hencke & Pinto, 2003). The key difference is found in *where* a mother is employed as mothers who worked or volunteered at their children's school navigated the involvement process in ways that were much less formal and much more illustrative of someone who had converted funds of knowledge into capital.

Examples of external parental involvement

Although literature related to minority parental involvement often critique the traditional parental involvement paradigm (Daniel-White, 2002), it is interesting to report that every family participating in the Parent Outreach Program demonstrated levels of external parental involvement. While Latino parents do mention life participation (i.e. internal involvement) as a form of involvement more frequently than external involvement (Zarate, 2007), parents in the Parent Outreach Program were active with

both. I assume that parents were receiving messages about the importance of attending school events and meetings because those were the most often cited ways in which they were involved with their children's schooling. In fact, those messages were also being conveyed by the outreach program itself as it aimed to teach parents various levels of parental involvement.

A range of external parental involvement activities were shared by each of the six families. While at least one parent mentioned that she did not attend PTO/PTA meeting because of her uneasiness with them, at least four of the families reported they at least tried to regularly attend the meetings. As conveyed below, her apprehension with the meetings was not because of content but in the expectations of purchasing or donating items. Her example is more reflective of financial constraints than time constraints as this mother was very involved in other aspects of her daughter's school experience.

I don't really know much about PTO. I have always heard the horror stories that they make you buy certain things or you have to donate or do something, and I'm like I can't do either. I'm sorry. It is not going to happen.

(Valerie, accounts receivable representative, daughter age 7)

The table below represents the external involvement activities that parents attended. I specifically asked them which school events they attended and which ones they felt were most important.

Table 2: External Parental Involvement Activities

Event / Activity Attended	Families who mentioned participating or attending
Grandparents Night	Johnson Lopez

PTA / PTO Meetings	Johnson Lopez Rodriguez Murrieta
School Assemblies	Lopez
Parent-Teacher Conferences	Lopez Borquez
Plays/Recitals/Concerts	Lopez Borquez Tabers Murrieta
Miscellaneous Meetings / Events (i.e. band or other meetings relating to children's extra-curricular activities, school carnivals)	Borquez Rodriguez Murrieta
School Graduations	Tabers
Open Houses	Tabers Murrieta

Attendance at the above external events was certainly a strong value in most of the families and when the primary parent could not attend they would enlist other family members within the household cluster to act as a family representative. Various barriers (i.e. limited resources, unclear policies, linguistic barriers, work schedules, and lack of knowledge as to the level that parents and families should be involved) are often cited in the literature as reasons why parents do not participate in external involvement opportunities (Tierney, 2002). While some of the families did mention involvement barriers, they also found ways of maneuvering around them. By tapping into their familial funds of knowledge and other members within their household clusters, families were able to ensure attendance at events that were seen as most beneficial.

I attend the ones that I guess are going to be interesting or that are going to be beneficial or help them. In Tania's school we have to attend so many hours to get credit for it. So we take turns. My parents will do stuff, or I will do it, or my

daughters will do stuff. With Daniela I try to go to her PTA meetings as often as I can.

(Linda, administrative assistant, children ages 15, 13, 11, 10, 8, 6)

Valerie shared a similar sentiment and utilized her own grandmother and her daughter's grandmother to fill in when needed.

I do make a point to go to as much as I can. The things that I can't go to, I call my grandmother who is her great grandmother and she ends up going. Or it's her dad's mom who goes. So if I can't make it, there is always someone else who can. The ones that I want to make sure that I go to are the open house, of course the graduations.

(Valerie, accounts receivable representative, daughter age 7)

Although families did make it a point to attend events, at least one father shared frustration in not understanding the value of the meeting. Tierney (2002) reported that parents are often unsure of what constitutes educational activities and convey that they would spend more time on educational activities if teachers gave them specific advice. Will's quote below illustrates that similar confusion and frustration is present around attendance at school events. This is reflective of a barrier imposed upon by both the school and the father. A more thorough explanation of the purpose of the meeting would have been helpful for Will in understanding why his attendance was necessary. Likewise, although Will attended, he did not realize that the meeting was not merely informing him about his daughter's band activities; it also served as opportunity to build upon his funds of knowledge and social capital.

They had this one, like, before she started band. It was a some kind of meeting, and I thought it was about the band. This is the instrument. Well, it wasn't about that. It was just – they talked about – what was it? The parent's responsibility. Okay. Couldn't you just send a handbook or something, instead of us taking our time away to go late in the evening? And it lasted, like, two hours. There was no need for that.

(Will, Army veteran and student , daughters ages 11, 9)

As I have illustrated, families were quite involved in at least attending various school activities and functions. The final examples serve as a fourth recommendation for outreach programs. Without exception, each of the families was recruited at a school event, as is illustrated with the two examples below.

Interviewer: So how did you find out about the Parent Outreach Program?

Janice: At an Open House at San Clemente Elementary. No, at a PTA meeting at San Clemente Elementary. It was Grandparents Night, and they threw in a PTA meeting during Grandparents Night.

(Janice, insurance biller, daughters ages 14, 12, 5)

When I asked Tanya the same question, she responded with the following, "Well, the kids' school was holding like a PTO meeting, and then they told us about it." Every single family had a similar experience. When considering the populations that most outreach programs are targeting (often cited as low-income, minority, under-served, under-prepared, etc.) I question if these families fit those criteria. Granted, given the school district that these students are enrolled in there is already a multitude of college

access barriers, but these families all exhibit high levels of external involvement. The Parent Outreach Program has attempted numerous recruiting strategies over the last five years. The program has expanded considerably and many families are recruited at school events. During the pilot year of the program teachers recommended the children and families that participated. However, when the Parent Outreach Program changed their recruiting strategies and outreached to those families who did not already exhibit some level of involvement, the completion rates of participants dropped. Completion rates were also lower once the Parent Outreach Program worked consecutive years in the same feeder pattern of schools (i.e. same elementary to middle schools). It is often difficult to maintain the same level of engagement when trying to capture all families in one feeder pattern. These difficulties offer interesting implications to consider when recruiting families for outreach programs.

Internal Involvement

Just as families in the study demonstrated significant examples of external involvement, the same was true for internal involvement. As was previously stated, researchers highlight internal involvement as more representative of the parental involvement of Mexican families, as it often includes such actions as family stories, advice giving narratives, and family behavioral modeling (Valencia & Black, 2002; Zarate, 2007). The Tomas Rivera Policy Institute produced a report indicating that Latino parents equated school involvement with involvement in their children's lives, which was meant to complement the education received at school (Zarate, 2007). This type of

involvement is consistent with internal involvement. By providing monitoring of children's lives at home and strong moral guidance, parents in the study hoped that it would lead to positive classroom behavior and future academic learning opportunities (Zarate, 2007). The families in the current study also demonstrated various types of internal involvement, however internal involvement was not only the responsibility of the parents, it was a role that extended family members, friends, and siblings also took on.

Typically, helping children with homework might be considered external or academic involvement. However, the examples provided below demonstrate that it was not the mother responsible for helping the children with homework; this responsibility was placed on the oldest child. Thus, illustrating both an example of siblings looking out for each other from the perspective of involvement literature and an example of caretaking responsibilities of older siblings as described in funds of knowledge literature. Tanya describes here how homework in the evenings is set up in her family.

> So I just tell them, "Help each other with your homework," and I know that that's something that the parents usually have to be focused on because if your kid's coming home and not doing their homework, or not – because like, I don't know, I try and supplement that by doing other things, like reading. I make sure that I'm always buying them books, or activity books with like do math, do whatever.
>
> (Tanya, obstetrics technician, children ages 11, 9, 6)

It is interesting to note that in one statement Tanya describes the additional activities she does with her children, particularly around books. But in this next example also talks

about her frustration with the amount of reading the children are expected to complete each night.

> I just think the only one (referring to a school expectation) that's a little bit more difficult is the reading, because they're supposed to read 45 minutes a day. I think that's a lot, considering they don't come home till 5:00. So I don't really push on it, because I know that they always read, even like on the weekends. I know they can read, so I'm not worried about it, so I just always tell them – because they have to complete a reading log every week and put that they read what book, and I just tell them, "If you didn't do it, just grab a book and write it. I don't wanna hear it." And I know it's not a good habit to teach them, but I know they read, and it's a lot because they don't come home till 6:00, their bedtime is at 8:00.
>
> (Tanya, obstetrics technician, children ages 11, 9, 6)

The reality of Tanya's work situation is that she does not have significant time each evening to spend doing homework activities. While having the oldest child help the younger children with homework is a common and useful strategy, I am not sure that her example of telling the children just to log in any book even without reading it is teaching them effective educational lessons. It is a contradiction of sorts because she describes earlier that they enjoy reading, but the expectation of 45 minutes of reading a night becomes an imposition on her and the reality of her work situation. By skipping the daily reading times that are required of the children the family is also missing out on the cognitive development associated with reading. They are missing the vocabulary,

comprehension, and imagination that are a result of both reading the materials and discussing them with family members. Thus, while this family does read in isolated intervals, they are not recognizing the larger educational lessons learned from these regularly practiced activities.

It is clear that these parents are involved in various ways – both externally and internally. The intent of the two sections is not to provide every possible example of their involvement. However, the critical point is that there are other realities present in these families' situations. Two mothers (both Tanya and Danielle) work the night shift in their jobs, making it difficult for them to volunteer at school, attend all of the necessary meetings and even help with daily homework. Four of these parents are single parents. Granted, their household clusters provide extensive sources of support, but in the eyes of the school system they are considered the "parent". Schools must remember that just because a parent does not check homework one night or attend a meeting does not mean that parent does not care. Unfortunately, the other reality is that it can negatively impact opportunities for the children. These families have multiple obstacles associated with their household clusters. Parents work odd shifts, function in single-parent households, cannot dedicate significant time each day to educational lessons, and some are living with multiple family members which sometimes means there is limited quiet space to study. Therefore, while extensive household clusters present great strengths in families, there are factors that impact the ways in which parents can be involved.

I end this short section with examples of the ways in which families address the topic of morals, respect, encouragement, and communication. All of these are considered

internal involvement or life participation. I asked each family what they considered the most important lesson that they were teaching their children. Most answers incorporated a theme of treating others with respect.

Will spoke often about the many lessons he was teaching his daughters. As a single father it was important to him that the girls were independent and that they did not take life for granted. He also felt that it was important for them to also think about helping others:

> I try to teach them, like, if you're doing well for yourself but if you see somebody else struggling, offer to help. You know? What's the worst – the word no shouldn't hurt you, but at least you have a consideration to that person, like, wow. You know?
>
> (Will, Army veteran and student, daughters ages 11, 9)

Treating people kindly and with respect was also an expectation that Isaiah tried to teach his daughters:

> To me it's just more respectful – well mannered adult. I mean education – whatever education I hope she gets but more important than that is respectful, well mannered, treating people nice. To me that's more important.
>
> (Isaiah, painter and DJ, daughters 14, 12, 5)

Every family in this study had seen first-hand the influence and impact that others had on their lives. Their relationships and funds of knowledge with other families had provided sources of support for them. Their life lessons for their children may not have been about

getting ahead, but they were about reciprocating the respect and kindness they had received from others.

Non-traditional involvement

Every family participating in the Parent Outreach Program exhibited high levels of both external and internal involvement as defined by the literature. Two parents, Danielle Johnson and Linda Rodriguez exhibited involvement that cannot necessarily be categorized. Both are examples which stem from their funds of knowledge, daily survival strategies developed in both their home and work settings. Both are also examples of how their funds of knowledge are utilized to direct the school to home processes that their families experience. Both also serve as reminders of why we cannot continue to be limited by the same, tired definitions of parental involvement and the benefits provided by that involvement. The third example illustrates the role of siblings as the primary involved family member. This involvement extends beyond the caretaking that is presented in funds of knowledge literature and highlights the responsibility of "little teacher" or "little mother" placed on these children.

Danielle's example provides her new insight into her children's lives and her methods are viewed as acceptable by the school, while Linda's example is necessary for her children to be successful in school and is often met with resistance. Unlike previous examples, I have chosen to share more from the conversations with these two mothers in an effort to paint a clearer picture of their non-traditional forms of parental involvement.

Danielle: I go over there to sit

Danielle works the night shift as a corrections officer and it is often difficult, if not impossible for her to be more directly involved in her children's school activities. Instead, she has chosen to "sit". She explains it in the examples below.

> I give it like 2-3 months after they start, I start coming in and sitting with the teachers or sitting with them while they are doing their lessons like once a week I do it. I am familiar with the principal and procedures of the school.
>
> On Mondays mostly I try to go over there to sit. That is one day a week for sitting or if I have to later on I go and show up at their lunch break.

Perhaps by some researchers' definitions this could be considered volunteering to observe the school environment. If so, it would be considered internal involvement or life participation as outlined by Zarate (2007). However, Danielle's involvement is a bit different. She is not observing the classes at the request of the teacher or as a parent volunteer, she is "sitting" so that she can pick up on clues in her own children's lives. This allows for her to get a better understanding not only of what they are doing and learning at school, but why they are behaving a certain way at home. She explains her tactics in the following conversation:

> Danielle: Well, I think I know them pretty well. My daughter thinks I know everything. At school I can say why did you do that and that and that, and she will say, how did you know? And I will say, I know. I know everything.
>
> Interviewer: So how do you know everything?

Danielle: Because they leave clues. Like my husband – like he goes to school but he doesn't go. So since Thursday is my first night at work, I sleep most of the day but when I woke up, the car was still in the same spot. So I just say, did you go to school today? He will say, yeah. And I am like – I will let it go. And the next day I will ask – why is the car in the same spot if you went to school? And he will look like… You just think of clues of what – if I go through her pockets or her backpack, then I just know that maybe she got this from you know or I know she likes to wear her socks a certain way, and I know the girl in class that wears her socks that way so I just ask her something that is related to that.

Interviewer: You are so observant.

Danielle: Think about where I work.

Danielle has translated the necessary skills learned in her job as a corrections officer and uses them to better understand her own family. Teachers appreciate it because she is present in the classroom, but she benefits from far greater gains. Danielle knows all of the students' names in her children's classes and the dynamics between the different children, with the teacher and so on. As she stated herself, she knows everything.

Linda: They just get sick and tired of hearing my name

Linda is present daily in at least one of her six adopted children's schools. Like Danielle, it is not because a teacher has asked her to volunteer. Unlike Danielle, it is not done so

that she may advance her understanding of her children's lives. It is out of the necessity

to ensure her adopted children, all of whom have either a physical or learning disability,

receive the proper (and legal) accommodations. She describes how she became so

involved below.

> Oh yes, I am totally on top of it all of the time. I didn't know anything about
> special ed or all of these problems that kids have, and it wasn't until I really
> started having these kids and that we started having to go to school . . . I have
> done a lot of IEP's and a lot of 504's…And I work 7 to 1. So the rest of time I am
> usually with either an IP or a conference or some therapy session at school.

It is unfortunate that Linda's involvement is often met with resistance. It is imperative for

her not only to understand the accommodations that her children are legally entitled to,

but also for her to know how to advocate for them and fight when necessary. Lareau and

Horvat (1999) shed light on this type of involvement as they describe families who

approach schools with open criticisms. Linda is no exception. She must be willing and

able to criticize the education and support her children are receiving. However, educators

value and seek parents who provide positive feedback. Thus, as Lareau and Horvat

(1999) explained, as Linda activates her capital, she also experiences social exclusion,

resistence, and challenge. The following conversations help to illustrate this point.

> But I'm always on the computer, doing some paperwork. Like this is paperwork I
> have to file still. And I have four stacks over there, and this is just one kid's file.
> This is Daniela's stuff. So it's like constantly, requesting records and Daniela has
> so many medical issues that she was – so I don't know. But I may go that route.

Who knows? Because the schools are just, I think since school started this year,

it has been constantly Daniela, Daniela, Daniela. And the teacher's new. She's

young, but she's gung ho, and she's intimidated I'm sure, by the other teachers

there that's been there forever, and the principal. And everybody – I'm sure

everybody – and it doesn't help, I'm sure, that I come along. I'm not the easiest

person so.

Linda already believes that she is not perceived as the easiest person to work with.
However, when necessary she will pick up the phone and fight for her children.

It's just got to the point where I just called the principal and I just chewed him out

on the phone. I left him a message at night, and I said, "This is it. I want her

moved to another class." I called the board, the education board. I emailed them

and I gave them all these things, and so now they're going to move her. The

teacher called me today, and she was like, "I don't want to call you all the time."

"You already do that." But I said, "I want to know, cause and effect, and how you

handled it, and what was the outcome." Don't call me and tell me she did this,

this, and that. And then tell me, "Go home and give her a point system." ….Oh,

and then she had the right to ask me to come see her class and see how she

behaves in class. Lady I live with here, I know what – she's here, and then she's

over there.

I commented to Linda that it must be frustrating because teachers expect parents to be

involved and she was certainly involved. She responded with, "I harass them." Linda has

a level of capital and ease in navigating that capital that is not typically present in

families. She explained that she has communicated with the principals, therapists, school boards, and multiple school personnel. Yet, that involvement is perceived as harassment further demonstrating the fact that the value attached to capital in certain contexts, how that capital is activated, and the legitimacy that capital receives plays a role in the social reproduction process (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Linda's oldest daughter Sylvia describes her mother as a fighter; she has learned that sometimes what a teacher says is best for her children may not always be the case. Sylvia said her mother has learned has to say no.

Siblings as caretakers and teachers

A common thread running through this chapter is the role of siblings as caretakers. I have chosen to include it in this particular section because it represents a way in which families tap into their funds of knowledge and household clusters to activate a different type of involvement. Siblings not only had the responsibility of watching over one another and being in charge of household responsibilities, but of helping with daily homework and teaching each other about future educational opportunities. Tanya's family provided a clear example of siblings as caretakers and teachers. In the summary of Tanya's family (chapter 3) I wrote that each child had a specific role. Tanya's oldest daughter was in charge of making sure that each of the younger children cleaned their designated areas. As presented earlier in this chapter, Tanya's older children were also in charge of helping the younger children with their homework. This sibling involvement came up numerous times and Will's family functioned in much the same way. I explained previously that his daughters were taught

early on to be independent and that his oldest daughter was in charge of cooking and making sure her younger sister stayed on task.

Julia, who participated in the pilot year of the Parent Outreach Program explained that, "as far as the actual homework, my oldest daughter – she takes care of that." She went on to explain to specifically explain that her oldest daughter was in charge of helping her son who was in second grade with his homework. Julia, like most of the parents in this study was balancing a large family with a time-consuming job. A common strategy utilized by these families is to "assign" an older sibling with the caretaker or teacher role. Although it aids the family in their daily survival needs, it places considerable pressure on the older siblings, who are most often female. Danielle shared the following example when I asked her if her son (the oldest) took on a caretaker role with her daughter.

> Danielle: No, she takes care of him.
>
> I: Oh, really.
>
> Danielle: I find that sometimes she will go and fix him a peanut butter
>   sandwich, and I will say, "Yvette, why are you doing that for
>   him?" He can do it for himself. She will fix him a bowl of cereal.
>   "Yvette, he can do stuff for himself." Just because he is the boy or
>   whatever, come on.
>
>   (Danielle, corrections officer, children ages 7, 6)

Danielle was frustrated that Yvette was already turning into the "little mother" with her son and although she may not have intentionally placed that role on her daughter, the

nature of her difficult work schedule may have played a factor in how responsibilities were unintentionally distributed.

Beyond the challenge of placing these children in gender specific roles, this type of non-traditional involvement also requires the children to take time away from their own academic responsibilities, sometimes discipline younger siblings, and places the burden of their younger siblings' educational success on their shoulders. Again, it is important that we look beyond the parents and beyond traditional definitions as we consider involvement by families. Involvement can take many forms, and practices like homework can be completed by other members of the household cluster. Recognizing these variations are key to understanding involvement on the familial level and not just on the parental level.

Where mothers work matters!

Perhaps one of the most interesting findings in the parental involvement section is the notion of where mothers work. Research conducted on the role of parental involvement of working mothers indicates that mothers who worked or attended school full-time were less involved than other mothers (Weiss, Mayer, Kreider, Vaughan, Dearing, Hencke, & Pinto, 2003). This research suggests that full-time maternal work and schooling imposes an involvement barrier. Weiss, et al. (2003) indicated that their findings were in line with previous research which illustrated that full-time employment limited the amount of time available to meet educational, family, and children's needs. However, the study did not address *where* mothers worked. For two mothers who were

part of the pilot interviews for the current research working full-time actually provided them with access to educational processes and opportunities that were not available to other mothers. These two mothers worked at their children's elementary school.

The first mother, Karen, is a teacher's aide at her daughter's school. In the following example she is describing an incident in which she was not happy with the grade that her daughter received.

> At first I made her go to him (the teacher) but she was kind of scared. But I was like, 'you need to go and talk to him because that's your grade and find out why and what you need to do.' On the side I actually would go in real early in the morning without her knowing.
>
> (Karen, pilot interview, teacher's aid, daughter age 10)

A number of important points are captured in this one statement. Because of Karen's position as a teacher's aid she became comfortable navigating the school system in an informal way. She knew that if she had a school concern she could address the situation without scheduling a formal appointment – an example of the funds of knowledge and capital developed because of where she worked. However, Karen emphasized the importance of her daughter speaking directly with the teacher about the situation. Karen was teaching her daughter how to formally address the situation with someone in a position of superiority. This one example clearly illustrates a mother activating her own funds of knowledge and capital *and* transferring and activating that capital in her daughter. Karen's experience of working at the school provided her with greater benefits

than if she had been involved in strictly an external process (i.e. field trips and PTA meetings).

The second mother, Maria, highlighted the social networks and involvement she had access to by working in the elementary school where her children were presently enrolled. Maria worked as a supervisor in the school cafeteria. Her position afforded her a number of things, immediate access to school personnel, an understanding of how to formally and informally navigate the school system, and an insider's knowledge of important school information and involvement opportunities.

> Probably because I work in the cafeteria. So yeah, I'm sorta involved with all of
>
> them. I've done some volunteer work, not a lot. She [the principal] asked me to sit
>
> in on some meetings as a parent involvement for the cafeteria, but representing
>
> the school as a parent. Not as a cafeteria worker. So I've done some of that too.
>
> (Maria, pilot interview, cafeteria supervisor, daughter age 10)

Maria distinguished her parent involvement in the meetings as separate from her position as a cafeteria worker. However, it is likely that Maria would not have been asked to serve on the parent involvement committee had she not held her position in the cafeteria. The data in the present study is limited regarding where mothers work. It is important to note that none of the families who participated in the oral history interviews worked at children's schools in the same capacity as these two mothers. However, the finding is an important one, one that extends parental involvement literature, and certainly one that deserves future research.

The parent involvement section was full of a number of examples of external and internal involvement for families. These families believe that involvement is imperative in their children's educational processes and this message is consistently reinforced by both the schools and the Parent Outreach Program. Parents served as volunteers, served on PTA/PTO boards, went on field trips, helped with homework and instilled important life lessons in their children. However, they also were balancing lives that were sometimes hectic and chaotic. Their involvement may not have been the ideal level of involvement, but it certainly did not change the value placed on their children's education. In fact, examples of non-traditional involvement were also presented and represented the ways in which families redefined involvement even when it was not valued or recognized by the schools. And finally, we begin to understand that where mothers work influences their navigation of the school system, understanding of processes, and opportunities for involvement. These families are just as, if not more involved than the "traditional" family – they just exhibit it in different ways.

Summary

This chapter presented three primary themes: familial funds of knowledge, educational ideologies, and reconstructing parental involvement. Familial funds of knowledge explored the various daily household practices and social networks associated with an enhanced understanding of educational processes. Educational ideologies presented how ideologies are formed and influenced, and explored what families' philosophies of educational actually are. Finally, reconstructing parental involvement

illustrated traditional forms of involvement within each of the families, and new (non-traditional) forms of involvement. The final section also highlighted the importance of where mothers work as an influence on involvement.

Findings from the current study have the potential to advance three distinct bodies of literature. There is virtually no literature which incorporates funds of knowledge into an educational context beyond K-12; it is especially not found in outreach programs. Findings from this study can contribute both to the expansion of funds of knowledge literature and outreach and access literature. Parental involvement literature can also be expanded beyond traditional forms of external and internal involvement. The significance of the findings will be presented in greater detail in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 5:

DISCUSSION

When considering college access rates there are a number of factors that contribute to the inequities that exist between under-represented students and their white and Asian American counterparts. Students' economic resources, rising tuition costs, the political climate, overcrowded secondary schools, inadequate preparation for college, and many other factors play a role. The role of families, their values of education, and their involvement in the education process also contributes to whether students experience a college-going culture. This study sought to understand the funds of knowledge present in six Mexican families in the Parent Outreach Program and understand how those funds of knowledge contribute to and are expressed in the educational ideologies of the families. In doing so, the study also served to illustrate families' philosophies of education, their educational ideologies, and how those ideologies are formed, reshaped, and evolve into a sense of opportunities and educational pursuits.

The research questions guiding this study focused on three primary areas: the funds of knowledge present in families, the families' ideologies, and how parents interpreted the college information they received as participants in the Parent Outreach Program.

This chapter will close and summarize the study by suggesting a new framework from which researchers and practitioners can view, serve, and involve families. This chapter will revisit key components of the three primary themes of chapter 4: familial

funds of knowledge, educational ideologies, and reconstructing parental involvement. This chapter will also provide concrete recommendations for practice and implications for institutions, policy, and theory. Finally, the chapter will close by providing suggestions for future research.

A new framework for incorporating families

There is a consistent message in the literature on increasing college access - incorporating families in the educational process is fundamental to the success of their children. Parental involvement in K-12 education has long been considered a positive factor in educational performance and academic success (Jun & Colyar, 2002; Lareau, 1987; Tierney, 2002; Zarate, 2007). However, research has illustrated the differences in parental involvement based on factors such as social class, social networks, and capital. Moreover, there are standardized views that school administrators have in regards to the proper role of parental involvement (Lareau, 1987).

A range of research illustrates the importance of parental involvement in outreach programs and the need to increase parents' social and cultural capital (Auerbach, 2004; Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Jun & Coylar, 2002;; Tierney, 2002). Incorporating parents into outreach programs can be done through a variety of ways: personalized information focusing on steps in the pathway to college and how parents can help, beginning in elementary school, expansion of family social networks related to college options to include educators, alumni, and families like themselves, reinforcement of parents' sense of self-efficacy, gathering with other families for support

and fellowship in instrumental steps on the pathway to college (Tierney & Auerbach, 2002). Most importantly, researchers recommend maintaining a level of cultural integrity, which includes viewing education not simply as a process of passing information to parents without regard to their cultural realities, but rather as an interactive process of identity and community development that respects the culture and knowledge of the families (Tierney & Jun, 2001). Each of these recommendations are important, but the "how" question remains. How can one operationalize these recommendations when working with under-represented families, specifically, English-speaking, Mexican-American families? The implications and recommendations that follow begin to address the "how" question and aim to conceptualize family involvement from a new framework. These recommendations and implications were informed by key findings from the study. Before revisiting the key findings from the study it is important to understand the findings from the context of the larger research sample and the experiences of the families who participated in the pilot years of the Parent Outreach Program.

Variations in college knowledge

The data that I collected from interviews conducted during the two pilot years of the Parent Outreach Program was analyzed and included in many of the themes found in chapter 4 and is represented in the following pages. However, there are key differences that are worth discussing as they shed light on the variations in funds of knowledge and college knowledge of families participating in the program.

All of the families who participated in the larger study (both the pilot interviews and oral history interviews) demonstrated some levels of college knowledge. However, the depth of college knowledge was not as evident in families who participated in the second year of the pilot program. Interestingly, significant changes were made to the second year of the Parent Outreach Program. The first change was in regards to recruitment strategies and who the program served. Although the program still worked within the same feeder pattern (same elementary schools to middle school), the parents who were recruited for the program during the second year were not the result of direct recommendations from teachers. These parents were not as actively involved as the parents during the first year of the program and the parents during the current study. The second change that happened during the second year was the length of the program. The program was spread across two semesters (thus meeting every other week as opposed to weekly) instead of the current one semester format. It became more difficult to retain parents for both the program and for the interviews. Many post-program interviews did not occur both because the parents did not finish the program and because it became difficult to track parents down after an entire year for a follow-up interview. I say all of this to provide an understanding of perhaps why the families during the second year did not have the same level of college knowledge and involvement.

As is illustrated, families during the current study and first year of the program demonstrated various levels of external and internal involvement. In fact, mothers during the first year of the program had an even deeper level of understanding of the school system and a larger involvement role because of their employment in the school.

However, families during the second year of the program were not as present in the school system nor were they as involved in the Parent Outreach Program.

Similar to involvement, families during the second year did not demonstrate the same levels college knowledge. It is important to point out though that one mother in the second year sample did have a juris doctorate (a law degree). From what I could gather, she was not currently practicing law nor was she actively engaged in passing on that college knowledge to her son. We did not go into depth as to why, but even in this one case where college knowledge was present, it was not being tapped into.

These variations are important to highlight as part of this discussion because they help illustrate the point that not all of the families share in the experiences of the six who participated in the current study. Not all families share in the same levels of college knowledge, funds of knowledge or involvement. I suspect that as outreach programs serve multiple levels of families in the same feeder patters and school districts these variations will continue to be present. Thus, making it very difficult to generalize family profiles or outreach recommendations for all under-represented families as each family presents diverse needs and challenges. This deeper understanding of families helps to frame the following pages, in which I aim to provide insight into those families who demonstrate some levels of college knowledge and involvement.

Familial funds of knowledge

Funds of knowledge in the form of daily educational practices were illustrated and connected directly to children's academic experiences, family and social networks which

provided key educational and college information. Although not experts, many of these families and their larger household clusters demonstrated pre-existing college knowledge. The educational information that families have along with their daily educational practices need not be discounted. In fact, this educational information supplements extensive funds of knowledge around reciprocity, children experimenting, childrearing, caretaking, and life lessons, all of which are critically important in the daily functioning of these families.

Families' daily educational practices highlighted that even when parents believed they did not have the knowledge to help or supplement homework, or that their activities in the evenings stopped short at homework, they actually were doing much more. The problem however, is that most of the families did not recognize the value in their daily educational practices like playing on the keyboard, setting up an "office" in a closet, or finding Curious George on a computer game. Families were being told to read and check over homework. The extensive educational practices that went beyond homework were not recognized or validated, nor were they encouraged or enhanced.

Social networks that extended beyond their household clusters were a key resource for families in this study. Many of these families had been living in the same communities and neighborhoods for years and knew who exactly to contact to find out information about the schools. Social networks also provided information about college. Families had pre-existing information about college processes but were assumed to have none. In fact, many family members in the study had attempted (although did not

complete) college themselves and had first-hand knowledge of some of the steps involved.

Thus, a shift in the framework from which we understand and incorporate families must take into consideration the fact that families have knowledge, both about education in general and specifically about college. We should help families begin to realize the positive lessons already present in their homes and incorporate their pre-existing knowledge into our programs instead of operating from a deficit perspective.

Educational Ideologies

The educational ideologies outlined highlight the ways in which ideologies, particularly around the college-going process were formed. College information came from social networks and from academic and college symbols that were part of families' everyday lives. Ideologies manifested as both helpful and hurtful – limitations were created and symbols sometimes were restrictive. Despite the educational limitations in families the sense of college being a realistic goal and a true aspiration were also present. Educational ideologies shifted across generations, and even over the course of the Parent Outreach Program. Additionally, there were differences in how educational success was defined, who college is for, and how educational success is measured.

Two key themes emerged demonstrating how educational ideologies are formed: through familial social networks and through academic cultural symbols. The formation of these ideologies played both a positive, influential role in helping families construct their educational paths in non-traditional ways and sometimes a negative limiting role

when serving as a sense of false security or dependency, or when high aspirations are not supported by the necessary steps to achieve the goals. Financial concerns sometimes impeded college aspirations however families were quick to offer solutions to these barriers. The range of college choices presented a limitation as families often did not recognize all of the options available to them. The Parent Outreach Program offered parents tangible resources, however, the resources often became sources of false security, as was demonstrated in the case with the "Red Book". The range of ways in which families construct educational ideologies should be taken into consideration. Equally important, we must begin to evaluate the ways in which limitations are created for and by families and accept the role that messages from schools and outreach initiatives play in that process. It is important to move beyond just providing information to creating a college-going habitus for families. In many ways the Parent Outreach Program did successfully do this. Although the example above (the Red Book) caused some families a false sense of security, its content was the beginnings of a college social network. This network was further developed by the many faculty and staff that were present at each session of the Parent Outreach Program. Finally, by holding some of the sessions on the university campus families were able to concretely understand the concept of college. Families left these particular sessions with a new sense of empowerment.

It is clear that contradictions did exist between the reasons behind families' participation in the Parent Outreach Program and their long-term reality of the college process for their children. A closer look at what the ideologies actually were revealed that they shifted over time. Families may originally have participated in the Parent Outreach

Program to spend time with their children, but left the program with a more concrete

understanding of the college process, illustrating the development of a college-going

habitus. Ideologies also shifted across generations and expectations about involvement,

education, and college-going grew with each new generation. As families moved through

different labor markets and social classes, so did their funds of knowledge and

educational ideologies. Finally, important information was highlighted in how families

constructed their perceptions of success. Again, it was interesting to note that despite

their participation in the Parent Outreach Program, some families did not believe their

children would actually attend college. This presents a difficult challenge for outreach

programs that are trying to develop a college reality for students. Families had strong

opinions about what occupations were considered the successful ones and how test

scores, particular schools, and grades were reasonable measures of success. The funds of

knowledge, ideologies, and experiences presented often influenced how and when

families were able to be involved in their children's schools.

Reconstructing Parental Involvement

Parental involvement was exhibited in a number of ways for families in this study.

It was obvious that families believed involvement was imperative in their children's

educational processes. Families were consistently encouraged, by both the schools and

the Parent Outreach Program, to be active in their children's schools. Parents served as

volunteers, served on PTA/PTO boards, went on field trips, helped with homework and

instilled important life lessons in their children. Examples of non-traditional involvement

were also presented and were reflected in the ways in which mothers redefined involvement for their families even when it was not valued by the schools. Enhanced understanding of the school systems and different types of involvement were also available when mothers worked at the schools that their children attended.

The literature is clear at providing examples of traditional involvement. This study is also clear in supporting the research with examples exhibited by each family participating in the study. Despite balancing multiple responsibilities and managing sometimes chaotic lives, these families were active in both external and internal types of involvement. What is not captured in the literature are the non-traditional forms of involvement nor the emphasis on place of employment as a catalyst for more meaningful involvement. Two mothers in this study exhibited forms of involvement that did not fit within the dominant paradigm. One mother shared how her "sitting" sessions were not an opportunity to observe the class curriculum or the teacher, but a chance to observe her children, their friends, and ultimately, to better understand her children. She did not actively participate in the classroom, nor did she volunteer to assist in any way. Her demanding work schedule did not allow her the time to serve on different committees, but she was able to connect with her children because of her non-traditional involvement as a "sitter" in the classroom. The second mother was actually the most involved mother in the study. She met with school personnel, knew how to reach the school board, was at the schools every afternoon; but her participation was met with resistance and frustration. She was advocating for the lawful accommodations of her children, all with various learning and physical disabilities. She knew how to fight the system and was resented

because of it. The third example of non-traditional involvement highlighted the role that siblings play as the active, involved member of the family. This presents challenges as these children are often expected to serve in a little mother or little teacher role. The additional pressure not only places these children (often the daughters) in gender specific roles, but requires them to be responsible for the educational success of their siblings.

Finally, two mothers who were participants the study's pilot interviews actually worked at their children's schools. They learned how to both formally and informally navigate the school system. They created social networks that extended into teachers, administrators, and other staff members because of their employment. They were also offered diverse involvement opportunities. It matters where parents work. Although they may be in a working-class position that position still affords them different and enhanced opportunities. We cannot discount the types of involvement that are typically not recognized the literature. These families are active participants in their children's lives, it is up to us as researchers and practitioners to begin to understand how to incorporate and tap into that participation. The following implications present opportunities to work with families from a new framework.

Implications for practice

The implications below represent both a critical look at how deficit perspectives about the role of families are formed and practical recommendations for outreach programs. It is important when considering both implications for practice and theory, to move beyond just providing families college information. In fact, it was illustrated that

some families in this study have various levels of college information. We must begin to show them how to use the information they have. There is a missing link between gaining the information and realizing future academic and professional aspirations. Part of our responsibility must be to teach families what to do with the information; how to use it, recognize it within their own families, and how to tap into it and realize it in the form of academic and professional gains.

Reframing deficits

As researchers we continue to recommend that parents are incorporated into outreach programs and as practitioners we continue to seek ways to incorporate parents. However, I assert that we must step back from this process for a moment and reframe the deficit perspective. If we continue to assume that parents and families are lacking in experience, knowledge, finances and educational attainment, we will continue to miss the inherent resources that are already present in these families and will continue to blame families for creating limitations around their own educational ideologies. The literature is clear that families (specifically, Mexican families) value education. We must begin to understand families from a more balanced perspective. Yes, they value education and yes, they want their children to attend college. However, these aspirations are sometimes incomplete as steps required to achieve these goals can be misunderstood or unknown. On the flip side, we must also consider how K-12 teachers and administrators, outreach programs, policy makers, various entities within higher education, and the relevant literature might also serve as limiting factors.

It is naïve to assume that there are not limiting factors present in families. However, it is equally naïve to assume that various educational organizations (outreach programs, K-12 schools, institutions of higher education) do not play a role in perpetuating those limitations and deficits. As researchers we must begin to evaluate the implications of continuing to work from a dominant perspective. By adopting a more critical view of the role that organizations play and by developing a more complete understanding of the inherent resources and values present in under-represented families, perhaps larger gains can be made in the college-going rates for these students.

Practical recommendations for outreach programs

Funds of knowledge can be an effective pedagogical tool, taking into account the capital of students at the K-12 levels. However, despite many recommendations to incorporate parental involvement in the school systems and in outreach programs, there is a gap in the practical application, as well as in the literature illustrating programs that utilize comprehensive methods of incorporating parents. If the funds of knowledge, capital, and ideologies of families are not being valued and utilized, parents may not realize their own resources, may not develop the confidence to help their children with the educational process, and may fail to tap into their own experiences and expand their activities in order to help their children succeed.

Before presenting recommendations, is important to first acknowledge the constraints that outreach programs face, in particular, the Parent Outreach Program which served as the programmatic context for this study. The Parent Outreach Program has

grown considerably over the last five years and the program is currently serving twice the number of families and schools than in previous years. This growth has not been accompanied by additional funding, nor has it been accompanied by additional human resources. Even with limited resources the Parent Outreach Program has made a significant impact in the Southside School District and has been highlighted as a successful, model program on a national level. Unfortunately, when considering national, state, and institutional policies and budgets, outreach programs are typically one of the first targeted on the chopping block and/or they are continually asked to do more (serve larger numbers) with less (budget and personnel). These programs operate with the dual challenge of decreasing resources and maintaining legitimacy by increasing access for populations that do not have high college-going rates.

Findings from this study present an opportunity to build on the work that outreach programs are already doing. These recommendations are not meant to serve as *the* solution for successfully incorporating families into outreach programs; however, they can be used to expand on the notion of cultural integrity and further incorporate families from a non-deficit perspective.

1. Outreach programs should include formal opportunities each session for families to share their tips and strategies for educational practices.
2. Outreach programs should help parents utilize their extensive social networks as a means of practicing and activating social capital.

3. Outreach programs should tap into the college knowledge already present in families, allowing the families to share their experiences around key college-going processes.

4. Outreach programs should offer structured and continuous follow up with former parent participants if parents are expected to continue to incorporate new information, strategies, and college conversations into their daily activities.

5. If the intent of outreach programs is to provide college access and information to families on the margin, recruiting and marketing practices should be established outside of school events.

A few important points should be considered as part of these recommendations. First, the key is to validate the families as experts of their own knowledge and help them to realize they are already practicing effective strategies beyond daily homework routines. Second, families must understand the value of their daily educational practices, established social networks, and current college knowledge. They must understand the relevance and why what they are doing and how they are doing it is important. Families in this study demonstrated various educational practices, networks, and college knowledge, but did not always connect those practices with what their children were learning in school or how it might help them with future educational pursuits. Finally, the families in this study illustrated various levels of involvement. Although it is impossible to know if all parents who participate in outreach programs demonstrate similar levels of involvement, it is important to consider how families are recruited to participate and what types of families are being targeted.

I recognize the limitations of qualitative work in terms of generalizing findings. In fact, qualitative work is not meant to be generalizable; it is meant to help understand the how's and why's of those participating in the study (Small, 2005). However, these five recommendations can be useful to outreach initiatives that are trying to incorporate families in more culturally sensitive ways. The recommendations represent an opportunity to utilize funds of knowledge in a new, untapped way and provide a significant contribution to the effort of affecting change in the systemic structure of education.

Institutional Implications

Creating a change in the college-going rates of under-represented students is a large task and must be addressed at an institutional level and not solely within outreach offices and programs. This is particularly imperative for land-grant, state institutions with goals of serving the constituents of the state. Many institutions are at a point of restructuring their financing because of decreasing state subsidies and higher education appropriations (Hebel, 2003) however, student recruitment, student outreach, and enrollment management techniques must be carefully considered.

As state institutions become more selective it is difficult to change current enrollment practices and trends where institutions are competing for the more high achieving students (spending more on recruitment of these students and directing more aid their way). Likewise, state institutions have been forced to increase tuition and decrease financial aid subsidies in the face of decreasing state budgets. However, I believe these practices are contradictory to the responsibility that state institutions have to

the constituents of the state. If institutions continue to compete for the higher achieving students, often those who can pay the larger tuition costs and those receiving additional merit aid, and continue to decrease the amount of aid being filtered to lower-income students, will it even matter if under-represented students can get into college if they cannot pay?

I challenge university presidents, budget officers, and enrollment management officers to consider who land-grant, state institutions are meant to serve and if our institutions are indeed serving those populations. Or are we merely falling into the competitive trap of isomorphism and leaving the students in our own backyards behind? I do not believe that the burden of outreaching to local students should fall solely on university outreach programs. In fact, I challenge university administrators to consider if outreach programs are merely serving as symbolic gestures implying that service to local students is indeed valued at the institutional level when other institutional practices suggest otherwise. Again I ask, who and what are we really trying to serve – our local students or national prestige?

Policy Implications

A number of federal and state policies exist which impact access to education and even with the federal government's commitment to college access for all students, under-represented and low-income student participation continues to decline. Debate continues around No Child Left Behind and the Dream Act; financial aid policy and the Higher Education Act directly impact federal funding that students may receive; and finally, state policies around standardized testing and state budgets impact students' educational

experiences on a daily basis. These are only a few of the policies impacting college access. Because the context of this particular study is outreach programs, I will focus this discussion primarily on policies impacting outreach and access programs.

Researchers and government officials on the "outreach" side of the argument might combat statistics illustrating low college-going rates with the argument that one can focus on increasing the funding levels for college-aged students, but if there continues to be a disparity in the K-12 system to prepare students for college the additional funding will not make a difference (Gladieux & Swail, 1998). Thus, because issues of access do not begin at the college level and are instead accumulated issues of inaccessibility beginning with the K-12 educational system, these systems should be reformed. Educational outreach and programs have become an accepted (yet incomplete) substitute for comprehensive K-12 educational reform. However, even with some funding being directed to outreach programs, the access disparity continues to exist.

Some of the nation's largest and most strongly funded outreach programs, such as TRiO and GEAR UP programs are serving only approximately 10% of their eligible student constituents because of challenges to financial resources such as funding being filtered into other educational initiatives (Swail & Roth, 2000). It has been argued that better participation in outreach programs could be captured through prioritization of resources, including better investments at the state and local levels (Swail & Roth, 2000). By funneling more educational funding into outreach programs such as TRiO and GEAR UP, a larger percentage of eligible students will be served, increasing students' academic preparedness and their academic welfare in general.

As a cautionary note, although I am in favor of increasing funding for outreach programs, there is a difficult balance to consider. Research has indicated that if federal funding is cut from programs such as student aid in order to increase the funding for student outreach programs, institutions of higher education will experience a decrease in enrollment. This decrease in enrollment is especially salient for lower-income students and students from under-represented populations (Heller, 1997) – the same students that might be impacted by the outreach programs. Therefore, the flip side of the argument is if students are now prepared to attend college, but now cannot afford college, where should funding go and where (and how) will the students go? As I have illustrated, the policy implications are incredibly complex. This research demonstrates the positive impact that outreach programs can have on families and I urge that when the federal budget is reviewed each year that programs like TRiO and GEAR UP do not become the first to be cut and/or decreased. I also believe that educational reform must be considered as well, and not only from a K-12 level. Focusing energy and dollars on just one educational policy will not correct the access issue. Time must be spent on revising a more equitable Higher Education Act, revisiting muddy policies like No Child Left Behind, and moving forward with new policies that might open up possibilities for college access like the Dream Act. Issues of access to education are systemic and although practical recommendations can be made to both outreach programs and the families they serve, if the system does not change neither will the issue.

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical and pedagogical approach of funds of knowledge is widely accepted in K-12 literature as a way to incorporate the values and resources inherent in families into the classroom and curriculum. Classrooms are considered learning communities created by its different members contributing their diverse expertise and where learning takes place through exchange and cooperation (Civil, 1994). Yet funds of knowledge has not made its way into literature beyond K-12. This study represents one of the first which attempts to apply a funds of knowledge perspective into an educational setting outside of a K-12 classroom. Not only does this study provide practical applications of the framework as it might apply to outreach initiatives and programs, it provides an opportunity to expand the theory and literature beyond its current capacity. In this study I presented examples of the different types of funds of knowledge present in families, thus expanding upon the ways in which funds of knowledge were previously documented in homes. Researchers can begin to understand how a funds of knowledge framework might work in an outreach setting and perhaps a higher education setting. Expanding the notion of and use of funds of knowledge into outreach programs not only enhances funds of knowledge literature, it also builds upon outreach and access literature.

Outreach and access literature is not lacking recommendations for practice, particularly around successful incorporation of parents and families. However, the recommendations generally do not go beyond concept of cultural integrity (Tierney & Jun, 2001). Operationalizing cultural integrity beyond a concept is difficult. Incorporating a funds of knowledge approach into outreach initiatives provides an opportunity to

expand the notion of cultural integrity thus expanding upon current outreach research and literature.

Perhaps one of the most pressing theoretical implications to address is the question of the link between funds of knowledge and other forms of capital. Is funds of knowledge just another term for capital? If the value of social and cultural capital is dependent upon a variety of social settings and fields (Lareau & Horvat, 1999) is funds of knowledge simply a fancy term for explaining capital in the social context of immigrant or low-income families? What is defined as funds of knowledge in certain literature is described as social and cultural capital in others. For example, Lareau & Horvat (1999) listed the following as cultural and social capital attributes illustrated in African American families: large vocabularies, child care arrangements, and social networks with other families. I maintain that the terminology one uses to describe either families' funds of knowledge or their capital is based primarily on social class and the privileges associated with particular levels. Funds of knowledge has become the accepted term for describing capital in lower income and immigrant communities. However, as was addressed in the generational shifts section in chapter 4, it appears that funds of knowledge shifts as families move up in careers and social class. As education levels and social class levels shift, so do funds of knowledge. Traditional forms of capital seemed to be used as opposed to funds of knowledge and I again ask: are families losing funds of knowledge along the way; trading them in for capital? Perhaps learning and utilizing funds of knowledge is context dependent. Or, perhaps the skills that are taught and learned as part of funds of knowledge can be applied to any context. I also wonder - can

families learn to navigate both – switching between funds of knowledge and forms of capital when in different environments? I wonder if there is a benefit to switching between funds of knowledge and different forms of capital? Is capital just capital, something that takes on different forms as families move up the social class ladder? Not only are these questions that will push researchers to better understand the theoretical parallels between funds of knowledge and forms of capital, it serves as an opportunity for future research.

The ways in which parental involvement is described in the literature remains limited to external (academic) and internal (life participation) involvement. In fact, issues addressed in the literature on the topic of social and parental involvement has not changed in the last 20 years. Additionally, the ways in which parental involvement is measured both at the K-12 level and in higher education is also limited. Most studies that examine the role of parental involvement in higher education utilize quantitative designs and variables are limited to such things as college visits, conversations about course work, and the like. One can also find a countless number of articles describing college-level parental involvement as hovering, or helicopter like in nature. These examples generalize families as demanding and overly involved. Conversely, the families in this study did not fit the "helicopter" stereotype. They are diverse, the ways in which they are involved are diverse, and in general they are eager and grateful for information and incorporate wish to incorporate that information in hopes of increased opportunities. This study advances parental involvement literature and particularly, the ways in which we conceptualize and measure parental involvement.

As researchers we continue to limit ourselves by not considering non-traditional forms of involvement. We cannot continue to perpetuate the message that other forms of involvement are wrong, literature must begin to reflect on the ways in which we attempt to understand involvement and create measures (beyond quantitative) that are inclusive of diverse family situations and experiences.

Finally, as we begin to better understand the diverse nature of parental involvement in K-12 through higher education, one begins to understand that the educational process is never just about the child and the institution. Ultimately, this study broadens the scope of literature beyond individual within a family and individual within an institution. There is always a multiple-part relationship that both K-12 and higher education institutions must consider. The relationship between the student, family, and various institutional departments, programs, resources, and people in which students and families interact is imperative to understanding educational opportunities and success within a three-part experience – pre-college, college, and beyond. As noted with previous theoretical implications, this provides an outline for future research in order to better understand this multiple-part relational experience.

Suggestions for Future Research

Throughout the data collection and analysis process ideas for future research were presented. What follows are suggestions for future research, research that will continue to advance the understanding of funds of knowledge and the role of families in the educational process.

Although unrealistic expectations and ideologies are sometimes created around future sports careers or fame, the examples in this study reveal how collegiate sports became the portal to developing college goals and constructing educational ideologies in families. The role of collegiate sports should be studied in further detail as the examples provided were not the only mention of the link between sports and introduction to college.

Families possess ample forms of funds of knowledge and this knowledge often is passed on through educational lessons over time in the household. Participants have not yet been followed up with (beyond the original study) to determine where their children are on a collegiate path. Therefore, it is unclear what type of influence outreach initiatives such as the Parent Outreach Program will have on future college access opportunities. Future research should examine how and if those funds of knowledge are being converted into concrete educational opportunities for children throughout the course of their K-12 experience and into their college-going process. Follow-up and on-going research with families should also examine how educational ideologies shift over time based on experiences, outreach initiatives, and familial funds of knowledge.

This research represents one of the first studies to utilize funds of knowledge as a means of understanding families and outreach programs in higher education. Additional research is necessary to truly understand the utility of funds of knowledge in access and outreach programs and in under-represented families while in college, not only on the path to college. This research should include diverse families from a variety of outreach

initiatives through the collegiate experience as this study, as well as most funds of knowledge studies, are focused primarily on Latino immigrant communities.

Additionally, as researchers begin to study funds of knowledge in different settings we can begin to understand the previously mentioned multiple-part relationship (student, family, various institutional entities) within a three-part experience (pre-college, college, and profession). This type of research is necessary to advance student development and retention theories, parental involvement theories, and will help to connect theory with practice.

The notion of household clusters is important to the suggestions mentioned above. If funds of knowledge is used as the theoretical lens from which we study students in their pre-college, college, and post-college process, we must begin to reconceptualize the definition of household clusters. Household clusters may begin to represent significant relationships outside of the family setting and into the collegiate setting. These may extend into residence halls and living/learning communities, fraternity and sorority involvement, and summer transition, retention and leadership programs in which a significant sense of community is developed.

Finally, research on the theory and pedagogical approach of funds of knowledge must look deeper at the parallels between funds of knowledge and forms of capital. Specifically, future research might include studying how and when funds of knowledge are activated and by whom. Is there a particular point in which funds of knowledge is traded in for other forms of capital? If funds of knowledge is viewed from a recognition, validation, conversion, and activation framework how and when does this happen? Who

are the players and does the process follow a similar one to traditional forms of capital? A myriad of questions remain to be answered, but the opportunity to explicitly connect funds of knowledge to social and cultural capital has yet to be explored.

Conclusion

This study began with the intent of highlighting the funds of knowledge present in Mexican-American families. I began with the goal creating enhanced access to higher education for under-represented populations by providing a practical framework from which to operate. Components of that goal have been accomplished, but along the way the stories and experiences of families participating in this study provided much more – both for me personally and for the literature that guides our work. This research offers a different perspective on how funds of knowledge and educational ideologies are formed - from experiences, relationships and symbols, and how those funds of knowledge and ideologies, although filled with strong values of education, can at the same time present limitations for future access in families. Researchers and practitioners are reminded that we cannot be limited in our definitions of family, how they construct a college-going process, nor in our definitions of parental involvement. If students from diverse and under-represented backgrounds are to be successful, we must begin with reflecting on the limitations that are constructed – in the literature, in policies, in theories, in practice, and in the families.

Appendix A

Table 3: **The Household Clusters**

FAMILY	RELATIONSHIP	OCCUPATIONS	LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED
BORQUEZ Will (34) Veronica (11) Jennifer (9) Rodrigo Gamez (30) Aracely Michaels (20)	Father Daughter Daughter Friend Girlfriend of friend	Will: college student, self-employed, veteran Rodrigo: administrative work in hospital emergency room, veteran Aracely: administrative work (part-time) in doctor's office	Will: current community college and university student Veronica: 5th grade Jennifer: 3rd grade (Los Nidos Elementary) Rodrigo: unknown Aracely: unknown
JOHNSON Danielle (27) Ricardo (28) John (7) Yvette (6)	Mother Father Son Daughter	Danielle: Corrections Officer Ricardo: Community College student	Danielle: high school Ricardo: some community college John: 1st grade Yvette: kindergarten (San Clemente Elementary)
LOPEZ Janice (29) Isaiah (39) Virginia (12) Veronica (5) Vanessa (14)	Mother Father Daughter Daughter Daughter (lives with biological father)	Janice: Insurance Biller Isaiah: Painter, DJ	Janice: high school Isaiah: welding certificate – trade school Virginia: 7th grade (Champion Middle School) Veronica: 1st grade (San Clemente Elementary) Vanessa: high school freshman
MURRIETA Tanya (30) Sal (11) Selena (9) Alex (6) Laura (20) Beatrice (2) Ernestina (52) Antonio (50's) Maria (27) Robert (7) Gustavo (6) Julia (2) Carlos (29) Amelia (10) Bianca (6) Baby (6 months)	Mother Son Daughter Son Aunt Female Cousin Grandmother Boyfriend of Grandmother Aunt Male Cousin Male Cousin Female Cousin Uncle Female Cousin Female Cousin Baby Cousin	Tanya: OB technician, community college student Laura: Administrative Assistant Ernestina: Housekeeper Antonio: Janitor Maria: Manager at Job Carlos: Stereo Installer	Tanya: community college student Sal: 5th grade (Lauer Middle School) Selena: 3rd grade Alex: kindergarten (Sage View) Laura: high school Ernestina: complete up to 3rd grade Antonio: unknown
RODRIGUEZ Linda (50) Pedro (77) Olivia (69) Dora (15) Laura (13)	Mother Grandfather Grandmother Adopted Daughter Adopted Daughter	Linda: Administrative Assistant Pedro: Retired head custodian at middle school Olivia: Retired factory worker Sylvia: administrative work with	Linda: high school Pedro: 6th grade Olivia: 9th grade Dora: Freshman (Desert Voices High School)

Daniela (11) Keith (10) Berenice (8) Tania (6) Sylvia (29) Elisa (26) Baby Boy (3 months)	Adopted Daughter Adopted Son Adopted Daughter Adopted Daughter Daughter Daughter Baby Cousin	Child Protective Services Elisa: head teacher at the YMCA	Laura: 7th grade – safe home through school district Daniela: 6th grade (Lauer Middle School) Keith: 5th grade (Los Rios Elementary) Berenice: 3rd grade (Los Rios Elementary) Tania: 1st grade (Santa Catalina Catholic School) Sylvia: community college student Elisa: junior credits at university
TABERS Valerie (25) Aracely (7) Francisco (50) Alexis (48) Veronica (28) Josiah (7) Josephine (6)	Mother Daughter Grandfather Grandmother Aunt Male Cousin Female Cousin	Valerie: Accounts Receivable Representative Francisco: Customer Service Representative Alexis: Customer Service Representative Veronica: Customer Service Representative	Valerie: trade school Aracely: 1st grade (Los Rios Elementary) Francisco: some community college Alexis: some community college Veronica: some university Josiah: 1st grade Josephine: kindergarten (Los Rios Elementary)

(note: space in between members denotes separate households, but indicates significant relationship in household cluster)

Appendix B1: Pre Interview Protocol

    I.   **Navigating and negotiating the education system**

Social Capital
A.
1. Do you know any of the teachers or staff at the school?
     How did you get to know them?
2. Have you met with teachers? What was the reason for the meeting and who initiated it?
(e.g. did the parents ask for an appointment?)

3. Have you talked with the principal? What was the reason for the meeting and who
initiated it?
(e.g. did the parents ask for an appointment?)

4. Do you attend school events?

5. Where do you do to get information about the school (or education in general) (do you
get information from your children, other parents, family members, school personnel
directly or indirectly)?

6. Do you talk with friends or family members in the community about the school (for
example, comparing notes about teachers)?
     What sorts of things do you talk about?

Cultural Capital
B.
1. Have you ever talked with a teacher or someone else at the school about some grade or
evaluation of your child?
     Were you satisfied with how the situation was handled? Why/not?

2. Let's assume for a moment that something happens at school that you are not happy
with. What can or should parents/guardians do if they are not happy with or do not
understand a grade their child received, or with some situation at school?

3. Is your child in a particular program or group within their class (e.g. a GATE program,
or receiving tutoring, or in a high level math group)?

Educational Ideologies
C.

1. Many parents think their main responsibility with their child in relation to the school is to get their child ready for school, to get them to school on time, and to help ensure they behave at school. What do you think?

2. Do you think parents/guardians should participate in different types of school events?
   Which ones are most important, do you think?
   Are you able to participate? (and if not, is there anything the school could do that would make it more likely or possible for you to participate?)

3. What do you think about your child's teacher?
   Do you think he/she is doing a good job? Why/not?

4. Have you heard anything about the sort of tests your child will eventually need to take to get through school and into college? (e.g. the AIMS test)
   Do you think there's anything you can do to help your children get ready for and do well on such tests?

5. Have you ever been to the University of Arizona? Can you describe your experience?
   Have you ever talked with a faculty member at the university or college?

6. Have you considered sending your child to any sort of school other than a public school, to Catholic school, or another religious school, or to private school, or to a charter school? If so why?

7. How many different schools has your child attended?
   How would you compare them; was one better than the others?
   How does their current school compare with others?

8. How do you think school here compares with the school you went to?
   Probe on where they went to school (e.g. in Mexico)
   Did you like your experience in school?

9. Do you hope that your child goes to college?
   Can you think of any reasons that they might not go to college?
   Is there something that you think might prevent them from being able to do that?

10. Do you talk with your child about college?
    Is your child interested in college?
    What kinds of things do you say?
    What can parents/guardians do to help their children in getting ready for college?

11. Do you know about the different community colleges, colleges, tech programs, and universities in the city or in the state?

    How about in any other states?

    Do you think it's possible that your child would go to college out of state? Why/not?

II.   Understanding curriculum, curricular tracks, and connections to careers

Curriculum and curricular tracks

A.

1. Are there particular subjects at school that your child likes, or is especially good at?

    Are there subjects that they don't especially like or in which they are not doing particularly well in?

    Are there things you can do at home to help them with their classes?

2. Do you think it's more important for your child to do well in some subjects than in others (math, science, social studies, English, Spanish, Fine Arts)? Why?

    Are there any subjects that you feel you can help them in?

3. Does your child like to read? (in Spanish/English)

    What kinds of stuff have you noticed your child liking to read?

    Are there things you can do to encourage them to read?

    Are there activities that you do with them that are related to reading, such as reading with or to your child?

4. If your child is going to be able to go to college, what subjects do you think are most important for them to do well in?

    What subjects are the least important?

5. Have you heard anything about the AIMS test?

    How important do you think your child's score on the AIMS (Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards) test will be for going to college?

Connections to career

B.

1. If your child is going to college, what do you think they should/might study, and why?

2. What kind of job does your child want to have, or what type of job do you think they are likely to have?

    Are there any subjects they would need to study hard in to achieve that goal?

III. Expectations and experience of the College Academy for Parents

A.
1. How did you hear of the program?
    (school personnel, their kids, other parents/guardians)?

B.
1. Why did you decide to participate in the program?
    What do others think about it (kids, family, friends)?
    Do you know of people who decided not to participate, and if so, what were their
    reasons?

C.
1. What do you hope to learn and gain from the program?

2. What have you heard you will learn from the program?

3. Is there any information or issues that you wish had been made clearer before you
started the program?

Appendix B2: Post Interview Protocol

I.   Expectations and experience of the College Academy for Parents

1. What did you like most about the College Academy for Parents?

2. Was the content of the materials you received and the presentations you heard useful and clear? Were the presentations by university professors understandable, or did they use too much technical and complicated language?

3. Were there parts of the College Academy for Parents that could have been done better, or that were not particularly effective? Not particularly useful?

4. What did you hope to learn and gain from the program? Do you feel as if those expectations were met?

5. Overall, how do you feel about the program?

6. Would you recommend the program to any other parents?
Have you recommended the program to other parents?

7. Did you feel that the program for your children was useful? Can you give me any examples of things your children learned while you were in the College Academy for Parents?
What comments did your kids have about the program?
Are there things that could have been done with the children that the program did not do?

8. Have you seen any changes in the past several months in your children's behavior in school or attitudes about school or college? Do you think those changes are partly the result of the College Academy for Parents program?

9. Are there any recommendations that you would make to the program coordinators about how to improve the program? About the program generally, or about the general presentations and events? About additional information regarding certain subjects that should be provided?

10. What advice would you give to other parents about what to think about and do when they are in the College Academy for Parents?

11. What advice would you give to the program coordinators about getting more parents involved in this project?

12. How did you feel about the teaching in the program? By the general staff? By the university professors?

Was it good?
Did it keep you interested?
Did you have enough time to participate and ask questions?

13. Would you be interested in participating in the future with the College Academy for Parents, assisting with other parents?

14. Do you think a reunion of the College Academy for Parents would be useful? Do you think you would probably attend?

     II.   Understanding curriculum, curricular tracks, and connections to careers
Curriculum and curricular tracks

A.
1. Did the program give you any particular ideas about how you might help your child at school?

2. Do you feel like there were any new sources of information or assistance for how you can help your child in school?

3. After having taken the program, are there any new ways that you are working with your child on homework? On reading?

4. After having been in the College Academy for Parents, do you have a better understanding of the sorts of classes that your child will need to take in college in order to go into a certain occupation?

5. Are there any particular choices about classes in middle school and high school that are especially important for your child getting accepted to college?

III. Navigating and negotiating the education system

Social Capital
A.
1. After being in the College Academy for Parents, do you think you will do anything different in relating to your child's teachers, or the principal?

2. Have you made new friends with other parents in the College Academy for Parents?
If so, do you think those friendships will help you in helping your child in school?
Did you already know most of the parents in the class? And if so, do you talk more about school with them now?

3. Do you talk with friends or family members in the community about the program? What sorts of things do you talk about?

4. Do you talk more about school with your family and friends now? Or about the College Academy for Parents? What sorts of topics do you discuss?

Cultural Capital
B.
1. Has the College Academy for Parents helped you better understand what goes on at school? (e.g. report cards and grades)

2.   Did you learn any new information in the College Academy for Parents about particular programs that your child could get involved in that would help them at school or in getting into college? Can you give some examples?

3. Do you feel that you now have a better understanding of the tests that you child will need to take to finish high school? (e.g. the AIMS test) and to get into college (SAT, ACT)? Can you tell me a little bit about your understanding of those tests?
Do you think there is anything you can do to help your child do well on these tests?

4. If you have any questions about getting into college, who will you call now? Do you feel that the College Academy for Parents helped you better understand how and where to get information about college?

5. How do you feel about visiting the University campus? Has the College Academy for Parents made you feel more comfortable about visiting or contacting someone at the university?

6. What responsibilities do you now see yourself as having about your child and school, and your child and college?
a. e.g. many parents think that their main responsibility with their child in relation to school is to get their child ready for school, to get them to school on time, and to help ensure they behave at school. What do you think?

7. Some of the parents have talked about pursuing more education themselves – for example, taking English classes, enrolling in the community college.
Have you had any such thoughts?
Do you think you will pursue any of the information or ideas you learned about in the College Academy for Parents? And if so, how?

8. Some of the parents have talked about not feeling like they could do very much to help their child do well in school and go to college. Have you felt that way?
Did the College Academy for Parents change that feeling at all?

Educational choices / ideology
C.
1. Has the College Academy for Parents affected your ideas about whether and where your child can go to college? How so?

2. After having been in the College Academy for Parents, do you talk differently with your child about whether or where they should go to college?
What do you say to them now? And how did you talk with them before?

3. Do you have different ideas after having been in the College Academy for Parents about the particular colleges or universities that your child should think about applying to?
Or about how many colleges they should apply to? How so?

4. Has the College Academy for Parents helped you to better understand college costs? If so, how so? Is there information about tuition and financial aid that you are still unclear about?

5. Has the College Academy for Parents affected your ideas about whether you can afford for your child to go to college? If so, how?

6. Has the College Academy for Parents affected your ideas about whether your child can and should live on campus? If so, how?

Appendix C: Funds of Knowledge Oral History Interview: Guiding Protocol
(adapted from Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005)

Oral History Interview 1:
Focus: Family History

1. If you could describe your family, both your immediate and extended family, what would their characteristics be?

2. How long have you been living in Tucson? When did you come to Tucson? How did you family come to Tucson?

3. Can you talk a little bit about the history of your family's migration to the Tucson community? (search for extended history) What was the primary reason for coming to Tucson?

4. Do you have regular contact with other families in the city? What is the nature of that contact?

5. In thinking about your own childhood, where did you consider home? How often do you visit your home of origin?

Oral History Interview 2:
Focus: Labor History

1. What type of job do you currently hold? What types of jobs have you had in the past?
(note: job can be defined as both paid and unpaid labor)

2. Did you receive training for these jobs? Can you describe that training?

3. How long have your been in your current job? How long were you in your previous jobs?

4. What were the reasons for changing jobs?

5. What types of informal jobs have you had? (i.e. garage sales, flea markets) What is the children's role with these jobs?

6. How did you learn the skills for these informal jobs? Do you feel like these skills are also being passed to your children? How so?

7. Does anyone in the household volunteer for anything in the community? If so, please describe the nature of the work.

Oral History Interview 3:
Focus: Regular Household Activities

1. What types of household activities do you practice on a regular basis? What is your typical household routine?

2. How are your children involved in these activities?

3. Do you participate in:
   regular music practices
   sports events
   shopping with coupons
   family outings
   sewing
   using the computer?
   Please describe the nature of these activities.

4. What types of weekly or monthly routines does the family engage in? Who usually participates in these routines?

5. If bilingual, what language is spoken at home? How did this become the norm for the household?

Oral History Interview 4:
Focus: Social capital and social networks

1. How many relatives live near or around Tucson? How would you describe your relationship with them? What does your family do when they get together?

2. How many of your friends live near or around Tucson? How would you describe your relationship with them? What does your family do when they get together?

3. How would you describe your friends? What are their characteristics?

4. What type of community organizations are you involved in? (i.e. church, sports, etc) What is your role in these organizations?

5. Do you offer your services to any of your friends or acquaintances? For example, taking care of their children, offering advice about jobs or school, etc.

Oral History Interview 5:

Focus: Child rearing philosophies

1. Who is the primary caretaker of the children? Can you talk a little about your experience as a parent – what do you find rewarding? What do you find challenging?

2. Are there older siblings that assist in the caretaking of the younger children?

3. Who takes care, the most often, of your children after school? What is their routine when they come home from school?

4. Can you describe your daily interactions with your children? For example, what things do you read each day? Does your family eat together at a certain time? Do you have a religious routine, like praying with your children, each day?

5. What do you think are the most important lesson you've taught your children? Why?

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