CULTURAL TRANSMISSION OF IMMIGRANT LATINO FAMILIES:
BRIDGING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

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By
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Abstract

The Achievement Gap in education exists on multiple levels, and tens of thousands of children of Latino immigrants find themselves at the lower end of the Achievement Gap in several categories: Latino ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, English Learners, and parents who did not graduate from high school. Students of this “Lower Quadruple Gap” are at the greatest risk of academic failure. Fluent English Proficient (FEP) students, however, have been able to overcome these statistical challenges. This qualitative study of FEP students included ethnographic interviews from 6 immigrant Latino families to examine families’ cultural practices at home and to explore how the process of cultural transmission, including Spanish, contributed to students’ cognitive development and their ability to achieve academically. Families have settled on what can only be described as a cultural island, segregated from the dominant US society, and have adapted their culture in response to their surroundings. Data from the interviews suggest that various conditions affected families’ cultural behaviors, but that families were transmitting a modified version of their traditional culture to their children. Data did not include observations of cognitive-promoting Mediated Learning Experiences (MLE) during this process, but families’ home environments were conducive to MLE interactions. Data also included standardized test scores, and all student-participants categorized as Fluent English Proficient (FEP) performed at grade level or above on all standardized assessments in both English and Spanish.
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Chapter 1:

Introduction

Educators, parents, politicians, the business community, and many others have paid much attention in recent years to the Achievement Gap, an academic achievement disparity most commonly defined by ethnicity with White and Asian students on the higher end of the divide, and Black and Latino (or Hispanic) students on the lower end. Even President George W. Bush has made education reform, and closing the Achievement Gap, the cornerstone of his administration (Bush, 2001). While intertwining social, economic, and cultural issues compound an already complex educational dilemma, efforts to untangle these larger issues in order to understand the roots of this phenomenon have not yielded significant results. The search for the “Holy Grail” of modern education—that is, broadly applicable solutions to close the Achievement Gaps—continues.

In this chapter, I will describe how the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 attempts to address the Achievement Gap and paint a graphic and sobering picture of just how wide and how deep the Achievement Gap between Whites and Latinos is, from lowest levels of Elementary to the highest levels of higher education. Furthermore, statistical data shows that multiple Achievement Gaps exist beyond ethnicity, but that one group of students has demonstrated the ability to overcome these challenges and bridge multiple Achievement Gaps.
The No Child Left Behind Act

In an attempt to address the Achievement Gap, President George Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001. In the Executive Summary, Bush comments, “The academic achievement gap between rich and poor, Anglo and minority is not only wide, but in some cases is growing wider still” (2001). The law holds public educational institutions accountable for their students on state achievement tests by requiring states to publish standardized test results for each school and school district. Of significance is how these results are presented; scores are disaggregated according to various subgroups: gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status (SES), level of parent education, and proficiency in English. Each of these student subgroups must reach 100% proficiency in each content area by 2014, theoretically raising the achievement level of every student and closing the Achievement Gap.

Also of significance is the law’s impact on schools and school districts that fail to meet the annual proficiency goals. If any of these aforementioned subgroups does not meet the predetermined level of proficiency, schools and school districts are placed on probation. Although students, parents, and schools receive additional resources to meet these goals, the consequences for schools and school districts can be severe if they fail to do so. Possible consequences for failing to meet the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) goals during the five year probationary period include: reconstitution of the administration and staff, reopening the school as a charter school, hiring outside contractors to manage the school, and a takeover of the school by the state (Paige, 2002). As the law currently stands, the landscape of public education in the United States will be
altered permanently if schools and school districts are not able to find a way to improve
the academic performance of those students at the lower end of the Achievement Gap.

**The White–Latino Achievement Gap**

Race and ethnicity are the criteria most commonly used to define the
Achievement Gap. Because White students represent the largest and most dominant
ethnic group in the United States, I will use Whites as a comparative group in this study.
White students significantly outperform Latino students by any measure of academic
achievement from early elementary to graduate levels of higher education throughout the
United States and California. The following data illustrate the profundity of the
White–Latino Achievement Gap. (Latino is a term that is used interchangeably with
Hispanic. I will use the term Latino in this paper unless the source of information
specifically uses the term Hispanic.)

**Achievement in Elementary and Middle Schools**

- From second to eighth grade in the state of California, the percentage of White
  students scoring at Advanced or Proficient on the Math and ELA CST is generally
twice that of Hispanics (California Department of Education, 2007).

- On a national achievement test administered by the National Assessment of
  Educational Progress (NAEP) in 2005, Latinos were the lowest-performing ethnic
group in both the fourth and eighth grade in Language Arts, Math, and Science
and have among the widest gaps between Latino and White students (National
Center for Educational Statistics, 2007).
• On the same NAEP exam, the percentage of Latino students scoring in the Below Basic range in all three subject areas was approximately twice that of Whites; conversely, the percentage of Latinos scoring in the Proficient or Advanced range was approximately one-fourth that of Whites (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007).

• Latinos represented a near majority (48%) of the California public school population in 2005, but there were nearly twice as many White students in the Gifted and Talented program (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2006).

Achievement in High School

• Latino dropout rates are by far the highest of any ethnic group in California, which is quadruple the rate of Whites (Fry, 2003).

• Latino graduation rates are the lowest of any ethnic group. In 2002, only 54% of California Hispanics graduated from high school. In comparison, 76% of Whites graduated high school (Greene, 2005).

• Latinos, representing the near majority (48%) of the California public school student population in 2005, only accounted for a fraction of all high school students who participated in Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Data from The College Board showed that Latinos consisted of 16% of AP Calculus students versus 41% White students. In AP English Language and Composition courses, 24% were Latinos and 46% were White. Latinos consisted of 16% of students of AP Biology students while 39% were Whites (as cited in The Education Trust, Inc., 2006).
According to The College Board, Whites were twice as likely as Latinos to score a three or higher on the AP Calculus, English Language and Composition, and Biology tests (as cited in The Education Trust, Inc., 2006).

In 2003, the percentage of White high school graduates who entered ninth grade four years earlier and were eligible for California State University is three times higher than the percentage of Latinos. The percentage of White students eligible for the University of California was even higher at four times that of Latinos (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2005).

**Achievement in Higher Education**

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, Latinos in California were almost half as likely as Whites to graduate from college in four years (as cited in The Education Trust, Inc., 2006).

According to the 2000 United States Census, Latinos accounted for 10% of all students attaining a bachelor’s degree, and Whites accounted for eight times the percentage of Latino students (79%), yet the percentage of undergraduate degrees awarded to Whites (84%) was twenty-one times greater than the percentage (4%) awarded to Latinos (Huber, Huidor, Malagón, Sánchez, & Solórzano, 2006).

In the “Educational Pipeline,” 10% of the total U. S. White population earned a master’s degree and 1% earned a doctorate degree. Only 4% of all U. S. Latinos earned a master’s degree and 0.4% earned a doctorate (Huber et al., 2006).
Certainly, ethnicity itself cannot satisfactorily explain the profound disparity in academic achievement on so many levels. While race and ethnicity have defined many social issues in the United States, looking at the Achievement Gap using other demographic factors paints a more accurate picture for analysis.

**The Quadruple Gap**

The Achievement Gap is not limited to the parameters of race and ethnicity. Polarities of achievement exist in several categories: the Socioeconomic Gap (economically disadvantaged and not economically disadvantaged), the Level of Parent Education Gap (not a high school graduate and college graduate), and the English Proficiency Gap (English Learners and English Only). These disparities are sometimes greater than the Ethnic Achievement Gap of Latinos and Whites. Students may theoretically possess multiple characteristics of the lower Achievement Gaps: students with limited proficiency in English, of lower socio-economic status, with parents who did not graduate from high school, who are also Latino. Students of this demographic profile, which I will refer to as the “Lower Quadruple Gap” students, are at greatest risk of academic failure (see Appendix A).

Since the California Department of Education does not release information about students who share common subcategories, such as those with the Quadruple Gap student profile (personal communication, September 18, 2006), it cannot be determined exactly how many students are included in the Lower Quadruple Gap subcategories: lower SES, Latino ethnicity, English Learner (EL), and low parent education level. Certainly, the numbers of students in each of these subcategories is significant. Of the 488,562 fifth
graders that took the ELA CST in 2006, economically disadvantaged students represented 56.8% of the total (277,680 students); Latino/Hispanic students also constituted a large percentage of fifth graders at 49.0% (239,173 students); English Learners and students whose parents were not high school graduates made up a smaller, yet still significant portion, with 26.8% (130,857 students) and 17.8% (86,729 students), respectively (California Department of Education, 2007). Theoretically, tens of thousands of California children could possess the characteristics of the Lower Quadruple Gap student.

The Bilingual Factor

One group of students—those who have learned English well enough to be classified as having Fluent English Proficiency (FEP)—are essentially bilingual in their parents’ native language and English. Students in the FEP category speak a language other than English at home, but they have also achieved a high level of English fluency at school. The FEP category is separated into two subcategories: Initial-Fluent English Proficient (I-FEP) students who demonstrated proficiency in English upon entering Kindergarten, and Reclassified-Fluent English Proficiency (R-FEP) students who achieved a high level of English fluency after second grade. In 2006, there were 46,785 R-FEP and 40,223 I-FEP students who took the ELA CST, and these students, who were essentially bilingual, appeared to perform just as well or even better than students with typical characteristics of the Higher Quadruple Gap. In fact, on the ELA CST, R-FEP students scored 11 percentage points higher that English Only students, and equally as well as Whites, non-economically disadvantaged students, and students whose parents are college graduates. On the Math CST, R-FEP students had the highest percentage scoring
at Proficient or Advanced, outscoring Whites, English Only, non-economically
disadvantaged, and students with college educated parents (see Appendix B). As
previously mentioned, the California Department of Education does not release
information about students who share common subcategories. Therefore, it is impossible
to determine exactly how many of these FEP students are children who transcended these
challenges associated with poverty, having parents who had little formal education, and
spoke a language other than English at home.

**Latino Demographic Changes in the United States**

Upon examining current and projected statistical data, one can see that a profound
demographic change is taking place in the United States, due largely in part to the
immigration of Latinos. According to the 2000 census, Hispanics accounted for 12.6% of
the United States’ population. This figure is projected to double to 24.4% by the year
2050, as non-Hispanic Whites will maintain the slightest majority of 50.1% (United
States Census Bureau, 2004).

By looking at demographic statistics in California, the growth rate of Hispanics is
more accelerated. Hispanics are the largest minority group in California, and are
projected to outnumber non-Hispanic Whites to become the largest ethnic group by 2011.
Soon after 2040, the majority of Californians are projected to be of Hispanic ethnicity,
almost double the number of Whites (California Department of Finance, 2007).

The demographic changes are even more pronounced when one looks at the
student population of California public schools. Since 1996, Hispanics have constituted
the largest ethnic group of the student population in California public schools, and were projected to be the majority group in 2007 (California Department of Finance, 2007).

Latinos are quickly becoming the majority of the population in California public schools, and statistically, most will find themselves on the lower end of the Achievement Gap. Unless educators grasp a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding the Achievement Gap, a significant number of children will have difficulties participating in the social, economic, and political institutions of the United States as adults.

While it is important to understand why so many students at the lower end of the Quadruple Achievement Gap are performing so poorly, this qualitative study will investigate the reciprocal dimension of this issue: why are FEP students performing so well? What kinds of activities or behaviors are practiced at home which allow them to overcome challenges that statistically should leave them at the lower end of the Quadruple Achievement Gap? What role do parents play in these students’ academic success? How does their cultural background enable their children to acquire a second language even though they do not speak English at home? Why do these students perform well in all academic areas?

**Statement of the Purpose**

Given the projected Latino and Hispanic population increases in California and the United States, the persistent Achievement Gap between the dominant cultural and the Latino immigrant population, and the wide-ranging impact these phenomena have upon public policy, this study will investigate the following question: In which ways does the transmission of the parents’ culture of origin to their children influence the academic
achievement of their children? Special attention will be paid to the relationships between acculturation strategies used by Latino immigrant families, its affect on cultural transmission practices and the cognitive development of their children, and their children’s overall academic achievement.
Chapter 2:

Review of Related Literature

The goal of this chapter is to unify three theories. The first, acculturation, describes the various strategies that ethnocultural groups and the dominant society employ as they come into varying degrees of contact with one another. The second theory, developed by Reuven Feuerstein, attempts to describe how cognitive development occurs during the process of intergenerational cultural transmission. The third theory shows the cognitive and academic benefits associated with bilingualism. Like the layers of an onion, these theories should be peeled in order to understand the complexity of the current issues surrounding academic achievement of Latino students, especially those of immigrant parents.

Acculturation

Acculturation is of interest to educational psychologists in order to study the effect of cultural change on psychological phenomena, such as cognitive development (Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986). Unfortunately, Berry et al. acknowledge that there is no common definition for acculturation, but they advocate that researchers consider Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits’s formulation of acculturation from 1936 as a foundation (as cited in Berry, 2003):

Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, which subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups...under this definition, acculturation is to be distinguished from culture change, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation. (p. 18)
Berry follows his own prescription and uses this definition as a basis for his multidimensional model of acculturation strategies. This model includes strategies sought by ethnocultural groups or individuals, and of the larger society. Each has positive axis and negative axis: “Maintenance of Heritage Culture and Identity” and “Relationships Sought Among Groups,” providing an “acculturative space” for an individual or group (Berry, 2003, pp. 23-24). Individuals can rarely be identified as entirely using one strategy, but rather appear along a spectrum of each axis.

He proposes that instruments measuring attitudes and behaviors can be used to determine acculturation strategies used by a group or individual. Berry admits that while
“there is rarely a one-to-one match between what an individual prefers and seeks (attitudes) and what one is actually able to do (behavior)...there is often a significant positive correlation between acculturation attitudes and behaviors,” which allow for an overall assessment of acculturation strategies (Berry, 2003, p. 21). Berry cites numerous empirical studies measuring cultural identity, behaviors, psychological, socio-cultural, and economic adaptive behaviors that support the strategies included in his multi-dimensional acculturation model.

*Strategies of Ethnocultural Groups and the Larger Society*

The acculturation strategies from the perspective of the ethnocultural group or individual are rather symmetrical to those of the larger, dominant group. I have grouped them as mutual strategies to illustrate their similarities, but they are independent; an ethnocultural group may attempt to use one particular strategy while the larger society implements another.

*Assimilation and Melting Pot*

Individuals who use the assimilation strategy try to shed their cultural identity and practices (negative maintenance of “own” culture) in favor of interacting with the dominant society (positive relationships sought with “other”). They adopt a new national identity, show the most behavior changes, and reveal intermediate adaptive abilities. A society that expects ethnocultural groups to assimilate uses the melting pot strategy (negative retention of native culture; positive adoption of dominant culture).
Separation and Segregation

The separation strategy is the opposite of assimilation; individuals maintain their cultural identity and traditions (positive maintenance of “own” culture) but do not participate in the larger society (negative relationships sought with “other”). Separation is characterized by a strong ethnic or cultural identity, the least amount of behavioral changes, and moderate adaptation. Segregation is typically the forced separation of an ethnocultural group (positive retention of native culture, negative adoption of dominant culture).

Integration and Multiculturalism

People who are interested in maintaining their cultural heritage (positive relationships sought with “other”) while interacting with and participating in the dominant society (positive relationships sought with “other”) are using the integration strategy. Those who successfully use integration have a dual ethnic identity. They retain key cultural behaviors while adopting new behaviors of the dominant society that enable them to function within it, and are the best adapted. When the dominant society supports the cultural maintenance of its ethnocultural groups or individuals while at the same time encouraging participation, a multicultural strategy is being used (positive retention of native culture; positive adoption of dominant culture).

Marginalization and Exclusion

Marginalization refers to an individual’s or a group’s lack of interest in or ability to hold on to their native culture (negative maintenance of “own” culture) while at the same time choosing not to seek relationships with others or being excluded (negative
relationships sought with “other”). As a result of significant losses of cultural heritage, those who are marginalized have no clear ethnic identity, adopt dysfunctional or deviant behaviors such as substance and family abuse, and are the least adapted. Exclusion refers to the imposed marginalization of an ethnocultural group by the dominant society (negative retention of native culture; negative adoption of dominant culture).

**Factors Influencing Acculturation Strategies**

While Ryder et al. discuss the overwhelming empirical evidence supporting integration as the acculturation strategy most sought and preferred by ethnocultural groups (as cited in Berry, 2003), and the positive correlation between attitudes (what they want) and behaviors (what they do), Berry reviews the literature citing other factors which might create a disconnect between an individual’s or a group’s behavior and their attitudinal desire to integrate into the dominant society. On the part of the dominant society, racism and discrimination might prohibit and discourage assimilation or integration into the dominant society. National policies, such as those on immigration, might encourage one strategy over another. A period of expected or forced, yet unsuccessful, assimilation of a group might lead to marginalization and continued exclusion by the dominant society.

Particular features or circumstances within the group might influence or determine the strategy adopted by an individual as well. Bourhis (2008) defines vitality as “that which makes a language community likely to behave as a distinctive and collective entity within multilingual settings” (p. 127). An ethnocultural group with a high level of vitality has the ability to maintain its cultural heritage by providing more
opportunities for cultural transmission, resulting in integration or possibly separation acculturation strategies. On the other hand, an ethnocultural group with a low level of vitality might assimilate more quickly or easily, especially if the presence of the ethnocultural group in the dominant society is smaller. The social status and prestige of an ethnocultural group’s language amongst its own members as well as the members of the dominant society also determine a group’s ability to maintain its linguistic and cultural heritage as well. The higher the status, the more likely that group’s language and heritage will be maintained, and in turn increasing the group’s vitality. The lower the status, the less likely the group will continue its use of its language, thereby decreasing the group’s vitality.

*Acculturation Behaviors among Latinos*

Researchers have developed several instruments to measure acculturation in Latino populations focusing on attitudes and social behaviors. Marín, Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, and Pérez-Stable (1987) developed a scale to measure acculturation among Hispanics in the United States. Three factors—language use, media preference, and relations among ethnic groups—correlated highly with other acculturation factors, such as age of arrival, ethnic self-identification, generation, and length of time spent in the United States. According to Chun and Akutsu (2003), familism, or familialism, is one of the most important and distinct values of Latinos as an ethnic group. They define familism as “a cultural commitment to Latino family life and consists of strong identification with and attachment to members of the nuclear and extended family as well as strong feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity toward members of the family”
Chun and Akutsu cite several studies investigating familism among Latinos that revealed a relationship between acculturation and changes in values. Results from the various studies showed that some aspects of familism declined over time due to acculturation, but some aspects, including the importance of the extended family, remained stable or actually increased. Marín found that results for studies on Latino familialism are mixed, mostly because attitudes and behaviors were measured as one entity (as cited in Chun & Akutsu, 2003).

Chun and Akutsu (2003) offer several suggestions for family acculturation research and call on acculturation researchers to implement more consistent and sufficient measuring techniques as well as to include qualitative measures such as ethnographic family interviews. In fact, they argue that acculturation research topics on ethnic minorities in general are narrow, with many of the studies on African Americans and Latinos focused on substance abuse and delinquency. They ask, “Why have fewer studies been conducted on predictors of academic success for African Americans and Latino? Are researchers unknowingly perpetuating racial stereotypes in their selection of investigative topics?” (Chun & Akutsu, 2003, p. 113).

Culture and Cognition

Several researchers have studied the connection between culture and cognition, but the exact definition of cognition seems to vary from researcher to researcher. Some researchers suggest that specific ethnocultural activities contribute directly to a child’s cognitive development, while other researchers, such as those who have studied Mediated Learning Experience, suggest that cognitive development occurs during the process of
cultural transmission. While no one theory has unified the concept of cognition and its place within culture, they all seem to agree that culture provides a way to teach children how to think.

*Cultural Activities*

For at least fifty years, psychologists have studied the contribution of specific cultural activities to cognitive development. Price-Williams, Gordon, and Ramirez (1969) investigated the conservation ability (as suggested by Piaget) of children in Mexico who worked with pottery, specifically sons of potters. Their hypothesis was that children with experience in working with pottery developed earlier conservation of substance than the control group, and that this skill would possibly transfer to conservation of number, liquid, weight, and volume. Subjects were sons of potters chosen from two different towns in Jalisco and compared to children of similar demographics in their perspective towns. Results in one town showed that potters’ sons showed greater conservation in all five areas, but only statistically greater conservation in substance as hypothesized. In the second town, 77 of the 80 subjects showed conservation in all five areas compared to only 10 in the control group. They concluded that specific cultural skills contribute to cognitive growth, and investigation into the cognitive benefits of other cultural skills such as weaving should be explored. While this study focused on a skill and not the process of learning the skill (cultural transmission or mediation), the authors provided no explanation for the differences in the pottery-makers’ conservation abilities in the two towns.
More recently, McLean (1997) interviewed 41 Alaska Native parents in two small rural towns in southwest Alaska. Questions focused on subsistence skills within the culture that parents thought were important for their children to learn, their children’s readiness to learn these skills, and what skills parents thought their kids needed for the future. Based on parents’ responses, it is clear that families and the community placed great importance on transmitting this cultural knowledge from one generation to the next, especially at camps where families process subsistence foods. McLean suggests:

“subsistence skills can be a connection to the culture and analyzed for their educational value. For example, the involvement of family members at fish camp would show many opportunities to develop motor skills, cognitive skills, language arts, and social-emotional skills” (McLean, 1997, p. 5) as well as other content areas. She specifically recommends that subsistence skills such as needlework and hunting be studied for their cognitive values: patterning, symmetry, measuring, planning, problem solving, decision making, one-to-one correspondence, estimation, prediction, fine motor skills, perceptual motor coordination, social skills, inference skills, and even developing moral values. She also suggests that future studies examine ways that educators can integrate local cultural knowledge into the classroom in order to facilitate cultural transmission. As with Price-Williams, Gordon, and Ramirez’s (1969) study, McLean also focuses on the value of actual subsistence skills, but she also recognizes the importance of the process of cultural transmission.

Given the few employment opportunities in the community, the parents in McLean’s study were concerned that their children will be forced to leave to find work
unless they know the traditional ways of survival. Parents expressed concern for the survival of their traditional way of life, and understood that unless their children stay and continue to practice the traditional ways, then the community will eventually disappear.

Mediated Learning Experience and Structural Cognitive Modifiability

Reuven Feuerstein is a prominent psychologist in Israel that began his work with immigrant youth in Israel during the 1950s, as the country experienced an influx of immigrants from around the world. Most immigrant children arrived in Israel with apparently low levels of cognitive functioning, as indicated by their low performance on intelligence assessments. He noticed that immigrants with a stronger cultural identity, however, were quicker learners and able to adapt more quickly to their new surroundings. Feuerstein determined that the major factor for this variance was the intergenerational process of cultural transmission “which includes the transfer of the past, accumulated experience and particularly skills that have developed, values, etc. The culture transmitted has a kind of cognitive skeleton that determines the manner in which the accumulated knowledge is represented and organized” (Feuerstein, 2003, p. 9). The process of transmitting this “cognitive skeleton” that is embedded in a group’s culture serves to prepare the younger generation with what it needs to survive now, as well as to enhance their modifiability (or adaptability) to survive unknown challenges—through problem solving—that await them in the future.

Eventually, Feuerstein created a theoretical construct to explain this phenomenon. His theory of Structural Cognitive Modifiability (SCM) is based on his belief that intelligence is not a fixed entity based on genetics, but a dynamic process capable of
change. The manner in which humans receive, process, and communicate information—an individual’s cognitive structure—is flexible and can be modified in order to learn more quickly and efficiently. Feuerstein theorizes that the Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) is the primary factor responsible for the level of an individual’s intelligence. The amount of MLE that an individual receives determines intellect and accounts for the variances of modifiability among human beings (Feuerstein, Rand, Hoffman, & Miller, 1980; Feuerstein, 2003).

According to Feuerstein, there are two modalities through which a person can learn: a direct learning experience, or a Mediated Learning Experience (MLE). An MLE is an interaction between a mediator and a mediatee that increases the mediatee’s level of modifiability. Feuerstein and other researchers have identified up to thirteen characteristics of MLE interactions that distinguish it from traditional teaching and coaching techniques (Tzuriel, 2000; Lidz, 2000, Feuerstein, Falik, & Feuerstein, 2003).

“The mediator selects, organizes, and schedules the stimuli, changing their amplitude, frequency and saliency; and turns them into powerful determinants of behavior instead of randomized stimuli whose occurrence, registration, and effects may be purely probabilistic” (Feuerstein, 2003, p. 23).

Given the organic nature of Feuerstein’s idea of intelligence, there are elements that can enhance, as well as reduce, an individual’s modifiability. These elements in themselves do not directly determine modifiability, but may impact the amount and quality of the MLE interactions; MLE (or the proximal determinant) is ultimately responsible for modifiability. As long as the individual continues to receive adequate
amounts of MLE, then the presence of environmental, genetic, physical, or emotional “blocks” (or distal determinants) will not negatively impact the individual’s cognitive development and modifiability (Feuerstein, Rand, Hoffman, & Miller, 1980; Jensen, et al., 1988; Feuerstein, 2003).

**Cultural Difference and Cultural Deprivation**

When an individual has been alienated from their native culture, as Feuerstein observed, it is the block of cultural deprivation that prevents modifiability. This break in cultural transmission results in a lack of exposure to MLE and a low level of modifiability (Feuerstein, 2003). Feuerstein takes great care to define cultural deprivation to prevent any misinterpretations, “[it] does not refer to the culture of the group to which an individual belongs. It is not the culture that is depriving, but it is the fact that the individual … is deprived of his own culture that is the disabling factor” (Feuerstein, et al., 1980, p. 13). In other words, there is no one culture that is superior to another; it is the transmission of a group’s culture that determines modifiability. Alex Kozulin (1998) explains further why fewer opportunities for MLE exist for children of immigrant families:

> The child becomes deprived of those devices of mediated learning that were incorporated into the traditional cultural schemas and rituals of his or her parents. At the same time, parents themselves often abandon or are forced to revoke their prerogative as mediators because their old culture is perceived as irrelevant, while the new culture is not yet mastered. As a result, the child is left to confront the world on a “here-and-now” basis without the help of the transcending devices of the cultural-historical tradition. (p. 75)
Feuerstein et al., (1980) describes his experience with immigrants to illustrate cultural deprivation. During the 1950s, large numbers of Moroccan families immigrated to Israel and experienced difficulty adapting to modern Israeli society. Psychologists administered the Bender-Gestalt test to 300 Moroccan children and hypothesized that nearly all the subjects had minimal brain damage based on the low results of the test. Feuerstein disagreed, and cited several factors that contributed to the break in cultural transmission resulting from their migration from rural areas of North Africa and transient camps in Southern France. The extended family structure became fractured, as only the nuclear family typically moved to the cities. The grandparents, who played a significant role in the caretaking of the children and consequently the transmission of cultural heritage, could not provide MLE to the grandchildren. In addition, the Moroccan community used the oral tradition to transmit cultural and religious information. By moving to the cities, their lack of literacy skills further prevented their abilities to transmit culture within the print-dominated urban society. Feuerstein attributed the children’s low levels of cognitive and emotional functioning to having fewer opportunities for MLE, suggesting they were in a state of cultural deprivation.

Feuerstein also discusses poverty as a potential determinant to cultural transmission and MLE. The focus of family activities may be on providing the absolute necessities required for daily survival instead of on transmitting cultural heritage. Parents may work longer or harder in order to overcome abject poverty, meaning they have less time and energy to spend with their children, and therefore reduce the amount of MLE they provide to their children. Poor health, associated with poverty, may further
complicate the process. Feuerstein is quite clear that poverty itself does not necessarily reduce modifiability. He cites the many Jewish communities that continued to transmit their cultural heritage to subsequent generations despite conditions of poverty, political oppression, and discrimination.

Cultural deprivation may occur in any ethnocultural group, not just immigrants. Reyhner and Eder (1989) described the federal Indian educational policy of the United States until the middle of the Twentieth Century as the assimilation of Indians by forcibly discontinuing the transition of native culture through the use of Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools and extinguishing their native culture and language (as cited in McCarthy, 1992). Emerson documented the extremity of cultural deprivation in Navajo youth, characterized by low academic achievement, high dropout rates, and high levels of substance abuse and juvenile suicide. These behaviors are similar to those characteristics of marginalized ethnocultural groups described by Berry (2003). Tribal leaders of the Navajo Nation now use MLE theory as the rationale for reviving their cultural traditions and language, and for asserting decision-making authority in local schools (as cited in Feuerstein, 2003, pp. 41-42).

Feuerstein comments that, “often, the culturally deprived are born within the dominant culture, living side-by-side with the socializing and educational agents of the majority culture” (Feuerstein, 2003, p. 38). Despite being immersed in the dominant culture, culturally deprived students have difficulty assimilating into the dominant society because of their low level of modifiability, even if they can communicate in the language of the dominant society. Because they have mastered their immediate environment, the
culturally deprived will not show signs of inadaptability until they are confronted with change or a situation that requires adaptation. Even worse, culturally deprived groups that fail to assimilate into the dominant society can manifest anti-social behavior, such as acts of rebellion and acting out (Feuerstein et al., 1980). If asked about the prospects of the Alaskan Native children of McLean’s (1997) study as described previously, Feuerstein would assure their parents that their children are receiving adequate amounts of MLE through the transmission of native subsistence-based culture, and that they possess the adaptability required to survive in the modern world.

In contrast to culturally deprived students, culturally different ones have received MLE through their participation in the process of cultural transmission and have a strong identity with their native culture. While they may struggle at first, culturally different students’ high level of modifiability allows them to adapt quickly. As Feuerstein states, “Despite the fact that they are…devoid of certain linguistic, conceptual, and technological skills, there are immigrants from developing countries who show an amazing propensity to modify their level of functioning” (p. 38). Feuerstein recalls that Yemenites emigrating from an agricultural-based society arrived with a rich culture and a solid identity and were more able to adapt to their new environment in Israel (Feuerstein et al., 1980; Feuerstein, 2003).

Culturally different individuals will take advantage of whatever opportunities the dominant culture may offer, as their modifiability will allow for their integration into the new society. Feuerstein (2003) elaborates on the connection between modifiability and acculturation:
Opportunities for educational and occupational mobility are necessary for cultural accommodation. Whenever they exist, the culturally different group will take advantage of them. This is not always the case with culturally deprived individuals. Devoid of the prerequisites of learning, due to the lack of MLE and cultural transmission, the culturally deprived person is often unable to identify the new goals offered by life in the more advantaged and higher functioning environment. Furthermore, the culturally deprived person is not inclined to identify with these goals. (p. 40)

Kozulin (2005) showed that Feuerstein’s distinction between culturally different and culturally deprived groups is not so clear. Kozulin and several Ethiopian “cultural interpreters” interviewed 137 Ethiopian families to determine the educational aspirations of Ethiopian immigrant parents for their children and the type of support that they were able to provide. Demographic information revealed that nearly all immigrant families came from rural areas of Ethiopia, received little formal education, experienced great difficulty in learning to speak the language of the dominant society (Hebrew) and had an even more difficult time learning to read and write. In addition, their experience working in traditional agriculture was not an asset when looking for jobs in industrialized Israel. The majority of the participants were unemployed. The results of the survey showed that nearly all (99%) wanted their children to go to college or a university to continue their studies, but 35% of the households had someone who helped the children with their homework and only 25% had the necessary learning materials at home (e.g., calculator, books, atlas). In other words, parents identified with the goal of higher education for their children, but did not know or were unable to provide the support to make that goal a reality.
Kozulin concludes that the educational system cannot assume that a high level of home support exists for immigrant families and greater support should be provided at school. More interestingly, Kozulin proposes that an investment should be made in language skills: Hebrew classes for parents in order to improve communication between school and home, and literacy classes for children in their native Amharic or Tigrieran languages to foster the children’s ability to communicate with their parents. Feuerstein would agree with this recommendation, as improving students’ ability to communicate in their native language enhances parents’ ability to transmit their cultural heritage. More cultural transmission leads to an increase in opportunities for MLE, which contributes to greater cognitive modifiability.

A few empirical studies investigate the phenomena of cultural difference and cultural deprivation. Kozulin (1998) compared the scores of four groups of Ethiopian students to the Israeli norm for students in grades five and eight using a static intelligence test – the Raven’s Standard Progressive Matrices (RSPM) and Feuerstein’s Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD). While the number of subjects included in the study was quite low (3 groups of 11 and 1 group of 13), the results showed increases in three of the four groups even after receiving a small amount of mediation. In one group, the post-intervention Ethiopian students reached the Israeli norm. Kozulin concluded that while the scores of older Ethiopian students may be equal to that of younger Israeli students, Ethiopian students have a different cognitive profile and appropriate materials should be used when providing intervention.
Tzuriel and Kaufman (1999) compared Ethiopian immigrant first graders and their Israeli-born counterparts using the Raven’s Colored Progressive Matrices (RCPM) and Tzuriel’s Dynamic Assessments (DA)—a modified version of the LPAD for younger students. They hypothesized that the Ethiopian children’s performance would reveal a high level of modifiability in the cultural different immigrants despite the fact that they came from an agricultural society that lacked modern technology. Post-test results showed that both groups had significantly improved after little mediation, and the Israeli-born group outperformed the Ethiopian group. The Ethiopian group, however, showed greater improvement and narrowed the gap considerably, confirming their hypothesis.

Skuy et al., (2002) conducted a similar experiment with African and non-African university students to determine if MLE and administration of the LPAD would impact IQ scores. They cited previous studies showing that Africans scored one to two standard deviations lower than non-Africans on various intelligence tests, but the participants did not reveal their true learning capacity due to the static nature of the exams. African and non-African groups were given the RSPM, and the experimental groups were given portions of the LPAD, including three hours of mediation. As with the Tzuriel and Kaufman (1999) study, results showed that Africans and non-Africans in the experimental group improved significantly on the RSPM post-test compared to both control groups, with the African experimental group showing the greatest improvement. They hypothesized that the greater improvement in the African group was indicative of a high level of modifiability and possible cultural difference. Overall, however, non-Africans still outperformed Africans. They attributed this performance difference to the
sociopolitical repression that non-white South Africans suffered under apartheid, which lead to fewer opportunities for MLE and possibly resulting in a state of cultural deprivation.

An older study conducted by Feuerstein, Miller, Rand, and Jensen (1981) compared the performance of Georgian immigrants in Israel from the former Soviet Union to homogenously and heterogeneously grouped Israeli students from a previous study. Results showed that the immigrant groups’ performances on the Primary Mental Abilities Test (PMA) were indeed lower than the Israeli groups. Four of the five immigrant groups, however, performed better that the Israeli students on the LPAD, suggesting the immigrant students had greater learning potential, or modifiability. While the LPAD has been used in more recent studies, it must be noted that Thurstone designed the PMA, a static intelligence assessment used for comparison purposes, in 1938.

Feuerstein’s experience with immigrant children provided the foundation for the theory of SCM and MLE, but few empirical studies have investigated the impact of the MLE-based programs with immigrant students, and even less with immigrants in the US. Feuerstein presents case studies and provides some anecdotal evidence supporting his theoretical framework, but I have found no recent studies that have directly researched the relationship between cultural transmission, MLE, and SCM.

Other Mediated Learning Experience Research

Numerous empirical studies investigate the effects of MLE-based programs with a broader range of student populations other than immigrants. Any individual who has lacked sufficient quantities of MLE, and therefore has low modifiability, fails to learn
from direct learning experiences. Roman and Zimmerman (1994) conducted a case study investigating the modifiability of a visually impaired individual applying the concepts of MLE theory. In this particular case, Roman and Zimmerman suggest that the subject’s disability affected the manner in which his parents interacted with him as an infant and child, reducing the amount of MLE the subject received. At the age of fifteen, the subject’s functioning level was near that of a nine-year-old. Roman and Zimmerman’s description of the subject’s behavior is typical of an individual lacking sufficient MLE as a result of a “block”.

[He was] capable of learning only simple, memorized routes and as having an impulsive approach to learning routes. He rarely used and never inquired about street names or salient environmental features; he rarely requested assistance when needed and was unable to demonstrate a plan for reaching his destination. If a detour occurred in his route, he could not develop a strategy to incorporate the new information and maintain his course of travel. If environments became confusing because of increased complexity…[he] would continue in an impulsive manner, not adjusting his pace to identify clues and landmarks. (p. 3)

The subject’s Orientation and Mobility instructor applied MLE concepts to a series of lessons to improve the subject’s modifiability, the subject was able to travel independently to a specific drug store and systematically locate specific items in the store. More importantly, the subject was able to use these same skills to travel to and shop at any store, not just ones with which he was familiar.

Mediated Learning Experience rating scales have also been developed and used by researchers in order to measure the quantity and quality of MLE interactions. Parents’ interactions with infants that fit the description of a MLE interaction are strong predictors
of cognitive modifiability (Tzuriel, 1999; Klein & Alony, 1993). Lidz, Bond, and Dessinger (1991) measured the quality of twelve MLE components and found that mothers of higher socioeconomic groups to have more occurrences of several MLE components compared mothers of lower socioeconomic groups. Preschoolers were observed using several mediation techniques when teaching their younger siblings how to perform certain tasks. Although these meditative behaviors contributed to siblings’ better performances on the clinical tasks, sibling mediation lacked higher levels of cognition required for the most effective mediating behaviors and is not a substitute for adult-teaching behavior (Klein, Zarur, & Feldman, 2003).

The majority of the empirical research surrounding Feuerstein’s theories, however, have revolved around the effectiveness of various forms of MLE-based cognitive assessment and intervention programs: Feuerstein’s Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD), Feuerstein’s Instrumental Enrichment (IE), and several Dynamic Assessments (DA) designed by Tzuriel. All aim to correct cognitive deficiencies caused by blocks and measure the modifiability of a wide variety of subjects. Mediation is at the core of both programs, with a trained mediator using MLE techniques providing instruction on completing specific cognitive tasks. Significant gains in cognitive abilities have been shown in children with hearing disabilities (Katz & Buchholz, 1984; Keane & Kretschmer, 1987; Martin, Craft, & Sheng, 2001), disadvantaged high-school special education students (Luther & Wyatt, 1989), learning disabled youth (Messerer, Hunt, Meyers, & Lerner, 2001), children with social, emotional, and behavior difficulties (Head & O’Neill, 1999), retarded adolescents
Cultural Transmission

(Feuerstein et al., n.d.), identifying disadvantaged students for gifted and talented programs (Skuy, Gaydon, & Hoffenberg, 1990; Kirschenbaum, 1998), adults recovering from brain injuries (Haywood & Miller, 2003), and adults with schizophrenia (Hadas-Lidor, Katz, Tyano, & Weizman, 2001).

Mediation-Related Research

Researchers have studied meditative-like behaviors outside of the MLE theoretical framework. Maynard (2004) observed the “culture of teaching” among Mayan children and their siblings. Mayan children that had received formal education were able to use a combination of “Western” and Mayan teaching techniques when teaching their younger siblings informal tasks at home. The utilization of this blended teaching style indicates a high level of cognitive flexibility in that the students were able to adapt to the culture of formal education as well as transfer that mode of teaching to their Mayan home environment. Much of the MLE research, however, has focused on dyad behaviors of mothers, infants, or siblings observed in a clinical environment, and not within the process of cultural transmission.

Cognitive Benefits of Bilingualism

The debate over bilingual education has spawned numerous studies about the effectiveness of various bilingual programs on academic performance, cognition, and cultural or linguistic maintenance. Educators and parents have an interest in bilingual programs for various reasons, but the results of numerous studies indicate that learning how to communicate in more than one language has several benefits.
Academic Achievement

Most of the research on bilingual education programs shows that learning two languages enhances students’ academic performance. Many of these studies focus on only one of the many types of bilingual programs and are limited in the number and diversity of subjects and programs. Thomas, Collier, and Abbott (1993), for example, showed that students participating in Spanish, French, and Japanese partial immersion programs showed achievement gains even after the first two years of the program’s implementation, with students scoring at least equal performance or better in English and in other content areas while making steady progress in the target language. Subjects of the study, which took place in Fairfax County, Virginia, were mostly white, of high SES, and self-selected for the program by their parents.

Thomas and Collier, however, have published a two-phased, large-scale study that gives a much more comprehensive overview on the effectiveness of bilingual education. The first phase (1997) investigated the student records of over 700,000 English Learner students enrolled in five school districts over a fourteen-year period from 1982-1996. Thomas and Collier’s first key finding states that “cognitively complex on-grade-level academic instruction” (p. 15) in the student’s native language as well as in English can help students to overcome factors typically associated with poor academic achievement, such as poverty. According to Thomas and Collier, students must receive high-quality instruction in their native language because the development of their native language affects their cognitive development.

This L1 language development is deeply interrelated with cognitive development. Children who stop cognitive development
in L1 before they have reached the final Piagetian stage of formal operations (somewhere around puberty), run the risk of suffering negative consequences, as measured by school tests. Many studies, including this one, indicate that if students do not reach a certain threshold in their first language, they may experience cognitive difficulties in the second language. (p. 41)

In Thomas and Collier’s (2003) second phase of the quantitative-qualitative study, they collected data from five urban and rural school districts covering four geographic areas of the United States over a five-year period from 1996-2001. It analyzed student achievement of Language Minority (LM) students from grades K-12 in eight different language instruction programs, including English mainstream, English as a Second Language (ESL), several variations of dual language immersion, developmental bilingual education, and transitional bilingual education.

Several results of the study stand out. The strongest predictor of achievement in a student’s target or second language (L2) was the amount of formal education the student had received in their primary language (L1). Thomas and Collier found that English Learner (EL) students benefit the most from bilingual education.

Enrichment 90-10 and 50-50 one-way and two-way developmental bilingual education (DBE) programs (or dual language, bilingual immersion) are the only programs we have found to date that assist students to fully reach the 50th percentile in both L1 and L2 in all subjects and to maintain that level of high achievement, or reach even higher levels through the end of schooling. The fewest dropouts come from these programs (p. 333).

After four to seven years of dual language instruction, bilingual students outperform monolingual students in all subject areas. Students whose parents refused ESL or bilingual services for their children, and therefore were mainstreamed into
English only classes, showed significant decreases in achievement by fifth grade, and by the eleventh grade, scored near the twelfth percentile on standardized reading tests. This group also had the largest number of high school dropouts (Thomas & Collier, 2003). While this study is comprehensive and even exhaustive in comparison to its predecessors, it does not investigate much into the home lives of LM students and how it relates to student achievement.

**Cognitive Psychology**

While cognition is mentioned in several articles as having a positive association with bilingualism and bilingual education, most of the research connecting cognition and second language acquisition was written nearly twenty years ago. Cummins (1976) first dispelled many reports that students lost their native language while learning a second language. Cummins theorized that this was not the case, and that students actually benefited from being bilingual.

Kozulin (1988) studied the effect of bilingualism on reality monitoring, where twenty subjects had to distinguish words that they spoke out loud and words that they thought. Subjects consisted of ten English monolinguals from the United States, and ten bilinguals who grew up in Russia, studied English in school, have lived in the United States for at least five years, and still speak Russian in the home. Bilingual subjects were not only better able to discriminate “said” words from “spoken” words than monolingual subjects, but also performed better while working in English, or bilingual mode. As an experimental pilot study, there are obviously many limitations to this investigation;
however, it showed that even in adults, bilingualism has a positive effect on at least one aspect of cognition—reality monitoring.

**Cultural and Linguistic Maintenance**

Bilingual programs have also been implemented in an effort to prevent Native American cultural and linguistic heritage from extinction. Before the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, Reyhner and Eder (as cited in McCarthy, 1992) described the federal Indian education policy as being focused on removing indigenous culture and, above all, indigenous language, from its students. Since 1968, bilingual and bicultural programs have been implemented throughout Native American communities, arresting language extinction and maintaining cultural knowledge. Furthermore, greater local control of Indian schools has empowered parents and increased community involvement in transmitting local culture (McCarthy, 1992).

In addition to maintaining cultural and linguistic heritage, the achievement benefits of bilingual education have also been recognized. McCarthy (1992) summarizes the findings of other researchers on the academic gains of Navajo students: “Bilingual students who have the benefit of cumulative, uninterrupted initial literacy experiences in Navajo make the greatest gains on local and national measures of achievement” (p. 26).

The purpose of this review is to show that our task as educators to close the Achievement Gap is not an easy one, or a model for success would have been developed by now. I attempted to link several theories, some of which have little relation to teaching practices, to reveal the complexities of our challenge.
Chapter 3:
Methodology

Site

The students who participated in this investigation attended a public school, Junípero Serra Elementary School (which I will simply refer to as Junípero Serra), located in the San Francisco metropolitan area. Junípero Serra served over 600 students from Kindergarten through fifth grade. Most of the students lived in the surrounding community, which I will refer to as San Miguel throughout this investigation. The demographic composition of the school largely reflected the community from which the students lived, consisting primarily of monolingual Spanish-speakers, poor and working class, Latino families that immigrated from Mexico and Central America. As the following data show, the students living in San Miguel have the same profile as students of the Lower Quadruple Gap: Latino, English Learners, economically disadvantaged, and students whose parents did not graduate from high school. I will present some data providing a rationale for the student-participants that I selected for this investigation.

*Junípero Serra Elementary School Demographic Data*

Demographic data gathered from the California Department of Education’s (CDE) Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) 2006 report showed that 90% of Junípero Serra students were of Latino ethnicity. Sixty-four percent were English Learners (ELs), suggesting that most students speak Spanish at home. Ninety-eight percent participated in the federal free or reduced-price lunch program, indicating that nearly all of the families of Junípero Serra students were economically disadvantaged, or
of lower socioeconomic status. Ninety-three percent of the students were continuously enrolled in Junípero Serra from October 2005 to June 2006, and 0% of students participated in the Migrant Education Program, suggesting that the community was relatively stable. In fact, I conducted informal surveys each year that showed a large majority of the students attending Junípero Serra in fifth grade also attended Kindergarten. Unlike many agricultural communities with transient workers, the families in this community had established roots, or at least did not move outside of the immediate community. The average parent education level was 1.83, or less than a high school graduate. (A “1” represented “Not a high school graduate,” and a “2” represented a “High school graduate.”) Only 51% of the parents responded to the survey, so it was quite possible that the average parental education level was even lower.

Junípero Serra was one of the many schools in the district that offered both Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) and an Alternative Primary Language (APL) bilingual program in Spanish and English. The APL program taught literacy skills in Spanish in the primary grades, and then transitioned students to receive instruction almost entirely in English in the fourth and fifth grades. Parents often chose to place their children in an APL program to be sure that they could communicate with their child’s teacher in Spanish. Junípero Serra was a very homogenous school, consisting almost entirely of economically disadvantaged Latino students, whose parents were largely uneducated and spoke their native language, Spanish, at home with their children.
The Junípero Serra Elementary School Community

Based on conversations I have had with numerous members of this community, a large number of residents have emigrated particularly from two neighboring states in Mexico—Michoacán and Jalisco—which are considered to be the top two historical sending areas of migrants to the United States (Marcelli & Cornelius, 2001; Durand, Masser, & Zenteno, 2001). Michoacán, in particular, is a mostly rural state whose economy is dominated by agriculture and ranching. While literacy rates in Mexico continue to rise, the bulk of the illiterate population is concentrated in rural areas, such as Michoacán and many areas of Jalisco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2002). To assume that many residents of San Miguel are illiterate would be misleading, but the children of migrants from poor, rural communities in Central Mexico would more likely fit the profile of a Lower Quadruple Gap student. This data was also consistent with the 2006 STAR demographic data described previously.

Having spent ten years as a teacher at Junípero Serra, I have observed that commerce in the neighborhood reflects its demographic composition. Billboards, for instance, advertise in Spanish. Numerous businesses with Spanish names cater to the neighborhood. Mercados (markets) sell imported Mexican and Central American products. Clothing stores display formal dresses typically worn during bautismos and quinceañeras. Latin music stores, llanterías (auto tire services), panaderías (bread stores), carnicerías (meat markets), mobile taquerías (taco trucks), and other Mexican and Central American restaurants line the main thoroughfare of San Miguel. Even
national chain stores cater to the consumer demands of the large Latino immigrant population.

This largely immigrant community has a history of violent crimes, and the city in which Junípero Serra is located has been named as one of the top twenty-five most violent cities in the United States according to the study, "City Crime Rankings: Crime in Metropolitan America" in 2006 and 2007 (Congressional Quarterly Press, 2007). Using statistics released by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), the study uses per-capita rates of various types of violent crimes, such as homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary and auto theft, in order to rank cities with populations of and least 75,000 from the most to the least violent. The report has received much criticism, especially from the FBI (2007), because it fails to take into account other factors that contribute to violent crime in each city. Nonetheless, Junípero Serra is located in a neighborhood that is affected significantly by violent crimes and other characteristics of an impoverished community.

Data Sources and Collection Procedures

To collect multiple sources of data, I compiled student standardized test data released to teachers from the school district and conducted ethnographic interviews with six students from my 2005-2006 fifth grade class and their parents. Since this study involved the participation of human subjects, I submitted a proposal to the Institutional Review Board at California State University, East Bay, and it was approved.

I chose the student-participants for the study from this particular classroom because they represented the majority of Junípero Serra community residents, and the
findings of this study could lead to some generalizations. I also chose the student-
participants because they represented the major subgroups that determined the Academic
Yearly Progress (AYP) at Junípero Serra: students of Latino ethnicity that come from
economically disadvantaged families who speak Spanish at home. Most importantly,
these student-participants had demonstrable bilingual abilities as determined by their
language classification status, which I will explain in further detail.

Since I would be collecting data using ethnographic interviews, I thought it would
be advantageous to interview participants with whom I had already established a rapport;
while I was the teacher of this particular class and knew the parents on a professional
level, we had only discussed their personal lives as they directly related to their children’s
performance in school. The interviews gave me an opportunity to extend our discussions
so I could reach a more profound understanding of their background and home
environment.

*Student Language Classification Status*

A student’s language status was the primary criteria used to establish a pool of
potential participants. When parents first enroll their children in the school district, they
complete the Home Language Survey indicating the primary language of communication
in the home. If a language other than English is spoken at home, then a student is
categorized as an English Learner (EL). Once the student is determined to be fluent and
proficient in English, they are reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP). Only
students who were initially categorized as FEP in Kindergarten (I-FEP), students who
had been reclassified as FEP (R-FEP), or students who qualified for reclassification as of
June 2006 were considered to be potential candidates for this investigation. (To qualify for reclassification to FEP status in Junípero Serra’s district, EL students must receive a minimum score of 325 on the English Language Arts (ELA) California Standards Test (CST) and have a minimum overall score of four on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) with no scores less than three on any of the three subtests: Listening and Speaking, Reading, and Writing.)

**Student Standardized Test Data**

I intended to interview no more than six students and their parents. In order to narrow the field of potential candidates to six, I reviewed the potential candidates’ standardized test data that related to their language classification. There were two standardized tests used to determine a student’s English proficiency in the district: the CELDT, and the ELA subtest from the CST. Student writing samples and teacher observations were also part of the reclassification process, but I did not use these more subjective assessments.

Once I determined a pool of participants, I ranked potential participants in order of preference for the study. Given the small sample size, I intentionally took into account several student characteristics when refining the field of potential participants to six so that students with a variety of characteristics would be included in the study: history of achievement or improvement on the CELDT and ELA CST, current language status, parents’ cultural background, and gender. I ranked the participants so that if one of the top six ranked families was unable or declined to participate, I was to contact the next family on the list. Fortunately, all six families at the top of the list were eager to
participate in the study. Below is a description of each of the student-participants. I have used pseudonyms to protect their identities.

**Zulema Del Monte**

On both the 2005 and 2006 ELA CST, Zulema scored at the Advanced level and the highest in the class. She scored at the Advanced level on the 2005 CELDT, and was reclassified as FEP in 2005 as well. Zulema was a very motivated student who completed her homework nightly. She participated in class discussions, was well respected by her peers, and was regarded by the class as one of the smartest students in the class.

**Flor Rodriguez**

Flor is an I-FEP student who has consistently scored at the Proficient level on the ELA CST, in both fourth and fifth grade. Flor has never taken the CELDT because she was classified as I-FEP in Kindergarten. She was a very diligent student who always paid attention in class. She was rather shy and almost never raised her hand to answer a question in class, but she would always answer when I or another student called on her.

**Tico Jimenez**

Tico’s performance on both the ELA CST and the CELDT dramatically improved from fourth to fifth grade. After moving from the Below Basic level to the high Basic level and moving from Intermediate to Early Advanced on the CELDT, Tico qualified for R-FEP status in the fall of 2006. Among his classmates, he had the highest gains on the CELDT and second highest gains on the ELA CST. Tico was well liked by both the girls and the boys in the class, and he had a very funny sense of humor. Tico was an excellent
athlete whose sport of preference was fútbol, or soccer. Tico did not complete his homework on a regular basis, and therefore participated in my after school program, “El club de tarea” (The Homework Club). Tico had the ability to complete his homework independently, but El club de tarea merely provided a place for him to complete it.

Carmen Ortega

Carmen had also scored at the Proficient level on the ELA CST in both fourth and fifth grade. Like Flor, she was categorized as Initial-Fluent English Proficient (I-FEP) in Kindergarten, and has never taken the CELDT. Carmen participated in the APL program from Kindergarten to third grade, but moved to a SDAIE program in fourth grade. Her parents requested that she be moved back to the APL program for fifth-grade. Carmen, like Zulema, was thought to be one of the smartest students in the class, and was also very respected and well liked by everyone. Carmen never hesitated to ask questions or voice her opinion in a thoughtful and respectful manner.

Fabiola Fernandez

Fabiola was another student who showed dramatic improvement on the ELA CST (the highest gain in the class, just ahead of Tico) and was one of two students in the class that moved from Basic to Proficient. She received an Advanced score on the CELDT, and as a result, Fabiola qualified for R-FEP status for the fall of 2006. Of the seven students in the pool of candidates that qualified for R-FEP status in 2006, she was the only one to score in the Advanced level on the CELDT. Fabiola was as a hard-worker who completed her homework regularly and whose efforts resulted in higher
performances as measured by various assessments. Fabiola liked to tell stories, ask questions, and participate in class discussions.

Carlos Orellana

Carlos had made steady, consistent progress on the CELDT. He had moved up one level each year from Early Intermediate in third grade to Early Advanced in fifth grade. Based on his improvement of twenty-eight points on the ELA CST, Carlos qualified for R-FEP status. Carlos, like Tico, had difficulty completing his homework on a regular basis, and his participation in El club de tarea provided him some structure.

Ethnographic Interviews

I followed the protocol approved by the California State University, East Bay (CSUEB) Institutional Review Board (IRB) for each of the ethnographic interviews. First, I called the participants on the telephone to re-introduce myself as a graduate student and to describe the nature of my research project. During the initial telephone conversation in Spanish, I informed parents of my intention to interview the student, the student’s parents, and if possible, an older sibling, to find out more about the family’s general background, cultural practices that occur at home, and how students interact with other family members. I explained that we could be discussing some sensitive topics, such as the participant’s legal status, sources of income, or personal trauma; I also explained the steps I would take to ensure their confidentiality. Once the parents and their children agreed to be interviewed (thereby obtaining informed consent), a date and time were scheduled for the interview to take place at the family’s home or at Junípero Serra.
Just before the interviews were to begin, I explicitly informed participants that the interview would take place in the language of their choice, and that the conversation would be tape recorded, transcribed, and then destroyed. I reminded them of their right not to answer a particular question or to withdraw from the interview entirely. During the interview with the parent-participants, I used a series of closed- and open-ended questions to spark a conversation about one of the main topics: Family Background, Immigration to the United States, Child-raising Practices, Attitudes, and Life in the United States (see Appendix C). Questions that I asked the student-participants were more semi-structured and focused on Language Use, Individual Activities and Chores, Family Life, Experience in Parents’ Community of Origin, and Goals (see Appendix D). Upon completing the interviews, I thanked the families for their valuable time.

**Data Analysis**

Once the data was gathered and the ethnographic interviews were completed, I reviewed the notes from each interview and began to color-code the data to identify common themes or similar responses. I then compiled any detailed or numerical data in a matrix so that any patterns could easily be identified, separating information that related specifically to the parent and student participants.

I then reviewed my notes from the interview to identify significant quotes from the participants. I listened to the audiotapes to confirm the actual quote and transcribed any other of the participants’ insights that were summarized or not included in my notes. I analyzed these quotations and color-coded them as well, adding to the established themes and patterns previously identified from my notes. I also reviewed the students’
standardized test data and any miscellaneous data alongside the compiled interview data to identify matching themes or patterns.

**Researcher Role and Bias**

As the classroom teacher and participant observer of this study, I have had the opportunity to become familiar with my students and their families as well as with educational issues discussed in this investigation. I always communicated with parents in their language of choice, which was almost always Spanish. I had attempted to build good rapport with the parents throughout the school year, and some of the families I had known for several years, as the parents have older children that were in my previous classes. As a result, the participants had confidence and trust in me and appeared to have felt comfortable sharing the details of their lives in the interviews. This familiarity also increased the possibilities of bias in my role as a researcher, and every attempt was taken to objectify the process of scientific inquiry.

In addition, my background could have had an effect on the results of this study. As a white male, I am member of the dominant society (the United States) but not of the largely Latino community of Junípero Serra. I had studied four years of Spanish in high school, took numerous language and cultural courses in Spanish at the university level, and have traveled throughout rural and urban areas of Latin America for the past eighteen years. Since family cultural practices are at the heart of this study, my knowledge of Latino culture in general may differ from the specific practices of the participants in this study. In addition, I am a non-Latino, and a non-native Spanish speaker. There are many cultural and linguistic innuendoes that I might have misunderstood or failed to recognize
during the interview process which could have had an effect on the results of the study.

Lastly, Latino families traditionally hold teachers with a high level of respect, which may have affected their interview responses and the results of the study.
Chapter 4:

Findings

Data from the interviews with twelve parent-participants revealed a picture of individuals from nearly identical backgrounds and circumstances who immigrated to the United States for equally identical reasons, especially those who emigrated from Mexico. The responses given by the Orellana family provided some slightly different responses and highlighted the distinctions, such as education level and social class, within the Latino immigrant community. Even so, all participants shared some common characteristics that provided insight into the culture and environment of San Miguel, the challenges families faced in raising their children in San Miguel, and the ways parents attempted to overcome these challenges.

In this chapter, I will describe parent-participants’ backgrounds, describe the common characteristics among parent-participants of Mexican origin, illustrate how parent-participants have modified their traditional culture as they have adapted to their new lives in San Miguel, discuss the impact of this new, modified culture on the cultural identification of student-participants, and review the results of students’ assessments.

The Parent-Participants’ Backgrounds

During the interviews, a total of twenty family members provided responses in varying degrees, including eleven parents, the six student-participants, two grandparents, and one sibling. The primary interviewees called upon these other family members to provide assistance in answering a question or to elaborate on a response, or sometimes the partial participants provided unsolicited responses to questions they overheard from
the interview. Some simply sat down at the table and joined the conversation. Only one parent did not participate in the interviews. I have provided a description of the parent-participants’ backgrounds because it is important to understand the cultural context from which parents have based their current parenting practices in San Miguel. A description of the Orellana’s family background will be discussed in a later section in order to highlight their differences from those of Mexican origin.

The Del Monte Family

Mrs. Del Monte grew up in a small ranchito in Jalisco, Mexico. She described the town as very sociable, with nice people. Her father grew corn, and “broke” horses so that they could be ridden. Since many people in the town made equipales, or rustic furniture, he would go out and collect wood and other materials for people to make furniture. She was the fifth of eight siblings and attended primaria until the 3rd grade. (In Mexico and El Salvador, primaria includes first through sixth grades.) As a girl, she had to clean the house and sweep, but she didn’t have to cook. She played tag, hide-and-seek, and played with dolls made out of cuero (hide) and palos de escoba (broomsticks). When she was older, she worked in a fondita, a small restaurant that sold food in the town square at night.

When Mrs. Del Monte was fourteen, a friend of the family, Isabel, returned to Jalisco to visit her family and friends. Isabel had recently moved to San Miguel with her husband and five sons. Since Isabel had no daughters, she asked Mrs. Del Monte’s parents if Mrs. Del Monte could return with her to the United States to help her take care of the house. With reservations, Mrs. Del Monte’s parents agreed, and Mrs. Del Monte
and Isabel flew to Tijuana. From Tijuana, they hired the services of a pollera, or someone who transports undocumented immigrants across the border to the United States.

Mrs. Del Monte did not attend school in the US. Soon after arriving, Mrs. Del Monte met Isabel’s son, who was five years older than Mrs. Del Monte. At the age of sixteen, Mrs. Del Monte married Isabel’s son, Mr. Del Monte, and a year later gave birth to Zulema, who was a student-participant in this study. At the time of the interview, Mrs. Del Monte was not employed, and took care of children ages eleven, nine, two, and seven months. All of Mrs. Del Monte’s siblings continued to live in Mexico except for the youngest brother, who works in an apple orchard in Washington State.

Mr. Del Monte was not present for the interview because he was working at the time, but Mrs. Del Monte provided information about his background. He was born in the same town in Jalisco as Mrs. Del Monte, and he also attended primaria until the 3rd grade. His family moved to the US when he was a teenager, and never attended school in the US. He had four siblings, all of whom lived in San Miguel. Mr. Del Monte worked with one of his brothers constructing new houses, and Mrs. Del Monte commented at the time of the interview that he was working regularly.

The Rodriguez Family

Mr. Rodriguez was absent for the majority of the interview, but returned for work during the middle of the day and participated in part of the interview. Mrs. Rodriguez answered questions about Mr. Rodriguez when he was not present.
Both Mr. and Mrs. Rodriguez were born and raised in the same small, rural town in Michoacán, Mexico. She described the small town where she was born and raised as a tranquil, beautiful place—a ranchito where people grew corn and beans. I had the opportunity to visit this small town, which lies on the shores of a small, clean, clear lake that is quickly becoming a tourist destination for Mexicans and foreigners who are searching for a rustic experience. She remembered attending mass in the local church, dances, marchas, and rodeos with bulls.

Mrs. Rodriguez was the third of eight siblings. As a child, she washed clothes, cleaned the house, made tortillas, bathed in the lake, and brought water to the house everyday for her family to use. She played “house” with dolls that she made from material she collected in the milpa, or cornfields, using corn tusk as hair. On December 11th, her ranchito celebrated the apariciones, or the appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego, in addition to December 12th, the feast day of the Virgin de Guadalupe. There was no Kindergarten, but she started going to school at an early age because she wanted to go to school with her older sister in the 2nd grade. When she started 1st grade the following year, she already knew how to read. She continued her education until the 4th grade, and then started working. When she was older, she traveled to a nearby city to clean houses. Mrs. Rodriguez was the only parent in this study who wanted to return to Mexico to live. She admitted that if she had stayed, life would not have been very good because there is no work. She also recognized that her children were very used to living in the United States, and that relocating to Michoacán would be difficult for them. In addition, both of Mr. Rodriguez’s parents were dead, and many of
her relatives lived in the United States. Of her seven siblings, five lived in the United States, and two still lived in Mexico.

Mr. Rodriguez was the fifth of nine siblings, and attended primaria until the 3rd grade. He recalled working in the nearby fields and spending lots of time playing in the lake. While birthdays were acknowledged, each child celebrated his or her saint’s day. When children were baptized, parents gave them a baptismal name after a particular saint in addition to their birth name. The community celebrated many of these saints’ days, which were believed to be more important than one’s birthday. At the age of eighteen, Mrs. Rodriguez married Mr. Rodriguez (who was ten years older) in their community of origin in Michoacán. A year later, their first child was born. Shortly thereafter, the family decided to immigrate to San Miguel, where four of Mr. Rodriguez’s brothers were living. The family traveled to Tijuana and crossed the border with the assistance of a pollera.

Once in the United States, Mrs. Jimenez gave birth to Flor, a student-participant of this study, and another daughter one year later. Several years ago, Mr. Rodriguez obtained his permanent residency and brought the two US-born daughters to his community of origin to visit family members. After the birth of their fourth child a year ago, Mrs. Rodriguez finally obtained her permanent residency and traveled with her family to her community of origin for the first time in twelve years. Mrs. Rodriguez was not employed at the time of the interview and stayed at home to take care of the children and the home. Mr. Rodriguez worked with two of his brothers as general contractors repairing and fixing houses in San Miguel.
The Jimenez Family

Mr. and Mrs. Jimenez were born and raised in rural Mexican towns of close proximity, separated primarily by a river. Mrs. Jimenez, however, was born and raised in the state of Jalisco, and Mr. Jimenez in Michoacán. Mrs. Jimenez was the fourth of eight children and attended primaria until the third grade. Her responsibilities as a child were very similar to other mothers' responses of the study—clean the house, take care of younger siblings, and help out other family members. She also remembered harvesting corn and carrying it home on the back of a horse. Mrs. Jimenez remembered playing encantaba, a version of freeze tag, playing with paper dolls, rolling tires down the street, playing lotería, and watching cartoons on a television at a neighbor’s house. In addition to celebrating the feast day of the Virgin de Guadalupe on December 12th, the town celebrated it’s founding on August 31st.

Mr. Jimenez was the ninth of ten children and also completed 3rd grade. Afterward, he was expected to work in the field and take care of the family’s livestock. They had nine or ten cows, and he was responsible for taking them out to the pasture. He briefly described his eight months of military service that he completed at the age of eighteen before meeting Mrs. Jimenez.

At the ages of nineteen, Mr. Jimenez married seventeen-year-old Mrs. Jimenez in Mexico and shortly thereafter moved to Northern California, where each of them had older siblings that had been established in various communities throughout the Bay Area. They lived in San Miguel for seven years, and had two boys. Tico, the younger, is the student-participant of this study. Then, the family decided that it would be better if Mrs.
Jimenez and her two sons returned to Mexico while Mr. Jimenez stayed in Northern California to continue working. Mrs. Jimenez felt the need to be closer to her parents in Jalisco, and she had a difficult time finding work. Mr. Jimenez brought the family back to Mexico, and then returned to the Bay Area. During the next several years, Mr. Jimenez returned to Jalisco to visit his family and returned to Northern California with the services of a pollera. The older son attended three years of primaria in Jalisco, and Tico had the opportunity to attend Kindergarten.

When Mrs. Jimenez gave birth to their third son, they made the decision to return to the Bay Area in order to live together as a family. Mr. Jimenez returned to Mexico to bring his family back across the border. Since the two older sons were born in the United States, the family did not need the services of the pollera and asked Mr. Jimenez’s brother to bring the two older sons with him across the border. A pollera guided Mr. and Mrs. Jimenez across the desert near Tijuana, and the pollera’s wife brought the youngest son with her across the border, claiming the child as her own when passing through customs. Once in Southern California, Mr. and Mrs. Jimenez met their youngest son and continued the journey back to the Bay Area. Tico and his older brother are the only children of this study that had returned to their parents’ communities of origin on a regular basis to visit extended family members.

Mr. Jimenez cooked in a restaurant in San Francisco and had worked at various restaurants throughout the Bay Area. Mrs. Jimenez worked in a seasonal, part-time position preparing food at a local sports stadium. During the season, she received some
health benefits and was able to purchase medication for Mr. Jimenez’s mild form of diabetes.

*The Ortega Family*

Mrs. Ortega was the third of five siblings and attended a rural primary school until the third grade in her home state of Colima, Mexico. She recalled attending mass, baking bread, taking care of the goats, and tending a garden. Most of her memories are weak, because she left Colima at an early age. Of the twelve parents, Mrs. Ortega was the youngest to immigrate to the United States at the age of ten. After the death of her maternal grandmother, who had been living in a small town outside of Fresno, California, Mrs. Ortega came with her parents to attend the funeral. Mrs. Ortega’s uncle was a naturalized United States citizen and drove them across the border without documents. After the funeral, her mother decided that they should stay near Fresno, and she helped raise chickens and tend their garden (with many tomatoes and *chiles*, as she remembers). During the summers, she worked with the adults in the fields of the Central California Valley harvesting grapes, olives, and oranges. Mrs. Ortega attended middle school through half of the eighth grade, and discontinued her formal education when she married Mr. Ortega at the age of fourteen. Three of her sisters still lived near Fresno, and the youngest was studying at a university. Her brother was the only sibling who stayed in Mexico.

Mr. Ortega was from the same ranchito as Mrs. Ortega, but they did not know each other. He was the sixth of eleven children, and he completed *secundaria* in Colima. (In Mexico and El Salvador, *secundaria* includes seventh to ninth grades.) At nineteen,
he immigrated to San Miguel to be with some of his family members. Mr. Ortega’s father started working in a factory in a city neighboring San Miguel twenty years ago, and helped Mr. Ortega gain a position in the same factory using a false Social Security number. Four of his siblings lived in San Miguel, one in Tijuana, Mexico, and five still lived in Colima.

Soon after his arrival, Mr. Ortega attended his cousin’s wedding near Fresno where he met Mrs. Ortega. Although Mr. Ortega is from the same rural town in Colima as Mrs. Ortega, it was at this family gathering in Fresno that they met for the first time. After being married, they moved to San Miguel and began raising a family. After thirteen years of marriage, Mr. Ortega still worked at the same factory. Mr. Ortega’s father lived with the family in the three-bedroom, one-bath house they purchased several years ago. Five of Mr. Ortega’s siblings live in San Miguel and see them on an almost daily basis. Mrs. Ortega was not employed at the time of the interview and cared for their five children, ages eleven, ten, six, three, and two. The oldest, Carmen, was a student-participant in this investigation.

The Fernandez Family

Mr. Fernandez was the only parent of the study from the Mexican state of Zacatecas. Because his parents were working in the United States, Mr. Fernandez’s grandparents were responsible for raising him and his younger siblings. He completed primaria in the small ranchito, and he helped his grandfather with the cattle and planted and harvested corn. When he was fourteen or fifteen years old, his grandparents could no longer care for him and sent him to the United States to be with his parents. He attended
seventh grade and a portion of eighth grade, but never attended high school in the US. Instead, Mr. Fernandez began working with his father in the kitchen of a restaurant, eventually being promoted to head chef. At the time of the interview, Mr. Fernandez worked in a factory, and on the weekends, he ran what he called a “catering business,” where he prepared food for family parties, such as baptisms or Quinceañeras, in San Miguel. He became a permanent resident at the age of twenty-five, but did not become a US citizen until he was forty-two. Three of his siblings live in San Miguel, two in Southern California, and the remaining siblings were scattered throughout the US in Denver, Colorado, Chicago, Illinois, and St. Louis, Missouri.

Mrs. Fernandez, the fourth of eight siblings, grew up in a ranchito in the Mexican state of Michoacán. She attended primaria until the 5th grade, and worked around the house and in the fields. Her oldest brother was living in San Miguel at that time, and his wife wanted to return to work and needed childcare. At the age of twenty-three, Mrs. Fernandez immigrated to the United States to look after her nieces and nephews. She met Mr. Fernandez at a dance in another Bay Area community, and they married. After thirteen years of marriage, they had three children ages twelve, eleven, and six. She had worked numerous part-time jobs for several years, including a tortilla factory, and several clothing factories. Mrs. Fernandez received her permanent residency two years before the interview, soon after Mr. Fernandez became a naturalized US citizen, and she promptly began working part-time in a popular grocery-retail store in San Miguel.

Mrs. Fernandez’s mother, Alma, lived in the home with the family, and shared a bedroom with their only daughter, Fabiola, who was the middle sibling and a student-
participant in this study. Less than a year ago, Fabiola found her grandfather’s body in the garage after he died of a diabetic stroke. The Fernandez’s have owned their three-bedroom house for many years, and had been planning to add on another bedroom for Mrs. Fernandez’s parents for some time. They said that they would probably continue with their plans despite the death of Fabiola’s grandfather since their children were growing up. At the time of the interview, Alma shared her plans to take Fabiola to visit her community of origin in Michoacán during the Christmas vacation. I unsuccessfully attempted to meet Alma and Fabiola in Michoacán during that time, but I spent a day with Alma’s daughter, her only child who still lives in Mexico, in Mrs. Fernandez’s community of origin.

**Rural Roots—The Ranchitos of Mexico**

Each parent-participant described what life was like growing up in small, poor, rural villages, or ranchitos, of Mexico. In many of these communities, electricity, running water, and sewage treatment were not available. Only a few families had access to telephones or vehicles. Many aspects of their culture of origin were tied to a traditional agriculture and ranching lifestyle, but equally as important was the manner in which cultural knowledge was passed to subsequent generations through the process of cultural transmission. This section will explore the commonalities of parent-participants’ rural backgrounds growing up in what they each described as a ranchito that served as the foundation of their current culture. They described life as children in their communities of origin, including how they worked, played, were educated, and the sense of responsibility that they felt toward their families.
Work in the Ranchito

Parents, both men and women, described the work that they did in the fields. Typically, however, work was assigned according to gender. As boys, the fathers were responsible for taking care of the family’s cattle and helped plant and harvest subsistence crops. Mr. Jimenez described his work experience as a child.

Interviewer: Y cuando era niño, ¿qué tipo de quehaceres tenía, o sea trabajos? Cuando tenía la edad de su hijo, por ejemplo. (And when you were a boy, what type of chores did you have, I mean, jobs? When you were your son’s age, for example.)

Mr. Jimenez: Yo cuando estaba chico, era vaquero. (Me, when I was a boy, I was a cowboy.)

Mrs. Jimenez: Cuidaba vacas. (He took care of cows.)

Mr. Jimenez: Sí, cuidaba vacas... de mi papa. (Yes, I took care of cows... of my father.)

Mrs. Jimenez: [laughing] ¡Vaquero! ([laughing] A cowboy!)

Interviewer: Entonces, tu papa era taxista, pero también tenía animales? (So, your father was a taxi driver, but he had animals as well?)

Mrs. Jimenez: Sí, tenía animales. (Yes, he had animals.)

Interviewer: Y ¿cuánto vacas tenía, por ejemplo? (And how many cows did he have, for example?)

Mr. Jimenez: no, pues, yo... (No, well, I...)

Interviewer: O sea, cuánto cuidaba? (I mean, how many did you take care of?)

Mr. Jimenez: No, pues yo, vacas, vacas, yo llegué a juntar [inaudible] diez vacas [inaudible] y para que crecían. (No, well, I, cows... cows, I came to get [inaudible] ten cows, [inaudible] and so they would grow.)

Interviewer: ¿Cómo las cuidaba? (How did you take care of them?)

Mrs. Jimenez: Los llevaba en el campo... para comer. (He took them to the field... to eat.)
During this portion of the interview, Mr. Jimenez most likely responded that he was a “vaquero,” or cowboy, so that I might more easily understand what he did as a boy. Mrs. Jimenez laughed at this response and clarified that he just looked after them because to her, being a cowboy carried with it great responsibility and was work intended for a man. There was far more to being a cowboy in rural Mexico that just looking after a few cows, which was a responsibility reserved for boys in rural Mexico. In order for a boy to learn how to become a cowboy, however, he had to learn through experience. The men of the family taught the boys the basics of ranching by giving them the responsibility of caring for the family’s cattle out in the fields. The boys were given this serious responsibility so that the men could be free to work elsewhere, as Mr. Jimenez continued to explain.

Mr. Jimenez:  

Entonces hicieron agricultura también, ¿no?  

(Intenches hicieron agricultura también, ¿no?  

(So they did agriculture as well, right?))

Mr. Jimenez:  

O sea, se va uno y a todo... digamos cosechan los señores, y cuando se van cosechando, nosotros ya vamos metiendo las vacas en cada...para sea...  

(I mean, one goes and everyone...let’s say, the men planted. And when they go planting, we go putting the cows in each...so they can be...)

Mrs. Jimenez:  

...para que coman las vacas.  

(… so the cows can eat.)

Mr. Jimenez:  

Ibamos levantando su maíz, su trigo, o el sorgo, que se llama el milo, ellos van recogiendo y nosotros vamos con el ganado. Se llamaba M[inaudible], es como un grupo de más de mil hectareas, entonces allí le dan permiso a uno [inaudible].
(We went raising their corn, their wheat, or the sorghum, that’s called milo. They go harvesting and we go with the cattle. It was called M[inaudible], it is like a group of a thousand hectares, so there they give permission for one [inaudible].

Interviewer:  Entonces tenía que cuidar las vacas así, ¿no?
(So, you had to take care of the cows like that, right?)
Mrs. Jimenez:  Sí, para que no brincaran a otro lado.
(Yes, so they didn’t jump to the other side.)

Naturally, some cultural aspects of an immigrant’s original lifestyle cannot be continued in their new homeland, such as raising cattle or sheep in an urban residential neighborhood. While all of the families lived in homes with outdoor space, none of the families continued agricultural practices that could be replicated in an urban environment, such as keeping a garden in the backyard or raising smaller domestic animals, such as chickens. Only Fabiola’s grandfather, who lived with the family and died nine months before the interview, kept a garden in the family’s backyard where he cultivated maíz, pepino, tomate, and chile. During the interview at Fabiola’s house, the garden looked overgrown, and Mr. Fernandez said he did not have plans to continue the garden. Since parents were not passing onto their children their knowledge of life in the ranchitos, it is possible that a substantial portion of the families’ rural roots, and the cultural knowledge that accompanies it, will be lost.

While girls were given the responsibilities of cooking meals, washing clothes by hand, cleaning the house, and taking care of younger siblings, they were still expected to help in the fields. Large families were desirable so that the children shared the workload according to their age. Mrs. Jimenez described some of her responsibilities as a child in Jalisco.
Mrs. Jimenez: *Yo trabajé en el campo.*  
(I worked in the country.)

Interviewer: *Y ¿qué hiciste en el campo?*  
(And what did you do in the country?)

Mrs. Jimenez: *Mmm, de todo… Yo le ayudaba yo a mi abuelito a pizcar el maíz, pues quitar el maíz de la hoja, y desde allí lo llevaba a la casa en caballo, lo llevaba a la casa y hicimos como diez viajes de la casa a la [inaudible] a donde venden el maíz. También le ayudaba a fertilizar, a tirar líquido, Aaaa…[groaning] mucho labor.*  
(Mmm, everything… I helped my grandfather to pick corn, well, take the corn from the leaf, and from there I carried it to the house on horse, I carried it to the house and we made like ten trips from the house to the [inaudible] where they sold the corn. I also helped him to fertilize, to throw out liquid, Aaaa…[groaning] a lot of work.)

Interviewer: *Y ¿en la casa?*  
(And in the house?)

Mrs. Jimenez: *Sí, lavaba, planchaba, así es que salía en otras casas también para ayudar a mi mamá porque como nosotros [inaudible] sólo y después de tenía ocho años empecé a…a trabajar.*  
(Yes, I washed, ironed, it’s that I also had to leave other things to help my mom because since we [inaudible] alone, and after I turned eight years old, I started to…to work.)

Unlike ranching and agricultural practices that were the male domain in Mexico, many of the domestic duties the mother-participants experienced as young girls could be reproduced in an urban setting the US. Indeed, as I will discuss in the coming sections, student-participants’ domestic chores were similar to the chores that mother-participants had as children. Furthermore, the manner in which students learned to do these chores and the underlying values that are taught by completing these chores was preserved, as I will discuss in later sections.

*Playing in the Ranchito*

Mr. Jimenez: *Sí, pues, con nosotros, mis padres no nos compraban nada en aquel tiempo. En aquel tiempo, no nos compraba nada. Los padres de uno pues, más atrás, tienen como unos, digamos diez, quince, doce niños. Y ¿a comprarles a todos un juego? ¡Ya, no! Estaba muy duro.*
(Yes, well, with us, my parents didn’t buy us anything in that time. In that time, they didn’t buy us anything. The parents of one, well, back then, they had like, let’s say ten, fifteen, twelve children. And to buy all of them a toy? No way! It was very hard.)

As Mr. Jimenez stated, a family’s limited financial resources had to be stretched to feed and clothe everyone, so money was spent on the absolute necessities. As children, parents relied on their imagination and creativity for entertainment, using whatever resources were available to make their own toys. Mothers cut out figures from cardboard to make dolls, or gathered parts of a corn plant from the milpa (corn field), such as the leaves, husks, cobs, or corn tassels, to make their own dolls. They used scraps of cowhide and rags to clothe their dolls. Mrs. Rodriguez played “house” and “cooking” with “una cazuela y leña” (a pot and firewood).

In general, parents described games that required no equipment or material that was commonly found in nature or around the house. Lotería, a game similar to bingo using fifty-four cards with separate symbolic images, was the only manufactured game that parents mentioned playing as children. Mrs. Del Monte described some of the games he played as a child.

Interviewer:  
Y ¿recuerda qué tipo de juguetes tenía?  
(And do you remember what types of toys you had?)

Mrs. Del Monte:  
Pues juguetes, casi no. No tenía.  
(Well, toys, not really. I didn’t have any.)

Interviewer:  
Pero… pero… tenía cosas que… con…  
(But… but… you had things that… with…)

Mrs. Del Monte:  
¿Con que jugaba?  
(That I played with?)

Interviewer:  
Sí.  
(Yes.)

Mrs. Del Monte:  
Pues, jugaba con la cuerda con mi papa para brincar. [inaudible] para arriba y abajo. Jugábamos, o había un juego de… palitos, palo de
escoba, como... un palo así, pero un poco más grande, y con eso teníamos un juego en que [inaudible] con un palo, y a donde caer el palo, y con el otro palo, y tenías que ... y si lo tocaba, pues, perdía. Usabamos lo que teníamos, como un palo de escoba porque los juguetes fueron mucho [inaudible] para que comprara. Por eso le digo a ella, porque si quiere [inaudible] es que no, esta muy caro, o búscate algo que es... es más barata. [Imitating Zulema’s voice] “No, pero es que yo quisiera esa.” [inaudible] porque allá, [inaudible] muy cara... los juguetes.

Well, I played with a rope with my father for jumping. [inaudible] up and down. We played, or there was a game of... little sticks, broom straw, like... a stick like this, but a little bigger, and with that we had a game in which [inaudible] with a [piece of] straw, and where the [piece of] straw fell, and with the other stick, and you had to... and if you touched it, well, you lost. We used what we had, like a broomstick because toys were very [inaudible] to be bought. That’s why I tell her (Zulema), because if she wants [inaudible] it’s that no, it’s very expensive, or look for something that is... is cheaper. [Imitating Zulema’s voice] “No, but it’s that I want that.” [inaudible] because there, [inaudible] very expensive... the toys.

Like Mr. Jimenez, Mrs. Del Monte explained that toys were luxurious items that her family could not afford. When I first asked the question about the “toys” she had as a girl, it appeared as if she didn’t understand what I was asking, so I attempted to rephrase the question. Her initial reaction reflected the fact that the parents of this study played as all children do, but “toys” were items beyond the economic reach of families. A tire, for example, became a toy that children used to roll down the street for fun or became the central piece of a game. Fathers frequently played in the rivers, making faces out of mud and sticks or building dams. Most parents played versions of tag, such as encantaba (freeze tag), and escondelero (hide-and-seek).

In the ranchitos, even leisure activities for adults were combined with el trabajo (work). Mrs. Fernandez said that the women in her ranchito had to mend clothing, make
clothes for the children, or create a special piece of cloth for a special event or to sell in a neighboring town. Instead of performing the activity alone, women frequently sat in a circle to sew and weave so they could *platicar* (to chat, or talk). The girls also sat with the women and learned how to sew intricate patterns with yarn and thread to make tablecloths or clothing, listening in on the women’s conversation. The activity’s primary function was to create a product to use or sell. The underlying function, however, was to facilitate the process of cultural transmission, of passing down from one generation to the next the cultural knowledge of sewing as well as to give younger girls an opportunity to listen in on adult women’s conversation, thoughts, attitudes, and values. Mrs. Fernandez and her mother, Alma (Fabiola’s grandmother), described the cultural activity of sewing.

Mrs. Fernandez:  *Y…la gente…sí [inaudible] pues, muchachas, y como este ranchito es tan chiquito, pues en vez de ir al otro rancho…que es la [deleted], yo lo vendía y allí me lo compraban a mí.*

(And…the people…yes [inaudible] well, girls, and since this ranchito is so small, well instead of going to the other rancho…that is [deleted], I sold it and there they bought it from me.)

Interviewer: *Y ¿cuántos años tenías cuando estabas tejiendo?*  
(And how old were you when you were weaving?)

Mrs. Fernandez:  *Allá en el rancho, la gente empieza de la edad de…como a las seis.*

(There, en the rancho, the people begin and the age of…like at six.)

Alma:  *Pero aquí, no.*

(But here, no.)

Mrs. Fernandez:  *Aquí, mira.*  
[Alma brings out a sample to show everyone.]

Fabiola:  Wow!

Interviewer:  *¿Tu mamá te enseñó como hacer ésto?*  
(Your mom taught you how to do that?)

Mrs. Fernandez:  *Sí. Allá, uno…allá desde chiquilla ya sabe porque toda la gente cose, o [inaudible], y todo…*  
(Yes. There, one…there from [the time one is] a little girl, she already knows because everyone sews, or [inaudible] and everything.)
Mrs. Fernandez and Alma, begin to describe the different sewing tools that they use and explain some basic technique. The conversation about sewing continues, and about the possible break in cultural transmission to the next generation, possibly with Fabiola.

Interviewer: And do you want to learn, Fabiola?
Mrs. Fernandez: No sabe.
(She doesn’t know.)
Alma: No sabe la niña.
(The girl doesn’t know.)
Fabiola: I try to use the needle, but it’s hard!
Mrs. Fernandez: Allí en México toda la gente sabe. Como no hay donde ir… es un ranchito. No hay partes a donde ir, ni nada. Se sienta, y se pone uno a coser.
(There in Mexico, all the people know. Since there is nowhere to go…it is a ranchito. There aren’t any places where to go, nothing. One sits, and you start to sew.)
Interviewer: ¿Porque allí no había…no tenía televisión?
(Because there wasn’t…you didn’t have television?)
Mrs. Fernandez: Pues, sí. O a veces…
(Well, yes. Or sometimes…)
Alma: [inaudible] en la televisión…
[inaudible] (on the television…)
Mrs. Fernandez: Viendo la televisión y cosiendo.
(Watching television and sewing.)
Mr. Fernandez: I mean, you can do it…you can watch the TV and doing that at the same time.
Mrs. Fernandez: Pues, mi mamá, sí. Esta mirando la tele, esta cosiendo.
(Well, my mom, yes. She is watching the tele[vision], she is sewing.
Interviewer: Y también en el ranchito cuando las mujeres estan cosiendo, ¿estan platicando también?
(And also in the ranchito when the women are sewing, are they chatting, too?)
(Yes, yes, chatting sometimes…the neighbors get together because they live in patios [inaudible] a front lobby, chat, and [inaudible]. Yes. And that is the life of one on the rancho. It seems like it is very pretty. Very pretty.)
Mrs. Fernandez continued to sew with her mother every once in a while, who also lived in their home in San Miguel. Some cultural traditions were still practiced by family members, but student-participants showed little interest in learning traditional cultural knowledge and adult-participants showed little interest in teaching traditional cultural knowledge. She said her daughter, Fabiola, was just beginning to become interested in learning how to sew, but finds it very difficult and lacks the patience to learn. Sewing does not have the same social and communal significance in San Miguel as it did in Mrs. Fernandez’s ranchito, and the family is engaged in many different activities and interests that compete with the time required to learn such a highly skilled art form. In contrast to the tightly scheduled work hours, after-school programs, and weekend activities that exemplify life in the United States, life in the ranchito had a slower pace. Mrs. Fernandez continued the sewing discussion, commenting about the significance of time in the ranchito.

Mrs. Fernandez: *Porque, maestro, lo que pasa es que allá, uno no vive con el reloj.* (Because, teacher, what happens is that there, one doesn’t live with the watch.)

Alma: *No, allá, no.* (No, there, no.)

Mrs. Fernandez: *Allá, dice uno, “¿qué hora será?” Ohh, pues, yo [inaudible] dirá el sol. Ya se quitó de la sombra. Son las doce.* (There, one says, “What time is it?” Ohh, well, I [inaudible] will say the sun. It already took away from the shadow. It’s twelve o’clock.)

Alma: *Sí.* (Yes.)

Mrs. Fernandez: *Cuando uno se para, no, pues yo [inaudible] una sombra, ya son las doce. Cuando uno se quita la sombra de uno mismo, ya son las doce. Eso es el reloj de uno. Y aquí, no. Y aquí tiene que vivir uno con el reloj.*
(When one stops, no, well, I [inaudible] a shadow, it’s already twelve [o’clock]. When one takes away their own shadow, it’s already twelve [o’clock]. That is one’s watch.)

Grandmother:  
*Por eso es diferente.*  
(That’s why it’s different.)

*Education in the Ranchito*

On average, parent-participants of Mexican origin received an average of 4.6 years of formal education. In rural Mexico, children were expected to work at an early age in order to contribute toward the well being of the family. Education was simply not a priority in the labor-intensive life of a *ranchito*. Mr. and Mrs. Jimenez discuss the value of education in their community of origin in Mexico.

Interviewer:  
*¿Se fue a la escuela?*  
(And you went to school?)

Mr. Jimenez:  
*Sí.*  
(Yes.)

Interviewer:  
*¿Hasta cuándo?*  
(Until when?)

Mr. Jimenez:  
¡Tres, no más! [laughing]… No, sabe lo que pasa maestro, es que, en el tiempo ese, uno en México no… no le dan, pues, este… o sea, sí le dan estudio, pero lo traen pa’ arriba y pa’ abajo.  
(Third, no more! [laughing]… No, you know what happens, teacher, is that at that time in Mexico, one in Mexico doesn’t… they don’t give them, well… I mean, yes, they give you education, but they bring it up and down.)

Mrs. Jimenez:  
*Pero las papas creían que sería mejor que sacarlos de la escuela a que se fueran a trabajar, a ganar, pues, dinero para gastar que forzarlos a ir a la escuela.*  
(But the parents believed that it was better to take them out of school so they could go work, to earn, well, money to spend than to force them to go to school.)

In an agricultural-based society such as the *ranchito*, there was little need for an education that required academic skill beyond basic reading ability. Essentially, working
and making a contribution to the family was of greater importance than receiving an education. Not only did parents take their children out of school, but Mrs. Jimenez’s comment also suggests that children preferred not to go to school—that even the children saw little value in receiving an education. Mrs. Del Monte describes a similar experience in Mexico.

Interviewer:  *Estaba yiendo a la escuela hasta que salieras?* (Were you going to school until you left?)

Mrs. Del Monte:  *Sí. Yo… me quedé en el tercero porque era un poco duro. No pasé tercero* [laughing].
(Yes. I… I left in the third grade because it was a little hard. I didn’t pass third [laughing].)

Zulema:  (Gasping in shock.)

Mrs. Del Monte:  *(Gasping, mimicking Zulema.) ¿Ves? Por eso tienes que ir a la escuela.* (You see? That’s why you have to go to school.)

Zulema:  *Aye, no me voy a ir.* (Aww, I’m not going to go.)

Mrs. Del Monte:  *Pero allá en México es diferente que aquí. Allá, mi mamá no me mandaba a la escuela porque asistí una veces y una veces no. Es que… Pero aquí, todos tienen que ir a la escuela, porque si no, te reporta a la policía y te lleva.* (But there in Mexico, it is different than here. There, my mother didn’t send me to school because I went and sometimes I didn’t. It’s that… but here, everybody has to go to school, because if not, then they report you and the police get you.)

When asked about their highest level of education in front of the student-participants, both parents laughed, as if they were embarrassed of completing only up to the third grade. Even Zulema appeared to be shocked as she gasped at her mother’s response in disbelief. Mrs. Del Monte explained the difference to Zulema so that she could understand that she grew up in a different world than San Miguel. While she did not get in trouble for not going to school as a girl, Mrs. Del Monte wanted her daughter to
know that she would get in trouble with the police if she didn’t go to school in the US.

Mrs. Del Monte continued discussing her schooling experiences in Jalisco.

Mrs. Del Monte: _Pues, bueno, las escuelas allá… nada más que lo que pasa es que allá nada más…_ Es diferente el tipo de vida que lleva allá. _Mi mamá me mandaba… Como aquí nunca deja la escuela. Allá, no, allá las mamas los mandaban a la escuela. Así que, si ibamos a la escuela… bien, y no exactamente [inaudible] para la mamá porque dijo no [inaudible] lava las trastes, o… _(Well, OK, the schools there…nothing more than what happens is that there, nothing more… It’s different the type of life that they have there. My mother sent me… Like here they never miss school. There, no. There the moms send them to school. So, if we went to school, fine, and it wasn’t exactly [inaudible] for my mom because she didn’t say [inaudible] wash the dishes, or…)

Interviewer: _No tiene la misma importancia._

(It doesn’t have the same importance.)

Mrs. Del Monte: _No, casi no. No, este, como que [inaudible] vas a hacer la [inaudible]. Pero… Digo, porque si le gusta la escuela, le gusta. Pero si era aburrida, pues, [inaudible] Sí, va, pero yo iba a la escuela, asistía, yo, bien contenta, me iba a la escuela porque ibamos a empezar a aprender a leer [inaudible]. Pero ya cuando empezaron los maestros y, dice, “Vénte a aprender [inaudible].” Pero cuando empezaron con las matemáticas, yo dije, ¡ya! Pues, ya me quitaban el interés, pues, para la escuela._

(No, not really. No, this, since [inaudible] you go to do the [inaudible]. But… I say, because if you like school, you like it. But if it was boring, well, [inaudible]. Yes, you go, but I went to school, I attended, I, very happy, I went to school because we were beginning to learn to read [inaudible]. But when the teachers started and, they say, “Come and learn [inaudible].” But when they started with mathematics, I said, No more! Well, they took away my interest, well, for school.)

Similar to Mrs. Jimenez’s comments, Mrs. Del Monte also explained how other elements of life were a higher priority than school, because life was just different—it was more labor-intensive and required the support of all the children to survive. In addition, if children didn’t do well in school or found it boring, they had less motivation to attend because school “didn’t have the same importance.” Mrs. Del Monte continued.
Interviewer:  ¿Y cómo es diferente la escuela allá de lo que sabes de las escuelas aquí?  
(And how is school different there from what you know of schools here?)

Mrs. Del Monte:  Hmnm, cómo es diferente?…
(Hmnm, How is it different?)

Interviewer:  ¿Parece que son iguales, más o menos?  
(Does it seem that they are the same, more or less?)

Mrs. Del Monte:  Sí, son iguales, nada más que, como le digo, que los padres de la familia casi no pasan por… la escuela. Ellos llevan los niños a la escuela como aquí, [inaudible] porque tienen que llevarlos, recogerlos, este… [inaudible]. También hacen sus juntas que hacen, que hacen aquí con los papas, pero mis papas no fueron mucho…. Es como con las mamas hacen también que… Allá, es que las familias son muy grandes. Tiene un impacto porque los hijos… porque pues, son bastantes, y no se [inaudible] en el tiempo.
(Yes, they are the same, nothing more than, like I say, that the parents of the family almost never pass by… the school. They take their kids to school like here, [inaudible] because they have to take them, pick them up, this… [inaudible]. They also have their meetings that they do, that they do with the parents, but my parents didn’t go much… It’s like with the moms they make… There it is that the families are very large. It has an impact because their children… because, well, there are a lot of them, and they didn’t [inaudible] at that time.)

Mrs. Del Monte perhaps provided some insight in her comment into why educators have found it hard to understand why Latino parents appear to be uninvolved in their children’s schooling. Because parent-participants’ families of origin were large, their mothers did not have the time to attend meetings for an institution, such as the school, that did not have greater importance that survival, especially given the number of children that she had. Likewise, fathers spent long hours performing hard manual labor in the fields and did not have the energy to attend. Parent-participants think education is important, but they do not know how to participate in their child’s education because
parent participation in school was not part of their experience in the ranchito. In a way, parent participation in US schools is a class and cultural phenomenon. Schools expect that middle-class parents of mainstream US society get involved in the activities of the school by attending meetings, holding positions on the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), or volunteering in the classroom. This perceived lack of parent participation on the part of rural Mexican immigrants could simply be a cultural or class difference and indicative of the extent to which families are isolated from the dominant culture.

Responsibility to the Family

The parent-participants of Mexican origin came from large families, with an average of 8.2 children per family. Mr. Jimenez, one of ten children in his family, commented that, “Tuvimos una familia grande porque había bastante trabajo.” (We had a large family because there was a lot of work.) Mrs. Del Monte predicted that, had she stayed in Mexico, her life would have been “llena de niños” (filled with children).

Just as life activities of work and play revolved around agriculture and ranching, the reason for participating in these activities revolved around the family, and each member had the responsibility of contributing to its wellbeing. As soon as children were old enough to perform significant tasks, their ability to contribute to the family became more important that school. Parents expected to work, not for compensation, but for the good of the family. As described earlier, children worked in the fields, girls helped clean the house, wash clothes, or look after younger siblings, and boys looked after the family’s cows or goats. Even when the adolescents and young adults worked outside of the family home and fields for compensation, they were still expected to contribute monetarily to the
family. Mr. Jimenez explained what he did with the money he earned as a young man from working in the fields.

Interviewer:  Y ¿qué hiciste con el dinero que ganaste?
(And what did you do with the money you earned?)

Mr. Jimenez:  Parte le daba a uno, y parte se le daba a la mamá, porque tenía que comprar, pues…comida.
(Part of it you gave to yourself, and part of it you gave to your mom, because she had to buy, well…food.)

Mrs. Jimenez:  El maíz para comer.
(Corn in order to eat.)

Mr. Jimenez:  O sea si ganaba uno veinte pesos, le daba diez pesos a uno, y guardaba diez pesos, y así estaba.
(I mean, if one earned twenty pesos, one gave ten pesos to oneself, and one saved ten pesos, and that’s the way it was.)

Interviewer:  Y ¿qué hiciste con tu dinero?
(And what did you do with your money?)

Mr. Jimenez:  No, pues, [laughing] nos íbamos a los bailes [inaudible].
(No, well, [laughing] we went to the dances [inaudible].)

As Mr. Jimenez’s response illustrates, it was acceptable to keep some of his earnings for himself, but his first priority was to the family. Mr. Jimenez’s family simply expected that he contribute what he earned toward the welfare of the family, and “that’s the way it was,” as he stated. This sense of responsibility to the good of the family continued even as participants emigrated from their communities of origin, as most of the parent-participants said that they sent money via wire transfers to parents or siblings in their communities of origin.

New Roots—Life in San Miguel

The parents of Mexican origin shared many common characteristics; the environment in which they were raising their children differed greatly than the one in which they were raised. Nevertheless, the manner in which they have been transmitting
these formative experiences from their communities of origin, their culture, has contributed positively to their children’s value-formation, cultural identity, and overall wellbeing. Once parents emigrated from their communities of origin, they began raising families with the intention of staying in San Miguel. For most participants, the ranchito represented a hard life, and they wished for their children to have the opportunity for a better life than their own. Life in the US represented the future. Mrs. Rodriguez was the only parent-participant who expressed a desire to return to her community of origin to live, while the other parents only wanted to return to visit family members para vacación (for vacation).

Despite their commitment to establish new roots in the United States, a variety of conditions influenced participants’ behaviors, therefore limiting or expanding their ability to engage in a particular acculturation strategy. Some of these conditions were inherently permanent. Some could be changed, but participants would have had to invest a significant amount of personal resources and energy, perhaps at the expense of their own family and values, in order to change the condition. Regardless, participants’ conditions and the behaviors in which they engaged occurred on a macro level or on a micro level (see Figure 4.1). In communicating the findings about participants’ new lives in San Miguel, I will discuss the macro conditions (such as participants’ legal status and socioeconomic status) and their accompanying cultural behaviors as well as micro conditions (such as education attainment and social class) and the affecting micro behaviors. While interview data revealed many connections between conditions and
behaviors, the limited scope of this investigation could not account for all of the conditions and behaviors listed in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1 Macro and Micro Conditions and Behaviors**

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*Macro Conditions and Acculturative Behaviors*

Macro conditions, or conditions that the dominant society imposed upon or made available to participants, included participants’ legal status, violence in their community, and their hopes and aspirations of the future. All participants shared common hopes and aspirations for their families and their children, and they responded similarly to living in fear of community violence. Parent-participants’ length of legal status, however, had the
greatest impact upon their acculturative behaviors, determining types of jobs in which participants could work, limiting the number of neighborhoods where they could find housing, and restricting their mobility within the Bay Area, California, and the United States as well as their ability to travel abroad to and from their communities of origin.

Condition of Legal Status

All ten Mexican-origin parents in this study entered the United States illegally, and after spending an average of nearly twenty years in the United States (mean=19.5), six remained undocumented. They had been raising families during that time, so nearly all of the children of Mexican origin in the study (seventeen out of nineteen) were born in the Bay Area and were therefore citizens of the US. (The Rodriguez’s oldest child and the Jimenez’s youngest son were the only two children born in Mexico.) The interview did not focus on the participants’ perceptions of the process of obtaining documentation, but becoming legal US residents was certainly a long, arduous process. Mrs. Fernandez, for example, received her permanent residency after living in San Miguel for two decades, just a year before the interview took place. She was able to obtain her permanent residency only after Mr. Fernandez became a naturalized US citizen, the only parent-participant who had done so. She commented that had the interview occurred a year earlier, before becoming a legal resident, she would have been a lot more nervous participating in this study.

Because parent-participants had lived in the US without legal documentation for so long, their legal status was a macro condition that severely impacted many behaviors. Families had to adapt to a way of life that was separate from the mainstream US society.
in order to find housing, employment, and performing simple errands, such as shopping
or taking the children to school. Using the support of their respective family networks,
family-participants had built a life that allowed them to have a life and raise a family that
reduced the risks of being deported and returning to their community of origin.

*Finding Employment Opportunities (Behavior).*

Nearly all of the parent-participants immigrated to the US in order to find
employment and relied upon their extended family network to find work. Mrs. Del
Monte explained some of the difficulties associated with working in the US as an
undocumented resident.

**Interviewer:** *Y ¿hay una manera que es más difícil vivir aquí que allá?*
(And is there a way that is more difficult to live here than there?)

**Mrs. Del Monte:** *Pues, es porque estamos indocumentados. Es difícil porque, pues, no…
no tiene uno, como lo puedo decir… a veces hay trabajo mejor pero
donde uno no tiene documentos… uno… no puede uno… no puede uno
aprovechar porque, por ejemplo, viene uno de allá y, y, y lo miran que
viene uno de allá y no tiene documentos. Parece… los… los trabajos
que le dan son trabajos pesados y que pagan bien poquito. Para
aprovechar es bien difícil. Pero en cambio, si tuviéramos los
documentos, como [inaudible] pudieramos aprovechar porque
no… no… no la gente pues no [inaudible] ya como… tuviera como
[inaudible] reclamar, como, los derechos, pues, [inaudible].*
(Well, it is because we are undocumented. It is difficult because, well,
no… one doesn’t have, how can I say it… Sometimes there is better
work but because one doesn’t have documents, … one… one can’t…
one can’t take advantage [of opportunities] because, for example, one
comes from there, and, and, and they see that he comes from there and
he doesn’t have documents. It seems the… the jobs that they give him
are hard jobs and they pay very little. In order to take advantage of
[opportunities], it is very difficult. But on the other hand, if we had
documents, like [inaudible] we could take advantage [or opportunities]
because the people wouldn’t… wouldn’t… well, they wouldn’t
[inaudible] already like… they had like [inaudible] to demand their
rights, so, [inaudible].*)
To avoid the exploitation described by Mrs. Del Monte, parents worked closely with family members whom they trusted, such as Mr. Del Monte. Some parents, like Mr. Ortega, were able to find other ways to receive some of the benefits, such as health insurance and paid vacations, that were available to most workers, despite being undocumented. Mr. Ortega obtained a false Social Security number in order to be hired at the factory where many members of his family work. Mr. Ortega’s father, who had worked at the factory for nearly twenty years, knew and trusted his employer enough to help them find jobs there. Whether the owner of the factory or Mr. Ortega’s boss was unaware of or willing to overlook his undocumented status was unclear, but the factory was a safe place to refer family members for work.

Once parents obtained legal status, they were able to find more secure employment with additional benefits. Mr. Fernandez, for example, worked in a factory and received health insurance, paid vacation, and a pension. Two years before the interview, he became a naturalized US citizen and will also receive Social Security benefits. Once Mr. Fernandez received his citizenship, Mrs. Fernandez obtained her permanent residency and began working at a retail-grocery store, where she could participate in the company’s profit-sharing plan.

A parent’s undocumented legal status impacted their children’s opportunities for integration into US society. Because parents relied upon the extended family network to find employment, they worked in jobs that have historically employed undocumented immigrants, such as the construction, restaurant, and manufacturing industries. During the workday, parents worked almost exclusively with other Latinos, and were isolated...
from the mainstream society of the US. By lacking access to an “insider,” or a member of the dominant culture, parents lacked assistance in making social, linguistic, or cultural connections to better integrate their family into the mainstream society of the US.

**Finding Housing (Behavior).**

Because all of the Mexican parent-participants entered the United States illegally, they could not use the same methods of finding housing as members of the dominant society. From my own personal experience, landlords typically require specific information before renting an apartment or house, such as credit history, paycheck stubs, and a rental history. Undocumented residents would have had difficulty producing these documents, and so they must rely on their extended family network to find housing free from these constraints. The Jimenez Family lived on the property of Mr. Jimenez’s brother in a garage that was converted to a living space. Mr. Rodriguez provided housing to his brother and his family who also lived in a converted garage behind the house. Mr. Ortega’s father lived in Mr. and Mrs. Ortega’s home. Even the Del Monte family, who rented a unit of a duplex, found housing through their extended family network.

Once the Rodriguez and Fernandez families became permanent residents in the US (or as in Mr. Ortega’s case, a false Social Security number), it became easier to purchase a home. Having legal status enabled these families to gain access to various financial services as well. The Fernandez, Rodriguez, and Ortega families had checking accounts, and, except for the Rodriguez family, had at least one credit card. Mr. Fernandez, however, commented that he disliked the idea of credit cards and used it as little as possible. The Jimenez and Del Monte families, who were undocumented, had no
access to financial services in the US and only used cash or money orders to pay their housing rent, to buy goods and services, and to pay utility bills.

Parents’ reliance upon the extended family network for housing meant that the extended family network determined in which community the family lived. In the case of the participants of this study, the extended family network was well established in San Miguel. The high concentration of Mexican immigrant family networks was significant in that it decreased the need for participants to integrate into the dominant US society; there was little motivation as the family’s needs were being met through the established family and cultural networks of San Miguel.

*Mobility and Travel (Behavior).*

I did not collect data concerning vehicles or drivers’ licenses, but I had a conversation with Mrs. Ortega sometime after the interview about a particular dilemma she was having at the time. She described the problem that her family was having with regards to transportation. Since both Mrs. Ortega and her husband were undocumented, neither had a drivers’ license. They did have a vehicle with a current license plate that they used for transportation around San Miguel, mostly for trips to the grocery store, taking the children to school, and running other errands. The registration plates had just expired, and her father-in-law was the only person in the house who could renew it. Unfortunately, he had returned to Mexico for a long visit. Mr. Ortega was still able to get to work everyday with his brothers, but Mrs. Ortega was having difficulty completing her responsibilities without using the vehicle.
Because of the underlying fear of deportation, all of the parent-participants of Mexican origin limited their travel within San Miguel. Families shopped in stores, ate in restaurants, attended church, and visited parks all within San Miguel. The only time family-participants mentioned traveling outside San Miguel was to go to their place of employment or to visit relatives in surrounding Bay Area communities. Only the Ortega and the Fernandez families traveled to other parts of California to visit relatives (Fresno and Southern California, respectively), and no family mentioned traveling to a destination location, to explore a new area, or outside of the state of California.

For undocumented parents, leaving San Miguel to drive to an unfamiliar community where their presence might attract unwanted attention increased the risk of deportation. San Miguel was a type of sanctuary in which undocumented Latinos could blend in, and where they could resolve unexpected conflicts, such as a car accident, without the risk of getting involved with law enforcement. Even those participants with legal status had developed a level of comfort in San Miguel and rarely ventured out of their familiar confines.

Parents’ undocumented status restricted travel outside of the United States as well. Mr. and Mrs. Del Monte had not returned to Mexico since they left in 1992. Mrs. Ortega had not returned to Colima since she left in 1989, nor has Mr. Ortega since he left in 1991. Mrs. Jimenez had not returned since 1999 when she and her husband decided to permanently relocate in the United States, and she returned to San Miguel with her three sons. Mr. Jimenez’s last visit to Mexico occurred in 2003, but he refused to make the trip again. On his last journey across the border, he walked for more than twenty-four hours
through the Arizona desert. Even for those parent-participants who gained legal status, travel to their communities of origin was rare. Just a few months before our interview, Mrs. Rodriguez returned to Michoacán for the first time since she left in 1994 only after she received her permanent residency. Mrs. Fernandez had been a legal US resident for two years, but had not returned since her departure in 1984.

Living in the US for an extended length of time as an undocumented immigrant had an effect on their children’s acculturative strategies in two ways. First of all, most children had never experienced the ranchito culture of their parents, and were unable to take advantage of the benefits associated with the intergenerational transmission of culture. Undocumented parents did not bring their children to visit their communities of origin because of the risks associated with returning illegally into the US. Since families did not visit their communities of origin, their children had never met some significant members of their family, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. In addition, they were missing the opportunity to participate in cultural activities of the ranchito and the associated processes of cultural transmission. The life of the ranchito could not be replicated in the US, and therefore a significant part of the participants’ cultural roots were not being passed down to the next generation. This made it difficult for children to maintain their cultural heritage and compromised their ability to avoid marginalization.

Secondly, because parents’ undocumented legal status restricted their travel and mobility to San Miguel, their children had few opportunities to experience the life in the greater US society. Children’s knowledge of the world was limited almost exclusively to the segregated Junípero Serra community. The possibility of integration into the
dominant culture was extremely difficult despite being born and raised in, and citizens of, the US. Student-participants were neither Mexican nor American, but Junípero Serra community natives.

Condition of Community Violence

All of the parent-participants of this study voiced serious concerns about the amount of violence in San Miguel, and reported that violence was one of the most negative aspects of life in the United States. Participants’ fear of community violence was a macro condition that affected participants’ child-rearing behaviors, primarily by being hyper-protective and vigilant. Mrs. Ortega commented on the violence that occurred in San Miguel near her house.

Interviewer: ¿Qué preocupaciones tiene con la seguridad aquí en la comunidad? (What concerns do you have about security here in the community?)
Mrs. Ortega: Aquí en la comunidad? Hubo un tiempo en que… había mucha gente… o como que… aquí mataron mucha gente cerquita… y en la madrugada. Pero por la [main street] estaba… una persona muerte y luego… para acá también han matado como tres o cuatro personas en un mes. (Here in the community? There was a time in which… there were a lot of people… or like that… here they killed a lot of people nearby… and in the early morning. But on the [main street] there was… a dead person and then… over here, too, they have killed like three or four people in one month.)

Interviewer: ¿Cómo se afecta la manera en que está criando sus hijos? (How did that affect the way that you take care of your children?)
Mrs. Ortega: Pues, se afecta porque le da a uno miedo que jueguen en la calle en frente. Casí nunca les dejo al frente. Les dejo puro acá atrás en la yarda. (Well, it affects it because makes one scared to let [the children] play in the street in front. I let them play only here in the backyard.)

Carmen: …in the backyard… that’s the only place where there’s grass, but then you don’t want us to hit your plants when we play soccer…
By only letting her children play in the house and in the backyard, Mrs. Ortega was able to protect her children from the violence in the community. Her house also served as a type of sanctuary for her nieces and nephews, as the Ortega family was the only family in San Miguel that owned a home; the rest of Mr. Ortega’s siblings rented apartments nearby.

Tico Jimenez and his older brother, who had spent a significant amount of time in their parents’ communities of origin on the border of Jalisco and Michoacán, commented on the effect that violence has upon their lives in San Miguel.

Tico: \( Y \text{ yo no más me voy al otro…al orto pueblo. Yo no más me voy. Caminando un poco y cruzando el río. } \)  
(And I just go to the other…to the other town. I just go. Walking a little and crossing the river.)

Interviewer: ¿Para conocer?  
(In order to know what it’s like?)

Tico: Para no más ir. Para conocer.  
(Just to go. To know what it’s like.)

Interviewer: ¿Prefieren Richmond o México?  
(Do you prefer Richmond or Mexico?)

Tico and Brother: México.  
(Mexico.)

Tico: Es que allá, libre. Podemos hacer lo que queremos.  
(It’s because there, free. We can do whatever we want.)

Brother: Y aquí no podemos salir y allá, sí…por tanto carros que hay.  
(And here, we can’t leave and there, yes…because of all the cars that there are.)

Here is yet another significant difference between the ranchito and San Miguel. Parents had to decide what parts of ranchito life they could transmit to their children and alter the manner in which it was passed on in order to survive. Letting their children roam around, as they had in the ranchito as children, was simply absurd given the level of
violence in San Miguel. Parents have modified their way of life to survive in a new, and in some ways strange, environment.

*Condition of Socioeconomic Status*

While families earned significantly more in the United States than they would have earned in their communities of origin, the cost of living in the Bay Area was much higher. Despite their hard work, family-participants still struggled to *pagar los biles*, or “to pay the bills.” All of the Mexican-origin fathers were the primary breadwinners of their family, and their wives did not work (n=3) or only worked part-time (n=2). Since fathers had spent the majority of their time in the US undocumented, spoke little English, and had received very little education, their earning potential had been somewhat limited.

The families’ incomes, while significantly greater than what they could earn in their communities of origin, was still considered to be relatively low according to the United States Department of Agriculture’s Income Eligibility Guidelines for the Child Nutrition Programs (2005). Under these guidelines, which also take into account the number of family members in the household, all of the students in this study qualified for free lunches, and were considered to be economically disadvantaged. These figures were consistent with the STAR report stating that 100% of the students at Junípero Serra qualified for free lunch, meaning that all of the students at Junípero Serra are economically disadvantaged.

Being economically disadvantaged, families could only afford housing in communities that had experienced decades of impoverished and violent conditions, and they had fewer opportunities to move to safer, more expensive areas outside of San
Miguel. Furthermore, a limited income reduced the family’s ability to travel to visit relatives in other parts of California, the US, or Mexico, even if all the members of the family had legal status. As a result, families were less likely to relocate into a more integrated, ethnically mixed neighborhood and travel outside of San Miguel, further isolating them from the mainstream US.

**Condition of Adopting New Hopes and Aspirations**

The hopes and aspirations parents had for their children—to be educated and bilingual—seemed to be influenced primarily by social and economic factors, and therefore had the characteristics of a macro condition. Certainly, parents wanted their children to communicate with family members, and Spanish was part of their children’s cultural heritage. While education had little importance in their communities of origin, parent-participants understood the social and economic importance of education in the US, and they wanted their children to be successful in life, whatever their *camino* (road). They also believed that employment opportunities would be greater for their children if they were bilingual. The issue of bilingualism was discussed within the context of education, and was not seen as a separate skill or asset.

Mr. Jimenez revealed that he talked to his boys about how hard work was in the *ranchito* to motivate them to get an education.

**Mr. Jimenez:** *Y pues, nos mandaban a nosotros. Nos ibamos a [inaudible] el camote, el maíz, a fertilizar el sorgo, todo eso ibamos para ganar un [inaudible]-ito. Eso es lo que les digo a estos niños, que se ponen a pensar en ganar sus estudios.*

(And, well, they sent us. We went to [inaudible] the sweet potatoes, the corn, to fertilize the sorghum, all of that we went to earn a little*
[inaudible]. That is what I tell these boys, that they start to think about earning their education.

When students were asked what they hoped to do after graduating from high school, all of the students said that they wanted to go to college so they could work be a doctor (3), a veterinarian (2), or a lawyer (1). Tico confessed that he really wanted to be a soccer player, but would get a soccer scholarship play at a college first. The students’ responses revealed their limited knowledge of career choices and opportunities in the US economy that a higher education affords. Furthermore, parents could only discuss in general terms about how they were going to support their children to achieve the goal of receiving a college education. Mrs. Ortega was the only parent-participant with a family member, her youngest sister, who had the experience of attending college and who could serve as a resource.

Spanish-Language Mass Media Consumption (Behavior)

All of the parent- and student-participants mentioned listening to music in Spanish or watching television in Spanish as a family activity. Families reported that they have cable or satellite television, and they watched telenovelas and Mexican League Soccer. Many of the movies that students watched on television were American movies dubbed in Spanish. Students who liked music in Spanish listened mostly to rock en español, reggaeton, or ranchero genres. While several students said they listen to the same music and watch the same movies in English as their peers, the proliferation of easily accessible popular Mexican media helps to transmit Mexican culture. This may have the effect of decreasing the younger generation’s motivation to experience ranchito culture, the culture of other ethnocultural groups, or the culture of the dominant society.
Participants’ consumption of Spanish-language mass media is certainly a macro behavior, since it is one that participants engage in on a social and cultural level. However, no one mentioned a particular macro condition that would influence this behavior. A lack of an official language of the United States coupled with US traditions of free speech and a capitalistic, free-market economy might be macro conditions that influenced, or allowed, this particular behavior unbeknownst to the participants.

*Adopting New Traditions and Celebrations (Behavior)*

All family-participants described celebrating holidays that are typical of the dominant US culture, such as the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving. Families presumably celebrated many of these holidays because they are federal or school holidays, and employers typically give their employees vacation time from work.

Other Mexican holidays have taken on new meaning in the US. *Cinco de mayo* has become a holiday in which residents of this cultural island express their pride in their Mexican identity rather than honor the Battle of Puebla. *Cinco de mayo* is a holiday that is typically observed only in the City of Puebla. Only a few students understood the original significance of *Cinco de mayo*; most thought it was the Mexican equivalent of the Fourth of July in the United States, celebrating Mexico’s Independence (which is celebrated throughout Mexico on September 16th).

I have had the opportunity to watch parents and children, including numerous former students of mine, line the street of the main thoroughfare of San Miguel as an informal, spontaneous parade takes place. Cars decorated in the tricolors of Mexico blaring various genres of popular Mexican music “cruise” the street, while onlookers
wave Mexican flags, and children proudly wear the green jersey of the Mexican national soccer team. *Cinco de mayo* exemplifies the modification of a parochial holiday, one that was given little attention in parents’ communities of origin, which has taken on a new cultural significance in San Miguel. For some Junípero Serra residents, the modification results in some negative behavior, as Mr. Fernandez describes.

Mr. Fernandez: Últimamente, *esta muy...hay mucha, este...violencia*. I mean, *por ejemplo, cuando hacen...el Cinco de mayo, una vez, sí ,se puso bien feo. No sé si sabían que los estaban viendo, pero sí los estaban viendo.* [inaudible] y llegó el [inaudible], y no, *este, [inaudible] porque vino toda la gente p’aca. Y aquí, como uno, dos, a la tercera cuadra de aquí...estaban peleando cerca de aquí también hasta la una o las dos. Sí, era bien feo. Es que, lo que pasa es que...mucha gente no saben ni lo que significa el Cinco de mayo. Fue la Batalla de Puebla. Pero aquí, los chiquillos, es que nadie les está diciendo nada. Ellos no más hacen este [inaudible] y todo.*

(Ultimately, it’s very...there is a lot of, this...violence. I mean, for example, when they do...Cinco de Mayo, one time, yes, it was very ugly. I don’t know if they knew that [the police] was watching them, but yes they were watching them. [inaudible], and no, this, [inaudible] because everyone came over here. And here, like one, two, at the third block from here...there were fighting close to here until one or two [o’clock]. Yes, it was very ugly. It’s that, what happens is that...a lot of people don’t even know the significance of Cinco de Mayo. It was the Battle of Puebla. But here, the young people, it’s that nobody is telling them anything. They just do this [inaudible] and everything.)

As Mr. Fernandez explained, the younger Junípero Serra residents do not understand the history and meaning of Cinco de Mayo because the older generation is not adequately transmitting Mexican culture to the next generation. As a result of this lack of respect and knowledge, this traditional holiday has degenerated into a violent display of ethnic identity.
Language Evolution (Behavior)

Even Spanish has begun to evolve on this island due to the influence of the dominant society’s primary language: English. Mexican-born parents and United-States-born children alike use the word *parquear*, or “to park” a car. The word *parquear*, however, is not a word that can be found in a Spanish language dictionary; the correct word is *estacionar*. *Fensa* is also a word used to describe a fence, when the correct word in Spanish is *cerca*. In addition, students frequently switched back and forth from English to Spanish, depending upon the audience, and sometimes in mid-sentence. As a dynamic communicative tool, Spanish in San Miguel had begun to evolve to better fit its surrounding environment.

Micro Conditions and Acculturative Behaviors

Micro conditions of individual participants’ personal lives affected their acculturation behaviors. Participants of Mexican origin had many micro conditions in common, such as having a low level of education attainment, and being raised in a poor, rural social class. Birth order was a common micro condition for student participants.

Condition of Education Attainment

As previously mentioned, parent-participants had an average of 4.6 years of formal education. They had attained a functional level of literacy in their native language; all parent-participants said they could read and write in Spanish. In contrast, Mr. and Mrs. Orellana had the highest level of education of all parent-participants with 9 years in their communities of origin. Mr. and Mrs. Orellana both completed *secundaria,*
and they had acquired enough English to take community college courses taught in English.

This level of educational attainment appeared to be a micro condition that impacted parent-participants’ abilities to acquire and communicate in English, a micro behavior. To learn English via formal educational means, such as through an adult education program, required advanced knowledge of the grammatical structure of one’s native language beyond the functional level. Mr. Fernandez was the only parent-participant of Mexican origin who attempted to learn English through formal education, and he also had attained one of the highest levels of education in his community of origin, completing primaria. In addition, of the ten parent-participants of Mexican origin, only Mr. Fernandez responded in English during some portions of the interview, affirming that he could read and write some in English. Mr. Fernandez had also spent the longest amount of time in the United States (thirty years) and was the only naturalized US citizen of Mexican origin in the study. Here, he commented on his experiences learning English.

Mr. Fernandez: Cuando trabajé en Los Angeles, trabajaba con unos patrones que eran Chicanos. Y entre ellos, casi hablaban puro inglés. Y dicen con el inglés, a lo mejor, con inglés, escuchandolo...te...te pega. Y yo, sí fui a la escuela, pues a la adult school, pero viven más a...pues como viven más...con más [inaudible]. Y luego empecé a platicar y platicar más con el maestro. Pues no sé si, pero sí entiendo bastante, bastante el inglés, pero también hablo.

When I worked in Los Angeles, I worked with some bosses that were Chicano. And among them, they almost spoke pure English. And they said that with English, perhaps, with English, listening to it…it…it sticks to you. And I, yes I went to school, well to the adult school, but they live more…well since they live more…with more [inaudible]. And then I began to chat and chat more with the teacher. Well, I don’t know
if, but yes I understand quite a bit, quite a bit in English, but I also speak.

Mr. Del Monte, Mr. Rodriguez, Mr. Ortega, and Mrs. Fernandez spoke a minimal amount of English, which was used primarily for work-related activities. Mrs. Del Monte, Mr. and Mrs. Jimenez, Mrs. Ortega, and Mrs. Rodriguez admitted they understood and spoke very little English.

Living in a community with such a high concentration of Latino immigrants, the participants of the study could work, shop, worship, and play without having to communicate in English. Not only were there few opportunities for parent-participants to speak English, but there were few opportunities to learn English. Finding a method for adults to learn English given their exceptionally low level of education was also a factor. As a result, learning English was not attainable or a priority for most parent-participants.

Condition of Being Raised in a Particular Social Class

The social class in which parent-participants were raised appeared to be a significant micro condition that influenced many of the parent-participants’ behaviors associated with cultural transmission. As parent-participants of Mexican-origin described in interviews, they grew up in poor, rural areas of Mexico with agriculture-based economies. While participants no longer practiced agriculture and ranching in San Miguel, they continued to pass on many cultural remnants to their children as the following sections will demonstrate.

Teaching of Chores and Responsibilities (Behavior).

Mexican parent participants still expected their children to contribute to the well being of the family through work, although the nature and intensity of these
responsibilities were much different. All of the students were responsible for various chores and were expected to help their parents with some of the household work by keeping their room picked up and helping to clean the house in some capacity, such as cleaning the table or washing laundry. Specific chores were not limited to traditional gender roles; boys were expected to sweep and wash the dishes, and girls were asked to take out the garbage. The girls helped their mothers cook meals, and only Mr. Fernandez’s oldest son, age twelve, was interested in learning how to work as a chef during his weekend catering jobs. Many parents asked the student participants to take care of their younger siblings or help them with their homework. Mrs. Del Monte described her experiences as a girl in Jalisco.

Mrs. Del Monte: Cuando yo era una niña, pues yo le ayudaba a mi mamá limpiar a la casa. (When I was a girl, well, I helped my mother clean the house.)
Zulema: Como yo. (Like me.)
Mrs. Del Monte: Sí [laughing]. Sí, como tú. Ibamos a barrer, (Yes [laughing]. Yes, like you. We went to sweep.)
Zulema: Cook…
Mrs. Del Monte: …a lavar los trastres. Yo, cuando me vine para acá, no sabía como cocinar. La abuelita de ella [pointing to Zulema] me enseñó, la madre de mi esposa. Ella es la que me enseñó a cocinar. Yo, me vine de la edad de catorce años, y desde catorce años que no voy. Ella me enseñó a cocinar. (...to wash the dishes. I, when I came here, I didn’t know how to cook. Her [pointing to Zulema] grandmother taught me, the mother of my husband. She is the one that taught me how to cook. I came at the age of fourteen, and since fourteen years ago that I don’t go. She taught me how to cook.)

Zulema quickly recognized that her chores were very similar to those that her mother did as a child. Parents did not provide monetary compensation or an allowance to
their children for working, either; children were just expected to contribute to the common good of the family through their completion of chores around the house. In fact, Mr. Fernandez seemed annoyed that his son expected to be paid for helping out with the catering business on the weekends instead of learning a useful skill that would enable him to contribute to the family in the future. After all, Mr. Fernandez’s father taught him how to cook, as he mentioned in the interview.

Parents taught their children how to complete work around the house in the same way that they learned as children—through experience. Adults provided the opportunity for work, and guided the children through the task until they were able to perform it well. Mrs. Ortega explained how she learned how to work as a girl in the fields of the Central Valley in California.

Mrs. Ortega: *Yo le ayudaba a mi mamá en las vacaciones a trabajar en la uva, fue la naranja, el olivo,*
(I helped my mom during vacations working with grapes, it was with oranges, olives.)

Interviewer: *Entonces trabajaba con todos los adultos.*
(So you worked with all the adults.)

Mrs. Ortega: *Sí. Trabajaba nada más en el summer cuando no había escuela.*
(Yes. I just worked in the summer when there wasn’t school.)

Interviewer: *Y ¿cómo aprendiste como hacer los trabajos allí?* (And how did you learn how to do the jobs there?)

Mrs. Ortega: *Me decía mi mamá cuando yo estaba trabajando. Me decía, vamos a trabajar, y allí te enseñó como hacerlo.*
(My mom told me when I was working. She told me, let’s go work, and there she told you how to do it.)

While some kinds of work that parents taught their children were similar, and the process of teaching them was the same, the nature of the work was much different, as Mrs. Ortega continued to explain.
Interviewer: ¿Qué tipo de cosas les enseñas a tus hijos que aprendiste tú cuando eras niña? O sea, dijiste que en México, aprendiste como hacer pan. ¿Sabe Carmen como hacer pan?
(What kind of things do you teach you children that you learned when you were a girl? I mean, you said that in Mexico, you learned how to make bread. Does Carmen know how to make bread?)

Mrs. Ortega: No. La pongo a limpiar la yarda, limpiar su cuarto, a recoger las cosas que están tiradas, Carmen me echa, me ayuda a echar la ropa en la lavadora como en el weekend, el fin de semana. ¡Son bien flojos [laughing]!
No. I have her clean the yard, clean her room, to pick up the things that are thrown [on the floor]. Carmen puts me, she helps me put the clothes in the washing machine like on the weekend, the weekend. They are very weak and lazy [laughing]!)

Carmen: ¡Sí!
Yeah!

Mrs. Ortega: No quieren hacer nada. Se cansan rápido.
(They don’t want to do anything. They get tired quickly.)

Carmen: Yeah! I need to do homework.

Mrs. Ortega: Cuando lo hace, esta cansada. Ven a tu cama [laughing], estas cansada.
(When she does it, she’s tired. Come to your bed [laughing], you’re tired.)

In fact, studying was considered to be a major responsibility that parents placed on their children. According to many parents, their children’s main job was to study so that they could go to college. Mrs. Ortega thought that her children were flojos because they were not used to doing the hard work that she did when she was a child. Instead, her children’s main job was to do well in school, which was the most important of their responsibilities—a very different vision of education than what was adhered to in the ranchito.

It was true that very few children of San Miguel had experienced manual labor in the same way as the parents who grew up in the ranchito. Mrs. Jimenez seemed proud to
describe Tico’s experiences with hard labor during his visits to her community of origin in Jalisco during summer vacations.

Interviewer:  *La forma de trabajar de un niño allá es bien diferente que acá, ¿no?* (The way of working of a child there is very different that here, right?)

Mrs. Jimenez: *Pregúntale a Tico* [laughing],  ¿Cómo lleguen, los niños que se van a trabajar en el campo al chiles? (Ask Tico [laughing], How do they arrive, the boys that go working in the field with the chiles?)

Tico: *Que “grossed out.”* [laughing]

Mrs. Jimenez: *En México, desde casi como caminan, desde de… los que se van a trabajar a cortar el chile porque se van ahorita y que se van a cortar el tomate, a cortar chile, ahorita que… este trabajo que hay ahorita p’alla en el rancho, y dice que llegan “grossed out.” Es que caminan con el pies abierto desde, ¿por cuánto ganaban? Diez pesos.* (In México, since they almost walk, since… those that go to work to cut chiles because they go now and they go to cut tomato, to cut chile, now that… this work that there is now over there in the ranchos, and he says that they arrive “grossed out.” It’s that they walk with their legs open since… How much do they earn? Ten pesos [approximately US$1].)

* I tried to ask several clarifying questions during the interview about the phrase “grossed out” which the Jimenez family found very humorous. After reviewing my field notes and listening to the audio tapes, I am still not certain that this is the phrase that they used, nor is the context entirely clear to me.

A lively discussion ensued among the family, and especially between Tico and his older brother, around the amount of money one earned working in the chile fields.

Indeed, Tico and his brother identified equally with the cultures of San Miguel, where they were growing up, and the rural cultural roots of their parents.

*Dependence Upon Extended Family Networks (Behavior).*

Parent-participants immigrated to the United States for economic opportunity, but they usually followed in the footsteps of an older sibling or cousin. This extended family—including siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews—created a
support network upon which parent-participants relied for housing and employment. It also created a way in which cultural traditions could be maintained through family celebrations and gatherings. This reliance upon extended family mimicked the same loyalty to family that participants experienced in their poor, rural, Mexican communities of origin.

Families tended to immigrate to San Miguel because the husband already had siblings in the area. Mr. Del Monte’s (four), Mr. Rodriguez’s (four), Mr. Jimenez’s (one), Mr. Ortega’s (five), and Mr. Fernandez’s (three) siblings lived within short distances of their homes and visited with them frequently. Mrs. Fernandez was the only mother with siblings in San Miguel (three). Mr. Jimenez and Mrs. Jimenez had other siblings (five and two, respectively) that lived in the Bay Area within an hour of their home with whom they visited frequently. While parents had other siblings that lived in other areas of California that they visited once or twice a year, it was the “core” family network within San Miguel that supported family-participants.

Four of the five Mexican participant-families, for example, had family members living on the same property. Both of Mrs. Fernandez’s parents were living at home (until the death of her father). Mr. Ortega’s father and a brother were living with his family. The Jimenez family lived in the garage of Mr. Jimenez’s brother, and the Mr. Rodriguez had a brother whose family was living in his garage.

The family network served as an employment pool as well. Mr. Ortega’s father was the insider who helped his sons, including Mr. Ortega, and nephews find jobs in the same factory where he worked. Both Mr. Rodriguez and Mr. Del Monte worked in
construction with brothers. Mr. Fernandez’s father helped him to obtain work in several restaurants when he was younger. The importance of the extended family network was significant within the context of participants’ legal status, which has been discussed in a previous section.

Teaching of Religion and Values (Behaviors).

All of the parent-participants grew up as Roman Catholics in their communities of origin, and continued to practice Catholicism with their children. Families attended services in Spanish every week, or at least once every other week, at one of the three Catholic Churches in San Miguel. Parents were committed to making sure their children received the first four sacraments: baptism (at birth), penance, first communion (both around age 10), and confirmation (around age 16). Families celebrated some of the religious holidays including Christmas, Easter, and the Feast Day of the Virgin de Guadalupe. Religious holidays provided families with opportunities to spend time together, to participate in cultural activities, and to contribute to the formation of their children’s values and beliefs.

Preparation of Food (Behavior).

Food is a daily, fundamental aspect of any culture. All of the Mexican-origin mothers reported that they cook exclusively Mexican food at home, and all of the students enthusiastically said that they love the food that their family cooks during the holidays and other celebrations. Students even listed their favorite dishes: tamales, menudo, posole, agua fresca, tacos de carne asada, and carnitas. While both boys and girls enjoy the home-cooked cuisine, girls have the opportunity to learn how to prepare
these dishes as they help their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers in the kitchen. When I asked Mrs. Ortega about the food she prepares in her home, Carmen enthusiastically names a favorite food that her mother failed to mention.

Mrs. Ortega: *Posole, tamales, sopes…*
Carmen: ¡*Tacos! Y enchiladas…*
Mrs. Ortega: *No les gustan la comida de la calle, como China, la macaroni – no les gustan. Sólo comida mexicana.*
(They don’t like the food from the street, like Chinese, macaroni – they don’t like it. Only Mexican food.)

In the agricultural-based *ranchito*, food was an integral part of daily life, not only in its preparation, but in its cultivation as well. Families worked to produce much of the food that they ate, from field to table. While families no longer cultivate their own food in San Miguel, preparing and cooking food is still an integral part of everyday life. Students had tremendous pride in traditional Mexican food, and it has been an important element of preserving the culture of the *ranchito* in San Miguel.

*Condition of Cultural Identification*

While some cultural behaviors were associated specifically with the life of an agricultural-based society, family-participants described many cultural behaviors that were characteristic of Mexican culture in general. Some of these micro behaviors occurred in the privacy of participants’ own homes, while others occurred within the socio-cultural context of San Miguel; in other words, numerous families were practicing the same individual cultural behaviors. These expressions of cultural identification were permitted to occur by the dominant culture, but not necessarily encouraged.
Maintaining Traditional Holidays and Celebrations (Behavior).

Parents described celebrating very similar holidays and celebrations in their communities of origin. Community festivities revolved around numerous Catholic holidays, and each ranchito honored its own feast day. I asked parents if they continued to celebrate the feast day of their community of origin, and their most common response was, “Ya no” (not any more). Parents specifically mentioned La Fiesta de la Virgin de Guadalupe on December 12th, a Catholic holiday celebrated specifically in Mexico. The Feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe is a major religious holiday that seemed to have equal importance with Christmas and Semana Santa (Holy Week), and whose image has become a popular symbol of Mexican heritage and identity. Mrs. Del Monte described the Feast of Guadalupe that her community of origin celebrated on January 12th.

Mrs. Del Monte: Allí se celebran… esta…esta capillita, allí tiene la Virgin de Guadalupe. Allí cada 12 de enero, le hacen una fiesta a la virgin. Esta capillita esta en como un cerro. Le llaman El Cerrito allá. Cada 12 de enero la gente va y se visita la virgin y hacen como un tipo de feria… la gente va y comen allá, hasta [inaudible]. Lleva la comida, convivir con la familia, y van a [inaudible] a la virgin, disfrutan la fiesta. (There, they celebrate… this… this… little chapel, where there is the Virgin of Guadalupe. There, each 12 of January, they make a festival for the Virgin. It is called The Little Hill over there. Every January 12th, the people go and visit the Virgin and make a kind of festival… the people go and eat there, until [inaudible]. They take food, spend time with the family, and they go to [inaudible] the Virgin, to enjoy the festival.)

Interviewer: Entonces fuiste con toda la familia allá? Marcharon arriba? (So, you went with your whole family there? You walked up?)

Mrs. Del Monte: Sí, hacen como un tipo de [inaudible] para la Virgin [inaudible], para la Virgin de Guadalupe. Es un pueblito muy fiestoso. Hacen muchas fiestas. (Yes, they made a kind of [inaudible] for the Virgin [inaudible], for the Virgin of Guadalupe. It is a very festive little town. They make a lot of parties.)
While most of the families had a picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe in their home, only one family celebrated the Feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe at their church parish. Families continued to celebrate the same religious holidays that the mainstream US society celebrated, especially through vacations from school and work that occurred around the holidays of Christmas and Easter. Families did not mention celebrating the major Mexican political or historical holidays, such as Independence Day, the Mexican Revolution, or any of the religious feast days that parents celebrated in their communities of origin. Only Zulema Del Monte mentioned celebrating *El día de los muertos* (Day of the Dead) and *El día de los Tres Reyes* (Three King’s Day).

While families did not celebrate the Mexican holidays, they still continued the tradition of making *muchas fiestas* (a lot of parties), as Mrs. Del Monte commented. Families planned huge *fiestas* that accommodated the large extended family and friends to celebrate major religious holidays, when children received one of the sacraments, or other traditional American holidays. They described large, elaborate feasts lasting an entire day that included as many extended family members as possible. Religious events, such as baptisms and first communions, are celebrated more formally and include friends as well as the extended family. Most families planned to honor the tradition of celebrating their daughter’s fifteenth birthday, or *Quinceañera*, an event that incorporates the financial support of the extended family as well as other members of the community. The *Quinceañera* celebration typically begins with a special church service, followed by a huge party with food, dancing, and live *mariachi* music.
The celebration of holidays always involved the extended family, and provided an excellent environment for culture to be passed on to the younger generation. Children witnessed and assisted in the preparation of the fiesta, especially the food, learned about the importance of family and religious occasions, and had opportunities to extend their knowledge of their families of origin through family stories. In a way, the cultural roots of Latino immigrants lived through family celebrations.

*Participating in Family Activities (Behavior).*

Participants described taking part in very similar family activities. During the weekend, participants talked about activities that were within San Miguel or the Bay Area, like having a picnic or a *barbacoa* (barbeque) at a local park or going to *la pulga* (flea market). To the extent possible, families participated in activities that were similar to those in which they would have otherwise participated in their communities of origin. Mexican family-participants only mentioned traveling outside of San Miguel to visit relatives within the state of California, possibly to other cultural islands like San Miguel. They traveled directly to their relatives’ homes and did not take side trips. None of the Mexican-origin parents mentioned participating in activities or exploring areas outside of San Miguel.

*Leisure and Recreation Activities (Behavior).*

Nearly all of the leisure time that parents spent in the *ranchito* took place outdoors. In contrast, most of the students’ responses included indoor activities, and none of the student-participants reported engaging in the same leisure activities that their parents described. Students’ most common responses were watching television, listening
to music, watching movies, and playing video games. “Playing outside” was a general response given by four of the student-participants.

Since many of the television programs students watched and the music they listened to were in Spanish, students were being exposed to a form of cultural transmission, although its contents reflect the greater Mexican and Latino culture, not necessarily the culture of the ranchito. In San Miguel, parents frequently bought their children toys that their parents’ could not afford. Creating your own toys out of whatever material that a child could find was something that parents did as children in the ranchito because they had nothing else. Parents came to the US to escape the poverty of the ranchito, and they saw no reason to teach their children how to make the same toys in San Miguel. On the other hand, the imaginative and creative elements associated with such resourcefulness was a part of the ranchito culture that was not being passed on to their children’s generation.

Some cultural practices in San Miguel had taken on a new significance, such as fútbol, or soccer. None of the parents of Mexican-origin reported playing fútbol as children, but it was the only specific outdoor activity that students mentioned during the interviews. In addition, all of the students named their favorite professional soccer team that participated in the La Liga Mexicana (Mexican Soccer League), which included teams such as the Chivas, América, Pumas, and Cruz Azul. Parents also had an allegiance towards a particular Mexican soccer team or the Mexican national team (which plays in the World Cup), but no one mentioned having this allegiance as a child. For the
Mexican immigrants and their children, watching *fútbol mexicana* was more than a family activity; it had become an expression of their “Mexicanness.”

*Students’ Flexible Use of Language (Behavior).*

All six of the student-participants reported communicating in English and Spanish, depending upon with whom they were speaking. Tico explained his language use at school, and in doing so, switched from one language to the other as he commonly did during the interview.

Interviewer: When you’re with your friends, what language do you speak?
Tico: Spanish. Sometimes English. When I’m with, uh, Spanish *con mis amigos, y ingles con mis amigas*. O a veces en español *con mis amigas*.
(Spanish. Sometimes English. When I’m with, uh, Spanish with my friends, and English with my [female] friends. Or sometimes in Spanish with my [female] friends.)

Interviewer: ¿Porque sus amigas no hablan español?
(Because your female friends don’t speak Spanish?)
Tico: *No, ellas prefieren el ingles.*
(No, they prefer English.)

All of the student participants, however, spoke with their parents in Spanish, used both English and Spanish when communicating with their siblings, and primarily used English at school. Only two student-participants showed any preference for one language or the other, although both students had the capacity to communicate well in both languages. Flor felt more comfortable speaking with her sisters in English, while Tico preferred to communicate with his brothers in Spanish.

*Condition of Birth Order*

The birth order of student-participants, a micro condition, appeared to have an impact upon micro behaviors, such as academic achievement. In contrast to the families
in the ranchito, parent-participants had much smaller families (mean=3.8), ranging from three to five children. Three of the student-participants were the oldest sibling in their family: Zulema, Carmen, and Carlos. The other three student-participants, Flor, Tico, and Fabiola, appeared second in the birth order of their siblings. None of the student-participants were the youngest of their siblings.

No data was collected regarding what impact this had upon student-participants in their home life, but it could be significant for two reasons. First, in a typical family in the ranchito, the older children were given the responsibility of taking care of their younger siblings, teaching them how to complete chores around the house, and assisted adults in completing significant jobs in the house or fields. In San Miguel, older siblings were also expected to take care of younger siblings and teach them how to complete tasks around the house. Essentially, older siblings are responsible for providing adequate amounts of mediation to their siblings. Secondly, the older children could have had the opportunity to receive greater amounts of Mediation from their parents at a young age without having to compete with younger siblings for attention and to receive mediation from their parents.

The Orellana Family—Some Differences

The actual interview with the Orellana family was very different than the other interviews of the study. Mr. and Mrs. Orellana felt more comfortable conducting the interview at the Junípero Serra school library instead of in their home. In addition, they were the only couple that had the ability to conduct a substantial portion of the interview in English. They appeared to be excited about the questions I asked and provided very
detailed and elaborate responses. Some of questions evolved into lengthy discussions, which extended the interview time to just over three hours.

Unlike the other families of the study, the Orellana family emigrated from a major city Central America—San Salvador, El Salvador. Mr. Orellana completed seventh grade, and began playing a significant role in managing their family’s general store. Often, his father would give him $5000 to go out and purchase items for the store. Mr. Orellana came from a very small family. He was twelve years younger than his only brother, and his family lived above the store with both of his grandmothers. Neither of his grandfathers was alive, and he had no aunts, uncles, or cousins.

As the political situation in El Salvador became increasingly difficult, he did not want to be forced to join the Army. In 1979, he used the political environment as an opportunity to immigrate to the United States for a better future. He took a bus to Tijuana via Mexico City, and then illegally crossed the border for two hours with a Salvadoran guide. While living with an uncle, he attended high school for five years but never graduated. During this time, the Civil War began in El Salvador, and his mother and brother came to the United States. He became a temporary resident during the Reagan Administration, and then later a permanent resident. After fifteen years, he was unhappy with life in the United States and returned to El Salvador.

Mrs. Orellana also came from a small family with only a younger brother. When she was nine, her parents divorced, and her father left. They received little support from extended family members who lived outside of the city, but they visited them from time to time. Mrs. Orellana met Mr. Orellana shortly after he returned to El Salvador. She
was sixteen at the time, and had recently finished secundaria. A few years later, they were married and began raising a family; both of their two children were born in El Salvador. After several years, Mr. and Mrs. Orellana decided that their children would have more opportunities in the United States. Mr. Orellana moved back to the United States as a naturalized citizen, and Mrs. Orellana became a permanent resident. Mrs. Orellana is the only parent-participant of this study who entered the United States legally. Carlos, the older of their two children, was a student participant of this study and began second grade in the United States.

Both parents have attended community college in the Bay Area to receive technical training for employment opportunities, and Mrs. Orellana needed only a few more credits to receive her Associates degree. Mr. Orellana worked in a nursing home for many years, and Mrs. Orellana has had various retail jobs. They described taking many trips around California just to learn more about the state, and they particularly enjoyed eating out in the various ethnic restaurants in the Bay Area. Mr. and Mrs. Orellana both expressed dissatisfaction with the attitudes of immigrants in San Miguel as well as the mainstream US society. Mr. Orellana felt that the pressures of being an immigrant were stressful, even though he was now a citizen, and he felt he and Mrs. Orellana had to work very hard “sólo para pagar los biles” (just to pay the bills). For these reasons, they were seriously considering relocating their family back to El Salvador.

While the Orellana family and the other family-participants of Mexican origin shared many cultural similarities, their backgrounds varied in ways that allowed Mr. and
Mrs. Orellana to integrate into the larger US society in ways that the parent-participants of Mexican origin could not. Mr. Orellana’s family owned a large general store, which afforded them a middle-class lifestyle in San Salvador. The small size of his family meant that they needed fewer resources to provide the basic necessities, and could use their financial resources for other purposes. Although Mrs. Orellana’s family struggled, supported by a single-mother, Mrs. Orellana still attended a private school in El Salvador. Education was an important priority in her family in San Salvador, and continued to be a priority, as she was the only participant earning a higher education degree (Associates of Arts degree). Finally, Mr. and Mrs. Orellana grew up in an urban environment that had a culture that was very different than that of a rural town or ranchito. In many ways, the culture of San Salvador has more in common with the culture of San Miguel than some rural areas of El Salvador.

The political fact that Mr. Orellana was Salvadoran made a difference as well. He was able to obtain legal status easily because of the political climate during his time of migration to the US. As a result, Mr. Orellana had access to greater employment possibilities, more contact with members of the dominant US society, and more opportunities to develop his English communication skills. Because he obtained legal status early in his immigration experience, he was able to travel to his community of origin more frequently, and even made the decision to return to El Salvador, marry, and start a family. Despite these differences, the Orellana family participated in similar family activities, spoke the same language, and shared the same basic values as other Latino families in this study.
Student’s Cultural Identity

Tico Jimenez and his older brother were the only student-participants that traveled to their parents’ communities of origin on a regular basis. They talked about the adventures they have had during their summers in rural Mexico along the Jalisco-Michoacán border. They rode their bikes in the mountains, swam in the nearby river, killed snakes, played marbles and video games, and competed in soccer games where the losers had to buy Cokes. At the end of a long day, Tico recalled the evenings.

Tico:  *Y en la noche, like at, yeah, like at eight, nos bañamos, y luego we go to la plaza. A veces, damos vueltas, platicamos con nuestras amigas*.
    (And at night, like at, yeah, like at eight, we bathe, and then we go to the plaza. Sometimes, we go around, chatting with our [female] friends.)

Tico and his brother also worked and had chores to do around their aunt and uncle’s house. Here, they describe some of their chores.

Tico:  *
*Sí, ayudamos a mi tía a lavar los trastres.*
(Yes, we help my aunt wash the dishes.)

Brother:  *
Le ayudamos a mi tío. [inaudible] como… yo y mi primo nos levantamos tempranito para ayudarle, como… Él tiene un pedacito de terreno [inaudible] labor y sembra cada año frijol, y vamos y…nos levantamos yo y mi primo temprano y vamos a… ¿Cómo se dice? Cortar – no, sacar el pasto de la tierra para que no infecte el frijol.
(We help my uncle. [inaudible] like… Me and my cousin get up really early in order to help him, like… He has a little piece of land [inaudible] work and he plants beans every year, and we go, and…we get up me and my cousin early and we go to… How do you say it? Cut – no, take out the grass from the ground so that it doesn’t infect the beans.)

Mr. and Mrs. Jimenez expected their sons to work and contribute to the family at home in San Miguel, and Tico’s aunts and Uncles in Mexico expected the same thing from them as well. In Mexico, Tico had the opportunity to experience the same sense of responsibility, but within the rural cultural context with which his parents grew up, albeit
Cultural Transmission

Tico and his siblings understood where their parents came from, their rural roots. During the interview, each family member was able to participate in the discussion, to dispute another’s story, to add to it, or to clarify the details. The boys had a greater understanding of their rural Mexican roots, and this contributed to a stronger cultural identity.

Tico and his brother explained how they learned to prepare a pig for a party. While this is a common cultural activity in Mexico, the possibility of replicating this experience in San Miguel seems highly unlikely. Nevertheless, the uncle used the same process to teach his nephews how to kill a pig as Tico’s parents used to teach their children the meaning of work and family responsibility in San Miguel—primarily through experience, and by giving the boys the responsibility of performing the easier, more basic elements of the activity.

Tico: *Pelamos el puerco. Cuando hacen una fiesta, matan a un puerco y lo pelamos.* (We skin the pig. When they make a party, they kill a pig and we skin it.)

Brother: *Yo he matado uno.* (I have killed one.)

Interviewer: *Y ¿cómo lo matan?* (And how do they kill it?)

Tico: *Lo metimos un cuchillo en el corazón. Lo dejamos a morir, y luego lo quitamos todos los pelos y el cuero.* (We stick a knife in its heart. We let it die, and then we take off all the hair and the skin.)

Interviewer: *Y ¿quién les enseñó a hacer eso?* (And who taught you how to do that?)

Brother: *Donde llegamos, es con un tío... un tío y el papá de mi tía. Este... Nos enseña y ayudamos a ellos.* (Where we arrive, it’s with an uncle... an uncle and the father of my aunt. Um... They show us and we help them.)

Mrs. Jimenez: *Él mata el puerco y ellos le ayudan. Ellos agarran las patas y él lo mata.* (He kills the pig and they help. They grab the legs and he kills it.)
Not only did Tico’s uncle use the same process of transmitting culture as his parents in San Miguel, but the cultural activity itself was also the same as his parents’ experiences growing up. Tico’s experiences in Mexico contributed to his cognitive development associated with the mediated learning process of preparing a pig to eat, and at the same time contributed to his cultural identity—his connection with the rural life of ranchitos in Mexico.

Tico’s experiences in Mexico were unique among the student-participants of the study. Tico and his brother usually returned to Jalisco and Michoacán with their uncle once a year. Flor had been to Michoacán twice—the first time as a small child, and the second during the summer before the interview occurred.

Carmen, Zulema, and Fabiola, however, had never been to Mexico. Certainly, they had not experienced the ranchito in the same way as Tico, but more disheartening is the fact that many of the students had never met significant family members in their lifetime. Zulema, for example, spoke with her maternal grandparents on the phone several times a month, but she has never met them. She described how she felt about living in San Miguel.

Interviewer: How do you feel about living in San Miguel?
Zulema: Umm, good. I feel like…sometimes I feel, like, lonely because I don’t know Mexico – like I feel like I want to go to Mexico. It’s my home here, but it doesn’t really feel like home.

Carmen expressed similar sentiments.

Interviewer: Have you ever wanted to go to Mexico?
Carmen: Yea, I really want to go because everyone is always telling stories about Mexico, and I’ve never been. I feel like I’m missing out.
Even at the age of eleven, these students felt disconnected with their ancestral and cultural roots. Student-participants had not spent time with people in their family who could pass on to them knowledge about their rural backgrounds. Although parents were raising their children with an awareness of their Mexican heritage, the students who had not experienced life in the ranchito felt part of their Mexican-ness was missing. Fabiola told me during the interview that her grandmother, Alma, was going to take her to the ranchito in Michoacán for the first time during the Christmas holidays. Her cousin was getting married, and her cousin who lived in St. Louis, Missouri, was going to receive her Primera Comunión. Fabiola was clearly excited, and talked about all the things she was looking forward to: she couldn’t wait to go to the wedding, to meet all of her cousins, to stay in her grandmother’s house, and to see the ranchito where her mom grew up.

Student Assessments

Four of the student-participants had scored well on two assessments, the CELDT and the ELA CST, because they had done well enough to be classified, or qualified to be classified, as fluent in English. Results from other standardized tests showed that all of the student-participants performed at least grade level in Math, and half scored Advanced. The Spanish assessment results were also very high, especially when taking into consideration that students had received very little instruction in Spanish since the third grade. On the Spanish Math assessment, the lowest student scored in the 85th percentile, and the students that scored Advanced on the Math CST also scored in the 90th percentile. Spanish Reading and Language scores had a broader range, but the lowest score was in the 54th percentile, and the highest in the 94th percentile. Students essentially
performed at least at grade level in Spanish, and their performance on the English assessments increased (see Appendix E). I have briefly described each student’s scores below.

**Zulema Del Monte**

Zulema had the greatest gain of 132 points in the class on the Mathematics CST, moving from Basic to Advanced. No test data for the Spanish Assessment of Basic Education (SABE) was available, but Zulema scored in the 94th percentile in both Reading and Math on the Aprenda.

**Flor Rodriguez**

Flor also scored in the Advanced level on the Mathematics CST in 2005 and 2006. On the SABE, she has consistently scored in the 90th percentile in Reading Comprehension, Language, and Mathematics. Her Aprenda scores were also high: 86th percentile in Reading and 91st in math.

**Tico Jimenez**

Tico also improved from Basic to Proficient on the Mathematics CST. Tico scored near or above the 70th percentile on the Reading Comprehension and Mathematics SABE tests as well as on the Aprenda subtests.

**Carmen Ortega**

Among her classmates, Carmen had the highest Mathematics CST score and a gain of 115 points. No test data for the SABE was available, but on the Aprenda she scored well above the 80th percentile in Reading and Language, and in the 99th percentile in Math. She also improved from Basic to Proficient on the Mathematics CST.
**Fabiola Fernandez**

Fabiola showed significant growth over a two-year period. In third grade, Fabiola scored Far Below Basic on the ELA CST, which is in the lowest performance group. In fifth grade, Fabiola reached a score of Proficient—an increase of 107 points and three performance levels. She also scored near or above the 60th percentile on the Reading Comprehension and Language SABE and Aprenda tests, and above the 80th percentile on the SABE and Aprenda Mathematics tests.

**Carlos Orellana**

On the ELA CST, Carlos had the highest point increase (110) of the student-participants over a two-year period. In 2005 and 2006, Carlos scored Proficient on the Mathematics CST. He scored at or above the 70th percentile on all of the SABE and Aprenda subtests: Reading Comprehension, Language, and Mathematics.

When the Higher Quadruple Gap profile is compared to FEP students (see Appendix B), one can see that the percentage of both I-FEP (59%) and R-FEP students (63%) who score at Proficient or Advanced in ELA is in the same range. In fact, the percentage of R-FEP students is eleven percentage points higher than English Only students (52%), equal to White and Non-economically Disadvantaged students (63%), and only two percentage points below students whose parents are college graduates.

A similar picture emerges when looking at the Math CST. The percentage of both I-FEP and R-FEP students is within the range of the higher Quadruple Gap student profile percentages. However, the percentage of R-FEP students at Proficient and Advanced is the greatest (70%)—sixteen percentage points higher than English Only
students (54%), and even two percentage points higher than students whose parents are college graduates (68%).

When looking at the results of FEP students at Junípero Serra, I-FEP students performed equally as other I-FEP students in the state of California (see Appendix F). R-FEP students at Junípero Serra, however, outperform other R-FEP students across California. These finding show that both I-FEP and R-FEP students have an ability to transcend the Lower Quadruple Achievement Gap, but R-FEP students score even higher than I-FEP students, suggesting that R-FEP students in a bilingual program benefit from receiving instruction in their primary language.
Chapter 5:

Discussion

This ethnographic qualitative study attempted to broaden the selection of investigative topics about Latino families beyond the most frequent topics of substance abuse and delinquency as suggested by Chun and Akutsu (2003). By analyzing data gathered through ethnographic interviews, assessments, and my own observations through two major theoretical frameworks—Berry’s acculturation strategies (2003) and Feuerstein’s Mediated Learning Experience (2003)—I attempted to address the following question: “In which ways does the transmission of the parents’ culture of origin to their children influence the academic achievement of their children?” Indeed, it appears as though families live segregated from the larger US society, but the manner in which they have modified their culture and pass it down to the younger generations enhance their children’s cognitive modifiability and ability to learn. The students in this study have displayed highly adaptive, intelligent behaviors that have contributed to their academic success.

Living on a Cultural Island

Family-participants have established new roots in a community that can be described as a cultural island, a micro-society inhabited by a high concentration of immigrants who share common culture and experiences. Using Berry’s (2003) acculturative framework, this cultural island has been established by mutual separation on the part of immigrants from rural Mexico and segregation by the dominant US society.
Segregation by the Larger Society

When politicians debate immigration reform that aims to bring “millions of illegal immigrants in our country out of the shadows” (Bush 2007), they are referring to the participants of this study who initially immigrated to the US without any kind of documentation. President George W. Bush acknowledged the dilemma that undocumented immigrants face in a press conference, stating, “Workers who seek only to earn a living end up in the shadows of American life—fearful, often abused and exploited. When they are victimized by crime, they are afraid to call the police, or seek recourse in the legal system” (Bush 2004).

Several factors contribute to the involuntary segregation of immigrants from the dominant society. Berry’s (2003) description of the acculturation strategy of segregation accurately portrays the larger US society’s relationship with undocumented Latino immigrants. Because of their undocumented status, families were forced to use alternative ways of obtaining housing, finding employment, and carrying out daily tasks in order to establish new roots in the US while minimizing the risk of deportation. In fact, parents rarely left San Miguel except to travel to work, which meant their children had seen little of the world outside of San Miguel.

This segregation of immigrants meant that participants had few opportunities to seek relationships, or integrate, with members of the larger society. Learning about US culture through contact with “Americans,” or members of the dominant society, became a significant challenge for these “illegal aliens” living in its shadows. Their inability to
participate in the larger US society is compounded by the fact that these residents have difficulty learning the dominant language, English. There are numerous factors that contribute to this obstacle: participants’ extremely low level of formal education, their segregation from the dominant society, and the cultural values that they place on work and family instead of on continuing education. Despite being segregated, parents lived comfortably on the cultural island, especially compared to what their lives would have been had they stayed in their communities of origin.

Separation from the Larger Society

While parents’ undocumented legal status prevents them from participating in the dominant U.S. society, many other factors contributed toward their voluntary separation from it as well. Parent-participants, who essentially immigrated to the United States as economic refugees, chose to immigrate in order to find work so that their children may have a better future. Integration into US society is not necessarily their own goal, although integration is a goal they hold for their children.

The cultural island, with its large Mexican immigrant population, certainly met the criteria of a community with a high level of vitality, as described by Bourhis (2008). As of 2006, an estimated twelve million undocumented immigrants resided in the United States, the overwhelming majority being Latino (Passel, 2006), many of them settling in communities like San Miguel. Since many rural Mexican immigrants had settled in San Miguel over the years, social and economic institutions catering to Latino immigrants had emerged, providing a level of comfort to Latino immigrants. Families could buy familiar services and goods imported from Mexico, watch telenovelas, listen to ranchero music
on the radio, attend mass in Spanish, and celebrate traditional holidays with extended family members. All of these elements facilitate the process of ethnocultural transmission, contributing to the island’s vitality. Even the residents’ native language, Spanish, has a high status level on the island despite the fact that Spanish has a low status level among the dominant US society.

Fear of drugs and violence also encouraged further separation behaviors among family-participants. Parents rarely allowed their children to play outside of the house in the neighborhood because of the seemingly random violence associated with impoverished communities. This increased families’ dependence upon the extended family network. The Ortega’s house, for instance, was *la casa central* (the central house) where Carmen’s cousins would come to play after school and where family gatherings would take place. This family-centered atmosphere lent itself to a natural environment of cultural transmission, consistent with Chun and Akutsu’s (2003) suggestion that the importance of the extended family remained stable or increased for some immigrant families.

The risk to the children of the study, however, is that any events or factors that may prevent the family from maintaining its cultural heritage could lead to the child’s marginalization, or the loss of their native culture without being assimilated into the larger society. As Berry (1997) indicated, dysfunctional behaviors such as substance or family abuse are common among those who employ a marginalized acculturative strategy. Since families have had little chance of integrating or assimilating into the larger society, the family’s ability to continue transmitting their native culture to the next
generation is critical in maintaining the children’s cultural heritage, identity, and overall wellbeing.

*The Orellana Family Experience*

The experiences of the Orellana family were unlike that of the other participants, resulting in similar behaviors, but very different attitudes. Because of their long-time legal status in the US, higher educational level, and ability to communicate well in English, the Orellana family has had the opportunity to integrate into US society better than the participants of Mexican origin. They know and understand US culture well enough to believe that living in the US has many advantages, but still, they feel excluded or segregated from mainstream US society. They described the financial pressures of living in the United States as well as the stress of not being treated fairly as an immigrant. Because of the disadvantages of living in the US, the Orellana family is seriously contemplating a return to El Salvador, where they believe their quality of life will be better.

*The Process of Cultural Modification*

By living in the shadows, families did not have the opportunity to participate with members and within institutions of the larger US society. At the same time, this shadow gave participants the freedom to modify their cultural heritage in a way that they thought was best for their children. Families were clearly transmitting culture to their children on this island, but it was a culture that had undergone a modification process: shedding those aspects that were irrelevant in their new lives in San Miguel, retaining some aspects of their culture of origin, incorporating parts of the broader Latino culture,
and creating new traditions. Feuerstein (2003) would say that despite parents’ lack of formal education and limited ability to communicate in English, such an accomplishment requires a high level of intelligence and cognitive flexibility.

_Shedding the Rural Roots of the Ranchito_

Parents have shed many traditions that were embodied in the socio-cultural, geographical, and economic context their community of origin’s culture of their as part of the modification process. Some practices associated with rural Mexican life simply cannot be replicated in an urban environment, such as raising a herd of cattle. Others were embedded in a socio-cultural context; it is impossible to recreate the community celebration of a _ranchito_ outside of the community of origin. Still, other cultural practices, such as washing clothes by hand or making dolls from parts of a corn plant were associated with subsistence living. When families moved beyond the life of the _ranchito_, they saw no need to continue those former practices. In these cases, parents did not pass on those cultural practices that lack relevance, practicality, and function for life in San Miguel.

Kozulin (1998) explained the danger associated with parents viewing their traditional culture as irrelevant and shedding it before they have assimilated into, or mastered, the new culture of the larger society. By dissolving the “devices of mediated learning that were incorporated into the traditional cultural schemas and rituals” (p. 75) of the _ranchito_, the children would thereby receive less MLE through the natural process of cultural transmission. According to Feuerstein (2003), the resulting state of cultural deprivation would manifest in low levels of modifiability, a low propensity to learn, and
delayed cognitive development. This state of cultural deprivation is similar to Berry’s (1997) description of marginalization; if immigrants do not continue to transmit their culture from one generation to the next, the resulting loss of heritage typically manifests in socially dysfunctional behavior. As I will explain, this is not the case for the families of this study even though the risk of cultural loss is still great.

**Selective Cultural Retention**

While the risk of marginalization and cultural deprivation for the student-participants of this study was real, families had retained selective elements of their culture. Parents were passing down many cultural practices that were relevant to their children’s daily lives on the cultural island and that will serve their children well in the future. Parents instilled into their children a deep sense of responsibility toward the wellbeing of the family, taught them about holidays and religious events, shared with them the experience of preparing and consuming traditional Mexican food, taught children how to work by giving them the experience of work, and ensured that their children knew how to speak, read, and write Spanish by enrolling them in a bilingual program at Junípero Serra. These lessons were all part of the families’ attempt to raise children with *sangre latino* (Latino blood), as Mrs. Del Monte phrased it. Certainly, parents wanted their children to learn English and be bicultural, but parents were dedicated to maintaining their children’s cultural heritage through interactions with extended family members in San Miguel.
The Evolution of San Miguel Culture

One could view the evolution of the families’ culture in San Miguel as beneficial and similar to the biological changes that occur in a species during the course of evolution – it must change in order to survive. Feuerstein (2003) defines intelligence as the ability to adapt. Families recognized the inevitable change that would occur in their children once they left the ranchito. But without access to the cultural knowledge of the larger US society, parents were left to their own devices to adapt to their new environment. According to Feuerstein, families displayed a high level of cognitive modifiability in the ways they had altered their cultures of origin to prepare their children for a new life.

One of the more important aspects of parents’ culture that continued in San Miguel was the use of Spanish at home. Despite the development of a “dialect” in San Miguel that incorporates English phrases or Anglicizes Spanish words, the continuation of Spanish as the primary language of the families in the study facilitates the transmission of culture from one generation to the next. Kozulin (2005) explains the importance of children being able to communicate with their grandparents and other extended family members. As with Ethiopian immigrants in Israel, children must speak the language of their elders in order to preserve the lines of cultural transmission.

Opportunities for Mediated Learning Experiences

Within the evolution of the ranchito culture on the cultural island of San Miguel lies the distinction between Berry’s acculturative strategies of separation and marginalization, and between Feuerstein’s dynamic states of cultural difference and
cultural deprivation. According to both of these theories, students that live in a secluded world, excluded from the larger US society in terms of language, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and parental education level, are culturally deprived and should be failing academically. Indeed, tens of thousands of California students of identical backgrounds as the student-participants of this study are performing at many levels below their grade level. They can be described as marginalized and in a state of cultural deprivation. They, too, are US citizens, and attend schools like Junípero Serra in San Miguel and in other communities throughout the United States.

The difference for the student-participants, however, appears to be that their families have modified their traditional culture. Some elements have disappeared, changed, been preserved, or adopted in order to better suit life on a cultural island. Regardless, this modified culture has an organic characteristic and is being transmitted to the younger generation. In addition, the children have plenty of opportunities for high-quality interaction with extended family members that live in the home or down the street, or a parent that stays at home or only works part-time.

By looking at student-participants’ academic performance, one might assume that they should continue to do well in the future. While this might be true, this assumption could be misleading. The students in this study are highly modifiable and intelligent, and it appears as if they have benefited their separation from the larger society. Because they have not spent much time in the larger society, they know few people who have the proficiency to guide them through the process of integration—a goal that each of the students’ parents have for them. Like the Ethiopian families in Kozulin’s study, parent-
participants came from rural areas, received little formal education, and experienced difficulty learning how to communicate in the dominant language. Parents also knew that their children had to attend college if they were to aprovechar (take advantage of) the opportunities available in this country. Because parents were separated from the mainstream, they lacked the cultural knowledge required to ensure that their children achieve this goal. In a sense, it is up to the student-participants to get to college on their own accord.

San Miguel families do not have access to cultural insiders of the dominant society to assist their efforts in navigating the dominant society. If integration is the ideal acculturative strategy, then our efforts should be focused on adding to their knowledge and experience of the larger society so that they become bicultural. Attempting to change the culture of San Miguel so that their world-view better fits that of the mainstream US is more consistent with assimilation and the accompanying loss of cultural heritage and identity.

**Implications for Educators**

Educators have been accused of viewing immigrant families as being deficient in terms of education, language, and income. Parents have within them an extensive base of knowledge regarding the traditional ways of the ranchito that they have shed because of its perceived irrelevance on the cultural island. Some of those practices and activities were beneficial in developing parents’ cognition as children. If educators were to incorporate some of these cultural activities to their students as educational tools, families might see these lost cultural activities as relevant to their children’s lives on the cultural
island. In turn, parents could be called upon to lend their cultural knowledge and expertise to facilitate the transmission of cultural knowledge to students in San Miguel. The renaissance of the ranchito culture in San Miguel would provide students with additional opportunities for MLE and its cognitive benefits while reinforcing students’ cultural heritage and identity.

Undoubtedly, most of students of Junípero Serra have not be reclassified as being fluent in English, and learning a second language no se pega (it doesn’t stick) as Mr. Fernandez stated. If these students are culturally deprived, then perhaps implementing Feuerstein’s cognitive intervention programs will give students the extra “glue” that they need so that what is being taught in the classroom will stick—in other words, their cognitive structure will become more modifiable so that they will learn more quickly and efficiently. Adaptability is the measure of intelligence. Even culturally different students, like those of this study or who are on the cusp of reclassification, would benefit from participating in such a program.

Essentially, children in San Miguel are better off growing up on a cultural island segregated from US society than being forced to assimilate. Our goal should be to prepare students for an integrated life in the US without trumping their parents’ ability and authority to transmit their own culture to their children. As language is arguably the foundation for any culture, educators should implement one of the effective bilingual programs that Thomas and Collier (2003) described in their investigation. In a school with a homogenous population like Junípero Serra that is located on a cultural island, the most appropriate bilingual program would be a one-way (all students with the same
native language), 50-50 (half of the language of instruction in students’ native language of Spanish, and the other half in English), dual immersion program.

Schools should support parents to preserve their culture so that their children may reap the cognitive benefits associated with the natural process of cultural transmission. At the same time, schools should assume the role of the insider and assist parents’ attempts to integrate into the larger US society, not persuade them to assimilate into the greater Melting Pot. By recognizing students’ cultures of origin as cognitive assets instead of liabilities, educators have an opportunity to close the Achievement Gap and consequently influence the successful integration of this growing population of cultural islanders into the dominant society. Only then, will they be able to emerge from the shadows to participate fully in the social, political, economic, and cultural institutions as they realize their immigrant parents’ hopes and dreams of a better future in a multicultural United States.
Appendix A: The Quadruple Gap

2006 Grade 5 California Standards Test—English Language Arts, Math
Appendix B: The Bilingual Factor

2006 Grade 5 California Standards Test—English Language Arts, Math

![Bar graph showing ELA scores for different groups.

- R-FEP: 63%
- I-FEP: 59%
- White (not Hispanic): 63%
- Non-Economically Disadvantaged: 63%
- English Only: 52%
- College Graduate: 65%

![Bar graph showing Math scores for different groups.

- R-FEP: 70%
- I-FEP: 63%
- White (not Hispanic): 64%
- Non-Economically Disadvantaged: 65%
- English Only: 54%
- College Graduate: 68%]
Appendix C: Guiding Questions for Parent-Participant Interview

**Background**
Number of children, ages
Place of birth, birth year
Description of family of origin (brothers, sisters)
Description of town
Community activities, celebrations, festivals
Childhood chores, adolescent work experience
Free time, hobbies
Level of education, school experience

**Emigration**
Reasons for immigrating to US, Description of journey
Thoughts of returning
Description of vacations/travels to country of origin
Explanation of how life would have been different if stayed in country of origin

**Life in US**
Easier aspects, more difficult aspects
Communication (verbal/reading/writing abilities in Spanish/English)
Employment (occupation, work schedule)
Household income, ownership, inhabitants, their contributions
Obligations to extended family members
Financial practices (banking, credit cards, borrowing money, investments)
Family health issues
Documentation
Safety
Leisure/Entertainment (TV, movies, music, restaurants, vacations)

**Child-raising in US**
Family activities (picnics, church, outings)
Activities with extended family members
Celebrations, festivals, holidays
Teaching (of chores, sports, everyday skills)
Education (homework, Pre-K readiness, discipline, opinions of US system)

**Values**
Importance of knowing Spanish/English; Preference of children’s cultural identity
Dreams for children, plans to realize them
Important values to be passed on to children
Similarities/differences of parents’ values that are being passed on to children
Role of religion in children’s lives
Methods of teaching children values
Appendix D: Guiding Questions for Student-Participant or Older Sibling Interview

**Background**
Age, birthplace
Language use with family, friends

**Family**
Preferred family activities
Chores
Favorite family traditions/celebrations
Impressions of family visits to parents’ country of origin
Comparison of comfort level – Richmond and parent country of origin
Thoughts on family’s immigration to US

**Personal interests**
Free time
Hobbies
Friends (activities, what they’re like, etc.)
Opinions about living in Richmond

**School**
Participation in schools in other countries
Perceptions about school
Subjects (favorites, most difficult, etc…)
Impressions of teachers
Extracurricular activities
Homework habits
Goals after high school, plans to attain them
### Appendix E: Student Assessment Data

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**Notes:**

The SABE and Aprenda are norm-referenced tests, so scores are percentile rankings.

The Aprenda replaced the SABE and was first administered in 2006.

No SABE scores for 2004 were available.

Zulema and Carmen did not take the SABE in 2005.

FBB = Far Below Basic; BB = Below Basic; Pro = Proficient; Adv = Advanced
Appendix F

Language Subcategory Comparison, California and Junípero Serra

2006 Grade 5 California Standards Test—English Language Arts, Math

![Graph comparing ELA and Math scores between California and Junípero Serra subcategories.](image-url)
References


