

LATINX IMMIGRANT PARENTS AND THEIR CHILD’S TEACHER: FAMILY
ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCES

by

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Dedication

Este trabajo se lo dedico a mi papá Leoncio. Sé lo mucho que esto significa para ti y quiero compartir este logro contigo.

También le dedico este estudio a las familias inmigrantes and to the teachers. You both work very hard to ensure every child succeeds in life and school. I hope the family engagement view changes from a deficit perspective to one that is more focused on building strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships. Also, I hope that parent-teacher partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse families become more accepting and appreciative of the knowledge and skills these families bring.

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List of Abbreviations

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	CLD
Early Childhood Education	ECE
Every Student Succeeds Act	ESSA
Latino Critical Theory.....	LatCrit
National Association for the Education of Young Children	NAEYC
United States	U.S.

Abstract

LATINX IMMIGRANT PARENTS AND THEIR CHILD’S TEACHER: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCES

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Family engagement plays a significant role in students’ academic success (Araujo, 2009; Clarke et al., 2017; Durand, 2011; Herrera et al., 2020; Jasis, 2021; Lin, 2003; Vesely et al., 2017; Weiss et al., 2006) and produces positive long-term effects in school for children (Ishimaru et al., 2016; Yull et al., 2018). However, with the increasingly diverse population in p-12 schools, there has been “a growing cultural divide between teachers and students” (Vesely et al., 2017, p. 242). A way to close the cultural divide is by understanding the perspectives of family engagement and building strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships that value and accept the knowledge and experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) families. To establish top-quality parent-teacher relationships, there needs to be an equal partnership between the two (Ogg et al., 2021). Furthermore, it is imperative to understand how CLD students and their families are impacted and further marginalized due to the limited understanding of teachers and

schools on how their diversities intersect, making it challenging to build home-school connections (Vesely et al., 2017).

Using the family engagement definition from Halgunseth et al. (2009) – “family engagement occurs when there is an ongoing, reciprocal, strengths-based partnership between families and their children’s early childhood education programs” (p. 3) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education (2016) definition – family engagement is a “systematic inclusion of families in activities and programs that promote children’s development, learning, and wellness, including the planning, development, and evaluation of such activities, programs, and systems” (p. 1). The purpose of this study was to examine teachers’ and Latinx immigrant families’ perspectives of family engagement. In addition, this study sought to inform the different ways these families engage in their children’s education and provide information on how to build strengths-based parent-teacher relationships, specifically with Latinx immigrant families.

This multi-case/single site case study included a Latinx immigrant family and their child’s teacher in a pre-K program. The findings described the teachers’ perspective of Latinx immigrant families’ engagement in their children’s education as positive if they were given the resources and guidance to do so. The Latinx immigrant family’s perspective on family engagement in their children’s education was more than just about academics. It was also about being present in the child’s life and providing opportunities to gain experiences. Latinx immigrant families engage in their children’s education in various ways, including at-home learning support, maintaining communication with the

teacher, and motivating their children to learn. Lastly, building positive strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships is instrumental for family engagement. To create these partnerships, having two-way communication, incorporating funds of knowledge into the curriculum, and diversifying the teacher workforce are essential.

Chapter One

The heart of this work involves treating families as true partners, with valuable insight into their child's learning.

–Karen Mapp, The 74 Interview

Families are the primary context for children's development and learning (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2019). Therefore, family engagement is essential to early childhood development and academic success, yet the efforts to encourage positive and meaningful engagement have been little and inconsistent (Weiss et al., 2009). In addition, we fail to ask who the families that we are serving are and what their needs are in our p-12 schools, making it even more difficult for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) families (Herrera et al., 2020). Since families play a crucial role in a child's development, early childhood education (ECE) programs, schools, and teachers should make more effort to create and maintain positive strengths-based parent-school partnerships (NAEYC, 2019; Weiss et al., 2009; Yull et al., 2018) and provide an equitable space for all parents to get involved (Herrera et al., 2020) by “embracing diversity and full inclusion as strengths” (NAEYC, 2019, p. 1).

For many years, educators have held a very limited definition of parental engagement and involvement, placing CLD parents at a disadvantage (Herrera et al., 2020). This calls for a reevaluation of what family engagement means for educators.

According to Halgunseth et al. (2009) “family engagement occurs when there is an ongoing, reciprocal, strengths-based partnership between families and their children’s early childhood education programs” (p. 3). The NAEYC (2019) also supports the importance of establishing parent-teacher reciprocal relationships in which the primary role of families in children’s development and learning is embraced. The term family engagement is more inclusive and considers father, mother, and other adults or kin, such as grandparents or close family friends who interact with and influence the child’s upbringing (Halgunseth et al., 2009; Vesely et al., 2014).

The immigrant population in the United States (U.S.) is continuously growing, and therefore, we as a country need to make changes to adapt to the different needs this population brings. As immigrant families experience and adjust to the demands of this new and uncertain place and culture, there are many challenges they have to overcome. As an immigrant myself, I want to use my educational privilege, socioeconomic position, and race to help and inform p-12 schools¹, and families on how they and their students can benefit from building and maintaining strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships.

I recognize that I had very different reasons for migration than many of these families, and being a white² Latina has resulted in navigational and cultural capital. As the mother of two young children, one in kindergarten and the other in private pre-K but entering the public educational system soon, I would like to see a school environment where family engagement is encouraged and inclusive of all families. My goal is to

¹ This study was conducted in a pre-K program that is part of the city public schools.

² The term white will be lowercase when is used in racial, ethnic or cultural sense to avoid agreement with injustices.

advocate that our country being culturally and linguistically diverse is an asset and not a detriment. This study is significant because it highlights the need for change and attention in order to accept the many benefits that having a diverse population has in the nation. Acknowledging this need sheds some light on how p-12 schools can incorporate CLD families more. Furthermore, it explains that there are various avenues to accomplish and increase family engagement that might look different from traditional ways and expectations.

Due to the significant impact that education programs and families have in children's early developmental stages, Halgunseth (2009) and NAEYC (2019) advocate for the importance of strong parent-teacher partnerships. As public p-12 schools are becoming more diverse due to immigration and increased birth rates among immigrants (Mordechay & Orfield, 2017), p-12 schools must evaluate the process of engaging the rise of CLD families. This shift makes it imperative to have strong and healthy relationships between teachers, students, and families to ensure that students obtain the best possible education or even a chance at it.

Research shows that families from disinvested communities tend to have fewer opportunities to be engaged (Weiss et al., 2009) similarly to families from linguistically diverse backgrounds (Araujo, 2009; Yull et al., 2018). However, building parent-school relationships should be a shared responsibility between p-12 schools and families to help close the students' opportunity gap. When it comes to minority families and their engagement, the family members are often seen as a burden rather than an asset (Weiss et al., 2009) and their efforts outside of the school context are not valued (Yull et al., 2018).

For this reason, this study brought to light the different ways in which minoritized families are engaged in their children's education and how their experiences impacted their participation. Still, many times these efforts are overlooked by p-12 schools. I focused on ECE because research supports that the skills developed during those early years of life are critical for future academic success (Chaudry, 2004; McWayne et al., 2004). Also, I highlighted the importance of family engagement and found ways in which these strengths-based partnerships can be built and maintained throughout the child's education.

Many researchers write about family engagement concerning parent-school relations and school-based activities (Suizzo et al., 2012). However, Suizzo et al. add that it is critical to remember that due to reasons such as language proficiency, cultural views on the roles that teachers and parents play, and lastly, not understanding how the p-12 schools in the U.S. work, many Latinx immigrant families³ are not prominent school visitors. Therefore, some non-Latinx teachers believe that Latinx parents do not care about their children's education and hold them to low standards and expectations (González et al., 2013; Weiss et al., 2009), increasing the achievement gap (Suizzo et al., 2012; Wall & Musetti, 2018). Instead, it is imperative that p-12 schools reconceptualize the "parameters for parental involvement and letting go of perceiving parents through a social and cultural deficit lens" (Herrera et al., 2020, p. 5) to increase and promote the role parents play in p-12 schools.

³ Latinx immigrant families/parents: families that have one or more members who moved from a Latin American country. Latinx is also inclusive in terms of gender identity.

Halgunseth (2009) explains that the way p-12 schools are approaching family engagement causes discontent among some teachers because instead of focusing on the strengths that the families bring, they are trying to change the families to adjust to a one-size-fits-all model. Suizzo et al. (2012) recommend “building on the existing strengths of these families, [which] would likely greatly benefit children” (p. 545). Araujo (2009) emphasizes the great benefits to students when their cultural values, knowledge, and languages they and their families bring to p-12 schools are valued.

Part of culturally responsive teaching, according to Love (2019), means that teachers recognize that students of color are treated differently in society and therefore need to adapt to learning in different ways in school. “The push for more culturally responsive education acknowledges that in a racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse society, teachers can best educate students when they appreciate the culturally defined experiences and understandings students bring with them to school” (Schettino et al., 2019, p. 27). Also, Love (2019) adds the importance of building relationships with students and their families and how valuable it is to build on their strengths. It is also important to highlight the benefits of cultural humility – “the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the [person]” (Hook et al., 2013, p. 354). According to Vesely et al. (2017) teachers who have a sense of cultural humility are more open to developing competencies for working with diverse families. Teachers having cultural humility is paramount since many immigrant families have a different understanding of family engagement than the traditional U.S. public system.

This study examined teachers' and Latinx immigrant families' perspectives of family engagement and took a critical view of how p-12 schools and Latinx immigrant parents inform and educate each other on effective family engagement practices. Moreover, this study provided teachers and p-12 schools better ways to build family engagement that works best for Latinx immigrant families. Further, the study provided strategies for building and nurturing strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships that are two-way and highlighted the positive experiences and knowledge these families bring.

This work is important because public p-12 schools are filled with culturally and linguistically diverse students who are revolutionizing schools and traditional teaching and learning methods. With these diverse students come their families who have an idea of family engagement from their native countries that is different from the U.S.' expectations and who hold different views on what happens in p-12 schools (Dorfman & Fisher, 2002; Mapp, 2003). Because school personnel often do not understand and are not used to this new student body and their families, they can quickly underestimate and negatively judge the values that these students and families bring. Herrera et al. (2020) suggest that the dominant U.S. culture adds to this narrow view, which in turn makes us wonder if there is "not anything we could learn from immigrant parents about engagement in today's schools?" (p. 4). For this reason, it is imperative that the different models of family engagement are redefined and that educators value the various contributions CLD families offer.

In addition, teacher education programs need to do more to better prepare pre-service teachers with the necessary skills to navigate and interact with immigrant

families. This preparation will allow pre-service educators to understand better how the students and their families' different cultures and experiences inform daily interactions. This study informs these practices and provides guidance on how to build parent-teacher relationships with immigrant families for the students' benefit. This study also demonstrates that understanding what family engagement means for these culturally and linguistically diverse families, teachers and schools can provide a thriving learning environment for the students.

The impact of this study allows diverse students and families to feel empowered, cared for, and valued by the teachers and school. It helps maintain their cultural identity, feel proud of their heritage, and appreciate the schools' efforts to show interest in their values and beliefs. If we as a society do not make changes, alter what we have been doing for years, and ignore what this new wave of students and their families are offering, we would be doing them a dis-service as educators. Hopefully, this study can serve as the springboard to finding a definition of family engagement that is agreed upon by researchers, educators, and immigrant families, and a resource for how to build strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships.

As a result, potential implications of this study are standard definitions of family engagement where all involved are treated equitably. Furthermore, I would like to see an increase in family engagement amongst immigrant families and p-12 schools/teachers to confront their conventional approaches to thinking about what family engagement means. Moreover, I would like to see teachers truthfully build strengths-based partnerships with CLD families. I also would like to take this study back to my work as a teacher educator

and advocate to make changes to the curriculum that include better family engagement practices and skills on how to value and incorporate the diversity that these students and their families bring into the classroom. Lastly, I want to see a change from the deficit view perspective to one that considers the importance of honoring the students' background.

In this chapter, I introduce family engagement and its importance. I also present the disconnect between teachers/schools and immigrant families regarding the definition and what family engagement entails. This chapter discusses how the change in public schools' demographics in the U.S. affects how schools have been incorporating families into students' p-12 education. The research questions that guide the study are presented and an overview of its methodology and significance. To ensure transparency in the study, this chapter examines researcher positionality and provides definitions for key terms. This chapter ends with a summary of the study, explaining what each chapter includes.

Statement of the Issue

In fall 2015, minority students accounted for 75% of the total enrollment in public schools (de Brey et al., 2019). The trend in U.S. classrooms is toward greater multiculturalism and diversity (Kumar & Lauermann, 2018; Okagaki & Bingham, 2010). In addition, the National Center for Education Statistics (2019a) projects that the percentage of white students enrolled in p-12 public schools is going to continue to drop as enrollment of Latinx and Asian/Pacific Islander students continues to increase.

This shift in demographics in the U.S. is due to international migration and changing fertility patterns (Mordechay & Orfield, 2017). In 2013, most babies born in the U.S. belonged to minority groups (Mordechay & Orfield, 2017). As a result, today's Latino, Black, and Asian children will soon become the country's majority. This change in demographics is forcing public schools and teachers to question and change how they engage these students and their families to serve this diverse population better. Because of the increase in students from immigrant families, there is also an increase in English language learners (ELLs).

The National Center for Education Statistics (2019b) reports that the percentage of ELLs in public schools in the U.S. was higher in the 2016-17 school year (9.6%) compared to the 2000-01 school year (8.1%). This demographic shift requires traditionally monolingual and monocultural teachers to prepare themselves to build and maintain relationships with students and families from linguistically diverse backgrounds. Building and maintaining positive parent-teacher relationships is a new challenge that p-12 schools and teachers must respond to before the changes translate to access and achievement problems immediately. Instead of seeing this as a negative change, p-12 schools and teachers may consider how much more well-rounded the school faculty and students will be as they learn from and about different languages and cultures. The diverse backgrounds in the classroom will allow students to share their experiences and learn from one another. These different interactions will enrich the classroom environment.

Family engagement has proven to have many positive impacts on children's education, including school readiness and success (Bouffard & Weiss, 2008; Ishimaru et al., 2016; Yull et al., 2018), as well as their health and developmental outcomes (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education, 2016). However, as explained earlier, there is an observable discrepancy in the definition of family engagement and the different ways that it can be practiced. Teachers and administrators have their definition of family engagement, whereas, for immigrant families, their understanding of family engagement may vary depending on their experiences and backgrounds. Additionally, teachers might be aware of the importance of family engagement; however, they experience frustration because of the apparent low levels of engagement from certain families due to differences in cultural values or different languages spoken between them and the families they serve (Halgunseth, 2009). Vesely et al. (2017) explain that teachers must understand that students' learning is impacted by their own experiences and is influenced by their family values, and teachers need to relate to their language and culture.

Family engagement for p-12 schools in the U.S. is changing from being a low priority to being a critical part of education reform efforts (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013). This change is evident in the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) and in ECE programs. The ESSA policy mandates that family engagement is required by states and schools to support positive student academic achievement (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education, 2016). In addition, both U.S. departments explain that ESSA requires school districts that receive Title I funds to have

written policies on how they plan to increase family engagement and make special efforts to reach out to English learners' parents.

Early childhood systems can include childcare options, Head Start and Early Head Start, early intervention programs, preschool programs, and elementary school from kindergarten through third grade (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & the U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Like the ESSA policy, the NAEYC (2019) advancing equity in ECE position statement clearly describes that educators have a professional obligation to advance equity and this can be done when they “embrace diversity and full inclusion as strengths, uphold fundamental principles of fairness and justice, and work to eliminate structural inequities that limit equitable learning opportunities” (p. 1). This statement further highlights the importance of being inclusive and valuing what CLD students and their families bring into the schools.

The literature shows the importance of family engagement and its effect on demographics in p-12 schools and the teacher workforce. Chapter Two further discusses the impact of diversifying the teacher workforce to match the student population better. Even though this diverse population faces many obstacles, they still value and care for their children's education (expanded on in Chapter Two). Furthermore, to increase family engagement among immigrant families, p-12 schools and teachers need to change the traditional paradigm and start accepting and seeing what these families bring as valuable assets and an addition to the curriculum (Herrera et al., 2020). It is equally important to get to know their students and their families to better understand and ease in the process of building strengths-based partnerships. Lastly, the different cultural and linguistic

aspects that immigrant families bring play a role at the intersection of how to support their children's education better. A more detailed explanation and discussion of these concepts is provided in Chapter Two.

Statement of Purpose

The shift in demographics in the U.S. public schools means an increase in CLD families for teachers and p-12 schools to serve. P-12 schools are evaluating whether or not they are meeting these families' needs and understanding the different perspectives that they bring. Further, p-12 schools need to educate and inform these new families about the U.S. education system. The purposes of this study were to examine teachers' and Latinx families' perspectives of family engagement and to inform the different ways these families engage in their children's education. Lastly, the purpose of this study was to provide information on how to build strengths-based partnerships with immigrant families, specifically Latinx families.

This study uses the term *family engagement* instead of *family involvement* to reflect the shift in terminology through the years and because family engagement is a more inclusive term (Halgunseth et al., 2009; Herrera et al., 2020; Vesely et al., 2014). Family engagement considers other adults besides the parents that partake in the children's upbringing. Significant to this study, "children in immigrant families are nearly twice as likely to live with grandparents, other extended family members, and nonrelatives than children in native-born families" (Halgunseth et al., 2013, p. 122). The ESSA Act of 2015, NAEYC's (2019) advancing equity statement, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education (2016)

policy statement use family engagement to reflect a more inclusive language and to recognize that any adult that steps up to take care of a child should be included, counted, valued, and respected (Stringer, 2018). This study also intended to show how family engagement and parent-teacher relationships can be strength-based instead of deficit-based. The term *engagement* supports this view and is a two-way relationship in which schools recognize that immigrant families come with many skills. *Involvement* implies more of a one-way relationship and does not acknowledge that immigrant families come with valuable skills and perpetuate an inaccurate belief that schools know more about what is best for the child than the family does (Halgunseth et al., 2013). Below are the research questions designed to provide insight into the different perspectives of family engagement and, most importantly, to suggest other ways in which family engagement could be increased among Latinx families.

Research Questions

To maintain the study's focus and identify teachers' and immigrant families' perspectives and awareness of family engagement and how to build strengths-based relationships, the following research questions guided this study.

- **Research question #1:** What is the teacher's perspective of Latinx immigrant families' engagement in their children's education?
- **Research question #2:** What is the Latinx immigrant family's perspective on family engagement in their children's education?
- **Research question #3:** In what ways do Latinx immigrant families engage in their children's education?

Overview of Methodology

This study was conducted using an intrinsic multi-case/single site qualitative case study design (Stake, 1995) to understand teachers' and Latinx immigrant families' perspectives of family engagement. The study also sought to inform and educate both schools and immigrant parents on effective family engagement practices and how to create and nurture strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships. This study took place in a pre-K program in a public school in a diverse city in the southeast region of the U.S. A pre-K program is a day care with educational content for children younger than five. These programs "provide a foundation for learning and prepare students for success in kindergarten and beyond" (Virginia Department of Education, 2022, para. 1). The study focused on one immigrant family where the mother was from Central America and the father was Mexican American, and their children's teacher. One of the benefits of a case study is that the collaboration between the participants and the researcher allows the participants to convey their stories (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Successful relationships between the participants and the researcher require trust. Moreover, a case study allows the researcher to have a more holistic view of the case at hand (Noor, 2008) and provides a more in-depth examination (Zainal, 2007).

The data collection methods included face-to-face semi-structured interviews, observation, and review of documents. The interviews and observations were only conducted with parents and teacher, not early childhood-aged children. In addition, I kept field notes and a researcher journal to reflect throughout the study. I collected data in summer and fall 2021, and spring 2022. To better manage and systematically analyze the

data that these mixed data sources provided, I used Microsoft Word to store and manage it. Data analysis consisted of coding and thematic analysis using thematic networks to organize the data into categories and themes.

Significance of the Study

Family engagement plays a vital role in students' success in the classroom. Teachers and p-12 schools are responsible for creating, building, and maintaining relationships with immigrant families. These positive relationships influence students' learning. Overall, most parents care about their children's education. However, p-12 schools and immigrant families tend to have a different idea of what family engagement means and entails. Therefore, p-12 schools and teachers must understand that CLD families do care about their children's education and that their involvement might look a bit different than what the teachers are used to seeing. Being involved is no longer merely participating in events, but it is actually "sharing power in the decision-making process" (Herrera et al., 2020, p. 15).

The U.S. continues to change demographically, which is reflected in ECE programs and the public schools. It is expected that soon communities of color will be the country's majority. Due to this demographic shift, p-12 schools must rethink the way they have been doing things and be more purposeful about how they can embrace and welcome CLD families into the schools and build two-way relationships. Even though there have been some changes in policies to reflect immigration to the U.S, there still remain gaps in policies that deal specifically with the different experiences children in immigrant families bring (Wight et al., 2011). P-12 schools must identify the needs of

this new population. This study provided a Latinx immigrant family and their children's teacher and pre-k school with each other's perspectives of family engagement.

Furthermore, this study also provided information on the different ways this family engages in their children's education. Lastly, the study provided effective family engagement practices that promote and encourage strengths-based partnerships between immigrant families and p-12 schools.

Positionality

To keep transparency in this study, this section describes my own experiences, assumptions, and beliefs. Since the researcher-participant relationship affects the research and the outcome of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), I was clear and transparent about my identity as a researcher, my interests, and my intentions. Merriam and Tisdell also explain that insider/outsider position can affect access to participants and the level of confidentiality and stories share with the researcher. Lastly, there is the issue of the burden of representation that a native researcher has. They are seen as an expert on the community under study and having to represent them (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2015).

I am a Latina immigrant to the U.S. and a native Spanish speaker. My journey as an immigrant to the U.S. was voluntary and via an athletic scholarship to a university, which differed significantly from my immigrant family participant's immigration reasons and stories. Because of the language and culture that I share with the immigrant family, I could be considered an insider. However, because of my privileged background and immigration route, the immigrant family participant could look at me as an outsider. This outsider status might delay the rapport and trust building between the immigrant family

participants and myself, and their willingness to be open about their experiences (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2015).

My assumptions and biases include the generalization that most immigrant families that immigrate to the U.S. come from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, have little to no education, are undocumented, have limited English proficiency, and have little knowledge about the education system in the U.S. My preconceptions towards the teacher participant include that they are monolingual (English) and monocultural (American), believe in the benefits of family engagement, and want to encourage immigrant families to be more engaged. However, they might not recognize their part in developing a reciprocal relationship. They may also wish that the families spoke English and were more aware of how the p-12 school system works in the U.S.

Definition of Key Terminology

The following are key definitions of relevant terms used throughout the study to provide transparency and clear understanding.

Family engagement: Two definitions of family engagement are integrated for use in this study. First, “family engagement occurs when there is an on-going, reciprocal, strengths-based partnership between families and their children’s early childhood education programs” (Halgunseth et al., 2009, p. 3). Second, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education (2016) define family engagement as the “systematic inclusion of families in activities and programs that promote children’s development, learning, and wellness, including the planning, development, and evaluation of such activities, programs, and systems” (p. 1).

Parents: I decided to consider the different family configurations explained by Casper and Bianchi (2002) to create my own definition. Two adults, not necessarily married (they could cohabitate) but for this study, they have to live in the same household, care and provide for their biological and/or nonbiological children.

Family: Family is very complex and thus difficult to define universally. Because of the reality we live in today compared to the 1950s and 1960s, where more conventional definitions of a family were used, a standard description is impossible. To reflect the diversity that families now represent and acknowledging that cultural contexts influence this definition, I decided to use (Holstein & Gubrium, 1999) view of family as an *interpretative practice*. One in which “the procedures, conditions, and resources through which reality is apprehended, understood, organized, and represented in the course of everyday life” (p. 5).

Latinx: is a more gender inclusive term that replaces Latino/a when referring to people of Latin American descent (Monzó, 2016; Salinas & Lozano, 2019).

Strengths-based partnerships: Strengths approaches “avoid a focus on deficits and recognize the importance of the multiple contexts that influence peoples’ lives, as well as the resilience, potentials, strengths, interests, abilities, knowledge, and capacities of individuals” (Fenton & Mcfarland-Piazza, 2014, p. 23).

Monocultural-monolingual: A person that only has one set of structures for their own culture and do not have the benefits of another language (Ringberg et al., 2010; Sofifiatti, 1960).

Interpretivist ontology: Researchers with an interpretivist ontology consider the influence the environment can have on the study participants and make an effort to understand their views of the world (Willis et al., 2007).

Relativist ontology: Researchers with a relativist ontology view realities as socially and experientially constructed and dependent on the persons who hold them (Willis et al., 2007).

Constructivism epistemology: Claims that meaning is co-constructed between the researcher and the participants (Hatch, 2002) and it focuses “exclusively on the meaning making activity of the individual mind (Crotty, 1998, p. 58).

Critical epistemology: “Knowledge within this set of assumptions is subjective and inherently political” (Hatch, 2002, p. 16). Its purpose is to empower participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Overview of the Study

This chapter highlights the shift in demographics that p-12 public schools are experiencing, making it a priority for schools to adapt to this change. To respond and help students succeed in schools, a whole new definition of family engagement has to take place. To do this, schools have to build and maintain strengths-based partnerships with CLD families.

The following chapters include a literature review, methodology, results, and conclusions. The literature review defines family engagement, explains why it is important, and describes the different components of Halgunseth et al.’s (2009) Social Exchange Model of Family Engagement. Through the components of the model,

intersectionality, Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit), and funds of knowledge are used to help understand and connect family engagement for Latinx immigrant families. To increase family engagement, parent-teacher partnerships with an effort on strengths-based relationships is necessary. The chapter then covers the change in U.S. demographics and the impact for public education as well as the need to diversify the teacher workforce. The perspective of family engagement from teachers' and Latinx immigrant families is also discussed. Lastly, the literature review offers different strategies on how to build and maintain strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships.

Chapter Three provides my methodological framework, including my ontological and epistemological stances, a critical review of my design type and discuss the methods for this study, including a) research questions, b) selection of site and participants, c) data collection and analysis, d) trustworthiness, e) ethics, f) methodological significance of the study, and g) limitations and boundaries of the study. Chapter Four discusses the findings of the study where 1) the teachers' perspective of Latinx immigrant families' engagement in their children's education is that Latinx parents will engage if they have the tools and resources on how they can do it; 2) the Latinx immigrant family's perspective on family engagement in their children's education goes beyond academics; 3) the different ways Latinx immigrant families engage in their children's education is by supporting the children at home, maintaining two-way communication with the teacher and the child, ensuring the child has a positive learning environment, and lastly, motivating their children to obtain an education.

Chapter Five discusses the interpretation of the findings, the implications for practice, the recommendations for future research, and the limitations of the study. Overall, teachers' and families want what is best for the students and given the diversity in the U.S. p-12 classrooms, the way family engagement has been viewed needs to change and be more accepting of different ways of engagement. Being more accepting of different practices and diversifying the teacher workforce, will help to build strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships.

Chapter Two

This chapter provides an in-depth review of the literature on family engagement. I focus on defining family engagement, why family engagement is important, and describe the different components of the *Social Exchange Model of Family Engagement*. Through the components of the model, I connect and explain how intersectionality, LatCrit Theory, and funds of knowledge help inform family engagement for Latinx immigrant families. In addition, I discuss the change in demographics and what it means for public education including pre-K and the need to diversify the teacher workforce, and how beneficial this is, especially with the new student population. This chapter also provides family engagement definitions from the Latinx immigrant families' and the teachers' perspectives. Lastly, I provide strategies on how to build successful educational partnerships among immigrant families. This study contributes to the field strategies teachers can learn from Latinx immigrant families to promote children's socio-emotional development to maximize students' educational experience and promote the development of parent-teacher partnerships.

With the increasingly diverse population in p-12 schools, there has been “a growing cultural divide between teachers and students” (Vesely et al., 2017, p. 242). Therefore, it is only appropriate to try to understand how culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students and their families are impacted and further marginalized due to the limited understanding of teachers and p-12 schools on how their diversities intersect, making it challenging to build home-school connections (Vesely et al., 2017).

Furthermore, to establish authentic parent-teacher relationships, it is imperative that teachers learn about the cultural backgrounds CLD families bring and value their sociocultural practices (Soltero-González & Gillanders, 2021). The authors add that “through meaningful parental engagement, parents gain a better understanding of schools’ cultural models and settings” (p. 966).

When the background and knowledge the CLD families have is embraced by teachers and incorporated into the curriculum, this leads to an opportunity to tap into the families’ funds of knowledge which are essential to strengthen parent-teacher relationships and motivate children to learn (Moll et al., 1992, 2005). Funds of knowledge help identify non-school expertise families have (Hinton, 2015) and include families in their children’s education. Hensley (2005) explains that teachers might discover previously unrecognized resources through using funds of knowledge and start developing strategies to utilize these resources. Once teachers place value on this knowledge and skills, parents, in turn, feel important and empowered. This can dramatically improve the teacher-parent relationship because it lowers the barrier between teacher and parent, and a mutually respectful relationship starts developing. In addition, once the teacher begins sharing their discoveries with the students, they start perceiving their parents and themselves in a more positive light and affirming their cultural identity and the teacher-student relationship also begins to flourish (Browning-Aiken, 2005; Hensley, 2005).

Research shows that family engagement significantly impacts student success (Araujo, 2009; Clarke et al., 2017; Durand, 2011; Herrera et al., 2020; Jasis, 2021; Lin,

2003; Vesely et al., 2017; Weiss et al., 2006) and is especially beneficial in ECE programs (Fantuzzo et al., 2004). More specifically, Durand (2011) and Lin's (2003) studies show the positive impact family engagement has on children's literacy skills. Fantuzzo et al. (2004), Farver et al. (2006), and Raikes et al. (2006) studies show the positive impact family engagement has on cognitive and language development. McWayne, Hampton, et al. (2004), Ogg et al. (2021) and Suizzo et al. (2012) studies show the positive impact family engagement has on children's academic achievement. Lastly, Fantuzzo et al. (2004), Lin (2003), McWayne, Fantuzzo, et al. (2004), and Ogg et al. (2021) studies show the positive impact family engagement has on children's behavior and socio-emotional development.

Due to the reasons mentioned above, it is pivotal that p-12 schools consider the shift in demographics that the U.S. is experiencing and change the traditional way they have been engaging families into the schools (Wall & Musetti, 2018). Yull et al.'s (2018) study focused on the importance of building relationships between parents of color and teachers in a way that is strengths-based and welcoming of the knowledge and skills parents have. Culturally and linguistically diverse families bring many experiences, skills, and needs that demand consideration. Therefore, it is essential to understand immigrant families' perspectives and definition of family engagement and try to build strengths-based relationships between these families and the teachers and p-12 schools. Furthermore, Yull et al. (2018) highlight that often schools "fail to recognize the contributions and the efforts of parents that take place outside of the school context which contribute to a child's academic success" (p. 321). Therefore, creating events in which

families' funds of knowledge are highlighted is an excellent way to promote family engagement (Wall & Musetti, 2018).

The NAEYC (2019) advancing equity statement indicates that families are the primary context for children's development and learning and the importance of recognizing that families are experts about their children. According to Yull et al. (2018), schools see families of color as less capable of supporting learning for their children. Posey-Maddox's (2017) study reinforces how Black parents support their children's education in more community-centered ways that tend to be not as valued by educators who usually evaluate family engagement based on school-based activity attendance. This deficit view ensures a perspective that the education of children is primarily the responsibility of p-12 schools. As such, the positive impact of family engagement on students' academic success is lost because the families are not invited into partnership and engagement in culturally and contextually relevant ways.

Furthermore, the traditional way of family engagement neglects the "cultural and social resources of nondominant families [low income, immigrant/refugee, and other communities of color, who have been marginalized by dominant institutions, policies, and practices]" (Ishimaru et al., 2016, p. 850). The authors support decades of research that say that parents play a crucial role in their children's education and that learning and engagement come in many different forms and places. Ishimaru et al. also emphasize that when p-12 schools devalue the social and cultural resources nondominant families bring, because of a deficit perspective, schools become "subtractive" spaces.

Overall, family engagement is a great way to produce positive long-term effects in school for children (Ishimaru et al., 2016; Yull et al., 2018). Consequently, being aware and knowing successful ways to increase family engagement is tremendously important for teachers and p-12 schools. Seeing families of color and families from disinvested communities' approaches to family engagement as inferior as opposed to different, thereby focusing on a deficit view calls for the counterbalance of a strengths-based model to incorporate all of the rich skills these families bring (McWayne et al., 2021; Yull et al., 2018). A strengths-based approach will help recognize CLD families' cultural capital (Yosso, 2005) and yield more meaningful family engagement based on reciprocity that is co-determined by families and teachers/schools (McWayne et al., 2021; Yull et al., 2018). In addition, Ogg et al. (2021) explain that family engagement requires key stakeholders (e.g., parents and teachers) to be "equal partners" in the child's education and to build top quality relationships between the stakeholders. The NAEYC (2019) supports this by stating that each child, family member, and teacher is unique, and all bring valuable and enriching lived experiences that need to be recognized and respected.

Multicultural approaches to education are a must since the U.S. will continue to become an even more multicultural society (Nelson et al., 2020). Pratt et al. (2021) confirm that by 2026 Latinx students will represent 29% of the school demographics in the country. According to Cushner et al. (2022), 9% of the p-12 school-age population in the U.S. speak Spanish as their primary language, making the U.S. the fifth Spanish-speaking country in the world. In addition, "Spanish is the most common second

language spoken in America's classrooms, spoken by 75% of English language learners" (p. 23).

Schools' and teachers' ability to encourage family engagement is a great way to offset the low funding that education receives and a way to address "increasing economic disparities and language, culture, and ethnic diversity in our schools" (Miller et al., 2013, p. 159). The authors add that p-12 schools need to move away from the traditional way of engaging families to a more strategic and meaningful partnership in which the child's academic success is a shared responsibility. When these reciprocal partnerships exist, positive outcomes emerge not only for the students and their learning (better attitudes, school attendance and engagement, and homework completion), but also teachers (morale, job satisfaction, and better school evaluations), schools, and families (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Miller et al., 2013). Overall, these relationships help families better understand school expectations and gain confidence and knowledge of how they can better support their child's education and allow teachers an opportunity to get to know the student's cultural background.

For many years, family engagement has been thought of and practiced through typical definitions of school-based activities, which do not necessarily reflect the strategies and activities Latinx immigrant families or nondominant families use (González et al., 2013; McWayne et al., 2021). This mentality leaves Latinx immigrant parents out and away from p-12 schools due to "language barriers, cultural differences in views on the roles of parents and teachers, and inadequate understanding about how schools function" (Suizzo et al., 2012, p. 544). Therefore, some non-Latinx teachers hold

a perspective that Latinx families do not care about their children's education and do not want to be engaged (González et al., 2013; Weiss et al., 2009) or undervalue the culture and hold students to lower academic standards, which increase the academic achievement gap and prevents teachers from connecting and caring with students (Suizzo et al., 2012; Wall & Musetti, 2018). The student-teacher connection is also important as students crave an affective relationship with their teachers (Wall & Musetti, 2018).

It is evident that family engagement is crucial for student success and that newly arrived immigrant families, as a result of structural barriers to engagement (e.g., language, fear, employment), are often viewed not caring for their children's education and as unworthy partners in family engagement. This is a common misunderstanding due to cultural and structural differences in which Latinx practices of family engagement do not conform with the mainstream middle-class, white expectations (McWayne et al., 2021; Yull et al., 2018) and as p-12 schools continue to perpetuate whiteness. Researchers like McWayne et al. and Yull et al. confirm that family engagement models that schools follow are based on the values and accepted behaviors of white, middle-class families.

This disconnect further highlights the importance of closing the *cultural divide* (Vesely et al., 2017) to honor and value the knowledge and experiences of CLD families. According to González et al. (2013), one way to do this is to have a broader view of how Latinx parents can demonstrate their involvement in their children's education. This will change from a "deficit view" to one that shows families' engagement at a different style and rate, focusing on a strengths-based approach. Figure 1 below depicts this study's

theoretical framework informed by the family engagement literature integrated with intersectionality, LatCrit, and funds of knowledge. After the figure, I define family engagement, explain the importance of family engagement, and describe the different components of family engagement.

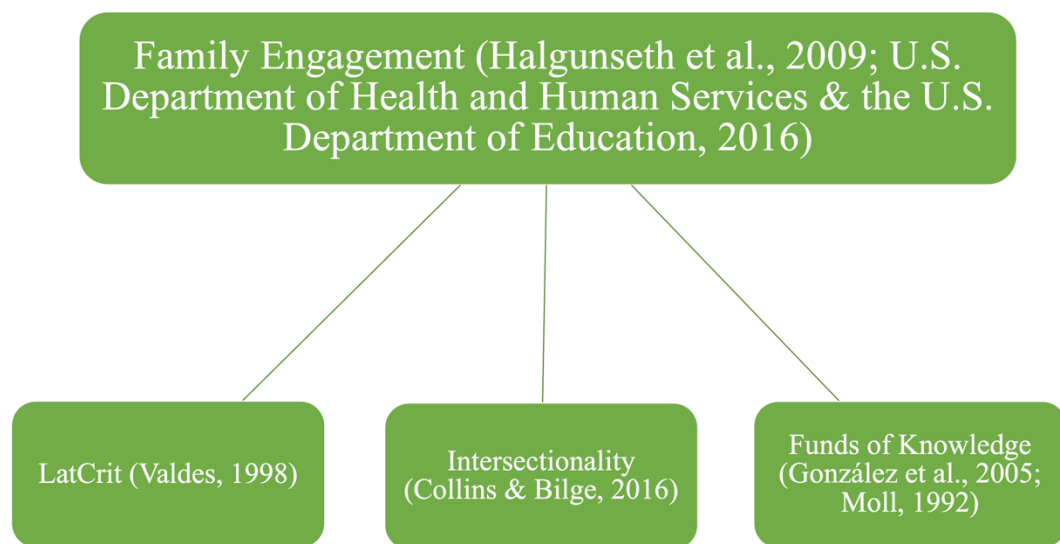


Figure 1

Theoretical Framework

Family Engagement

Distinguishing Family Engagement and Partnership from Parent Involvement and its Importance for Latinx Immigrant Families

Some studies use family engagement and family involvement interchangeably, and there needs to be a clear differentiation. Due to the discrepancies between these two

terms and the reasons explained in Chapter One, I decided to use the definitions from Halgunseth et al. (2009) – “family engagement occurs when there is an ongoing, reciprocal, strengths-based partnership between families and their children’s early childhood education programs” (p. 3) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education (2016) definition – family engagement is a “systematic inclusion of families in activities and programs that promote children’s development, learning, and wellness, including the planning, development, and evaluation of such activities, programs, and systems” (p. 1). Both definitions highlight the importance of creating and nurturing parent-teacher partnerships and how teachers need to include families in children’s education in meaningful ways. Also, these definitions focus on the importance of approaching family engagement with a strengths-based perspective, building mutually respectful relationships, and engaging in two-way communication to foster family involvement (California Department of Education, 2013).

For many years, Latinx families have been seen through a deficit view whose deficiencies (language, literacy, and culture) must be overcome to succeed academically and in life. Unfortunately, policies tend to focus on “fixing” the perceived deficits of Latinx children and their families instead of honoring their brilliance (Soltero-González & Gillanders, 2021). Since building strengths-based partnerships with Latinx immigrant families has challenges for different reasons such as socioeconomic status, housing, and overwhelming struggles that might prevent them from having a more active role in their children’s education (Mapp et al., 2017), the lens of intersectionality provides insight into

these socially-made structural constraints placed on Latinx families due to their situatedness.

Even though there are many family engagement strategies that are helpful, the one that presents the best results for students is when p-12 schools make an honest effort to create authentic and meaningful partnerships with the families they serve (Smith et al., 2014). These partnerships are crucial for encouraging family engagement (Soutullo et al., 2016). Building parent-teacher relationships that see both parties as equal contributors increase family engagement, enhancing children's development (Ogg et al., 2021).

Family engagement is not a static event. It is constantly changing depending on the contexts in which it takes place, the assets p-12 schools and families bring to the table, and the specific needs of the student (Carreón et al., 2005). Due to demographic changes in the classroom, p-12 schools need to adjust the way they have been trying to get families engaged in their children's education. As Hoffman et al. (2020) explain, "the traditional conceptualizations of family engagement...may not fully capture what it means to be engaged, especially for families from historically marginalized groups" (p. 86). The maximum benefit comes from positive partnerships in which p-12 schools and families work together to benefit the student.

To encourage family engagement and students' learning, it is pivotal that p-12 schools develop strategies to build and maintain relationships with families (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education, 2016). However, the strategies chosen by the p-12 schools should be suitable for the student population and show an honest desire to connect with students and their families

(Halgunseth et al., 2009). Partnerships are a much more effective and sustainable approach to family engagement than traditional unilateral communication (California Department of Education, 2013; Epstein, 2011). In partnerships between p-12 schools, families, and communities, student success is a shared responsibility and everyone works together to guide and support the student. Stauss et al. (2021) explain that when p-12 schools and teachers try to involve parents more, parents tend to interact more with the children at home, feel confident in their abilities to assist their children with assignments, and students show better attitudes and higher accomplishments.

The traditional way of parent involvement in U.S. education has been to put the responsibility on the family, and thus is deficits-laden (Halgunseth et al., 2009). Involvement has been measured by whether families attended activities the p-12 school deemed suitable. For immigrant families, the practices used at home “that support children’s education may be overlooked and underappreciated” (Halgunseth et al., 2009, p. 5). The importance of family involvement in students’ academic success needs to be recognized and made possible by providing opportunities beyond the attendance of school events. Providing additional opportunities together with good communication and trust helps increase parental involvement (Halgunseth et al., 2009; Stauss et al., 2021).

According to Ogg et al. (2021), trust is a key ingredient for meaningful and effective parent-teacher relationships and increased parent involvement. In addition, parent involvement focused on what the parents could not offer and p-12 schools attempting to adapt parents to their methods, emphasizing a deficit view. Therefore, the definition of family engagement for this study focuses on a strengths-based partnership

between families and p-12 schools that has the child's best interest at its center, and one that recognizes the diverse needs and expectations that culturally linguistically diverse families bring as well as the needs of the educator (Halgunseth et al., 2009). The following section describes the importance of family engagement for everyone, but especially for Latinx children and their families, and the positive outcomes it has on the child's academic achievement.

Outcomes Connected with Family Engagement for Latinx Children and their Families

Purposeful family engagement in students' education has positive links toward p-12 school readiness and academic success (Halgunseth et al., 2009; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Herrera et al., 2020; Mapp et al., 2017). Among other things, family engagement is crucial for children's learning, development, and social growth (Caspe et al., 2006; Halgunseth et al., 2009; Mapp et al., 2017). To encourage family engagement and student development, p-12 schools need to use strategies that help with creating and maintaining partnerships with families (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Herrera et al., 2020; Mapp et al., 2017). Further, the strategies used should be aligned with the needs of the diverse population schools serve and show a dedication to the community (Halgunseth et al., 2009; Hoffman et al., 2020; Mapp et al., 2017).

Henderson and Mapp (2002) and Ogg et al. (2021) support the importance of building partnerships with families to sustain children's learning and family engagement. In addition, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education (2016) explain that durable and robust family engagement is required to foster children's beneficial intellectual, physical, and social-emotional growth as well as

prepare them for p-12 school and life. Furthermore, family engagement in children's education positively influences their academic success and development (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education, 2016; Vesely & Ginsberg, 2011).

As mentioned earlier, several researchers agree that a significant portion of student success in p-12 school and classrooms is due to family engagement (Araujo, 2009; Epstein, 1995; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Mapp, 1997). For example, Henderson and Mapp (2002) and Mapp (1997) explain that when families and p-12 schools attempt to support student learning, students tend to enjoy school more, stay in school longer, and perform better in school. In addition, these authors and others like Soutullo et al. (2016) found that family engagement in their children's education positively impact students' grades, attendance, social skills, behavior, and interest in postsecondary education.

For Latinx families, "family engagement approaches that emphasize relationships among home and school and respect for family values may be particularly acceptable and effective (Clarke et al., 2017, p. 319). Halgunseth et al. (2009) emphasized that family engagement is crucial for improving student learning and family sense of security. When family engagement is encouraged and sought after, it helps increase social and human capital (Suizzo et al., 2012). Below I describe the different components of family engagement in Halgunseth et al.'s (2009) model and the role of intersectionality and LatCrit in family engagement since the model accounts for families from diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Family Engagement Components, Intersectionality, and LatCrit

I used Halgunseth et al.'s (2009) framework because it is thorough, and the authors synthesized from three key definitions in the field to create a more comprehensive explanation of family engagement and the one that guides this study. In addition, Halgunseth et al.'s model account for families from diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds, highlighting the different ways Latinx students and families intersect with schools and how they see, understand, and compartmentalize family engagement. The traditional (school-based) parent engagement keeps privileging the dominant culture and oppressing the non-dominant cultures (Ishimaru et al., 2016; McWayne et al., 2021; Posey-Maddox, 2017; Yull et al., 2018). Because of these structures, it is essential to explore intersectionality through the lens of family engagement and what it means for Latinx immigrant families.

In addition to intersectionality, it is important to examine the role LatCrit plays in family engagement and how schools perceive Latinx parents' involvement in their children's education. LatCrit focuses on the different identities Latino might have such as language, immigration status, ethnicity, and immigration, and the relationships between these (Nuñez, 2014). LatCrit theory is a movement that attempts to create a culture that better understands Latinos and the law. Overall, LatCrit seeks to improve the lives of Latino groups in the U.S. and combat all forms of persecution to gain justice for all (Valdes, 1998).

Given the complex journey and experiences CLD families have and the injustices the Latinx community suffers in the U.S., it is only appropriate to look at intersectionality

and LatCrit. Both terms help form a better idea of the Latinx identity and how it is shaped. Latinx families are constantly navigating the unknown and all of their involvements affect their participation in their children's education. The problem lies in the position the Latinx community has in the U.S. stratified society and how the power structure that our society has tends to devalue the knowledge and skills this community has to offer (McWayne et al., 2021). Below is a detailed explanation of Halgunseth et al.'s (2009) social exchange model of family engagement theoretical framework and how all of the resources might be represented to create and maintain strong parent-school relationships.

Theoretical Framework: Social Exchange Model of Family Engagement

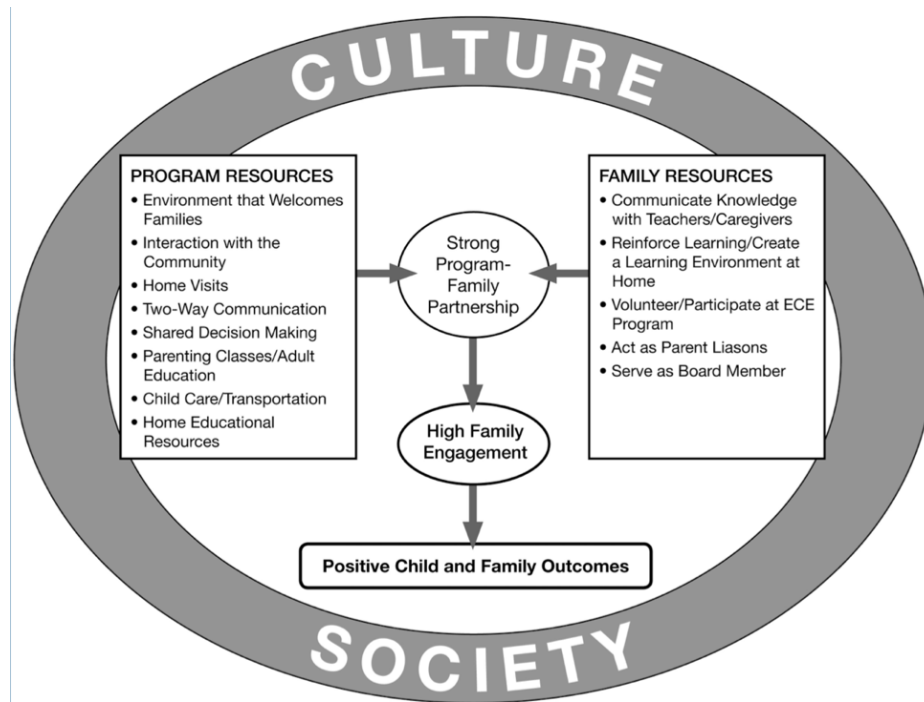
This study considers the social exchange model of family engagement framework designed by Halgunseth et al. (2009). The authors' comprehensive definition of family engagement considers six key elements that make it an all-inclusive one. By making it an all-inclusive model, it considers how the different identities of Latinx immigrant parents intersect and attempts to reduce oppression by seeing what these families bring through a strengths-based lens as opposed to a deficit view lens. The first element is that both p-12 schools and parents should be active in the decision making that affects the children and school. Second, two-way constant communication initiated by p-12 schools and parents through different channels and considering the language preference of the families is also important. Third, there is an exchange of knowledge between the families and the p-12 schools through families volunteering at different events at the school and teachers learning about the students and their families' lives and incorporating that information

into the curriculum. Fourth, both p-12 schools and families agree on the importance of having activities that foster education at home and within the community to promote learning. Fifth, there is a home environment in which families support and encourage learning as well as setting goals for children at home and school by both. Sixth, p-12 schools create and maintain family engagement practices by assuring buy-in from leadership and teachers and providing training and resources to fully engage families (Halgunseth et al., 2009).

The social exchange model of family engagement includes the ecological and social exchange theories. As research supports, having strong family-school partnerships is crucial for all children's academic success, including those from a linguistically diverse background (Halgunseth et al., 2009; Herrera et al., 2020; Stauss et al., 2021; Wall & Musetti, 2018). According to ecological theory, an interconnected system of contexts such as "distal (e.g., culture and society)" and "proximal (e.g., school and family)" (Halgunseth et al., 2009, p. 6) contributes to children's learning directly and indirectly. In addition, children's experiences at home and in ECE programs have the most impact on their development. On the other hand, social exchange theory focuses more on building and maintaining high-quality relationships through the process of reciprocity (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Halgunseth et al. (2009) add that trust is a core to social relationships between families and schools in social exchange theory. As trust strengthens, so is the commitment to the partnership between the families and teachers (Ogg et al., 2021). These partnerships rely on exchanges of tangible and

intangible resources such as ECE programs or a welcoming environment as long as the cost and benefit of these exchanges are justifiable to the families.

The ecological aspect of Halgunseth et al.'s (2009) model illustrates the significance of family-school relationships for the development of the students, while the social exchange theory demonstrates how social partnerships grow and sustain. Culture plays a critical role in the development of a child. Therefore, the social exchange model of family engagement considers all program and family resources, as shown in Figure 2 below. In addition, the events in a person's life are complex and usually are shaped and influenced by many different factors. Intersectionality is a tool that can aid in the understanding of the intricacy of the world and the environment that we are in (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Intersectionality attempts to identify different power dynamics that contribute to marginalization and serves as an analytic tool to solve problems and develop strategies to improve situations for marginalized people (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Nuñez, 2014). Halgunseth et al.'s (2009) model represents family engagement strongly connected to a robust program-family relationship. "A strong program-family relationship is one in which both programs and families contribute resources and work together on behalf of children's well-being" (Halgunseth et al., 2009, p. 7). Having a robust program-family relationship ready increases family engagement, which helps child development. After the figure, I explain the different resources of programs and families that facilitate strengths-based relationships.



Note. This figure was adapted from (Halgunseth et al., 2009)

Figure 2

Social Exchange Model of Family Engagement

Early Childhood Education Program Resources. To nurture family engagement, p-12 schools must offer resources that have been identified to increase children's learning and that families find them beneficial. These resources can include: building a welcoming environment, interacting with the community, doing home visits, encouraging respectful two-way communication with all families, including families in the decision-making process, offering options for adult education and parenting classes, providing childcare and transportation support, and offering resources to extend learning

opportunities at home. Having these resources provided by programs to families helps to create mutual relationships. In addition, they aid parents in developing new skills, build social systems, and reduce barriers to family engagement (Halgunseth et al., 2009).

It is essential to highlight that Latinx parents have high expectations for their children regarding education. Therefore, they do engage in their children's education in ways that are beneficial to them but might not necessarily coincide with those used in the U.S. (Soltero-González & Gillanders, 2021). Immigrant families are continuously juggling adjustment to a new culture, access to education for their children, job security, and learning a new language, all of which show how complex life can be for linguistically and culturally diverse families emphasizing the intersectionality of all these factors to better understand what family engagement means for CLD families. Below, I describe each of the resources shown in Halgunseth et al.'s (2009) social exchange model of family engagement. The resources programs have to offer is discussed next.

Welcoming Environment. Having a welcoming environment inspires families to be a part of the school-family relationship. A welcoming environment is one in which the program has a pleasing atmosphere for families and respects their attendance (Halgunseth et al., 2009). A study done by Nitecki (2015) confirms that parents from all backgrounds react positively to having a welcoming environment and serve as the footing for building parent-teacher relationships. Having a welcoming environment at the school is particularly important for marginalized and economically disadvantaged parents (Park & Holloway, 2018). For example, when Latinx families do not feel welcome at their school,

the interactions with teachers and school are minimal. Conversely, Latinx parents participate more in p-12 schools when they feel welcome (Halgunseth et al., 2013).

Making such an environment can vary from having a staff member welcoming family at the door, posting signs to ease the navigation of the building for families, and providing a designated parents' room in which they can interact with each other and share resources or information. Having role models representing different backgrounds and celebrating the cultures present among the families also help to promote a welcoming environment (Halgunseth et al., 2009). When families feel appreciated and accepted, this helps nurture family-school relationships (Constantino, 2008). For Latinx families, having a welcoming environment helps to create and improve partnerships among families and teachers (Colón et al., 2020)

Interaction with the Community. Being involved in the community might help lower the cultural and language barriers that often cause misunderstandings about families' involvement in their children's education. Being involved in the community allows programs to learn about the different cultures represented by the families (Halgunseth et al., 2009). When teachers socialize with the families in their communities, this has shown that teachers' negative beliefs about certain families have changed after having shared some experiences together (de La Piedra et al., 2006; Ferguson, 2008). Being an outstanding teacher means an immersion into the culture to learn from the community (Hoffman et al., 2020).

Home Visits. Home visits allow teachers to learn about the students' home life and culture and provide a more relaxed environment for teachers and parents to interact

(Meyer & Mann, 2006). Amanti (2005) highlights that through home visits, “we become real people to each other rather than shadow figures occupying our different niches” (p. 139). Park and Paulick (2021) add that home visits help strengthen parent-teacher relationships and help teachers increase their empathy and cultural awareness, which in turn helps to strengthen parent-teacher relationships. In addition, home visits can help avoid and fix issues quicker and more concisely (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). Finally, home visits help teachers connect the Latinx student and their family’s world at home to the school (Araujo, 2009).

Additionally, home visits facilitate engagement partnership building (Brown et al., 2016) and positively affect relationships with the children and the families. Furthermore, home visits help increase communication with parents, increase understanding of the child, and provide a better idea on how the environment at home affects school performance (Meyer & Mann, 2006). With teachers learning more about the students’ families and their lives through home visits, they can differentiate instruction for the students and adapt their teaching (Szech, 2020).

Two-Way Communication. Communication is a vital component of a strong relationship, especially regarding family engagement. It is pivotal that schools communicate with the families by means that take the different languages and cultural backgrounds into account. Translating documents into the families’ languages and providing translators for face-to-face and phone conversations are services that ensure two-way communication. It is also essential to ask parents their preference for communication (e.g., phone, email, home visits, etc.). Finally, it is not just about giving

parents information but also about listening to their needs and feedback. There should be a place where families can ask questions and express their issues (Halgunseth et al., 2009). For Latinx parents having two-way communication allows for authentic parent-teacher relationships to be built. This way of communication helps Latinx parents feel more comfortable while getting involved in their children's education (Soltero-González & Gillanders, 2021).

Shared Decision Making. Shared decision making is often ignored as a form of family engagement. Families need to be able to express their opinions and have a say in the different school practices and policies that ultimately affect their children. Lastly, programs need to find a way to include the voices of families from all walks of life into different parent leadership roles. For example, families can weigh in on the kinds of teachers the p-12 school hires and the curriculum design. These show the families that their opinions matter and will cause parents to feel ownership and pride in the school (Halgunseth et al., 2009). Bringing Latinx parents to the table in an honest effort of collaboration is a sign of family engagement (Auerbach, 2011). Latino communities in the U.S. are constantly victims of injustice and prejudice, pushing them into positions of marginality and disempowerment (Valdes, 1998). Having a joint effort in decision-making could potentially help alleviate oppression which aligns with LatCrit's purpose.

Adult Education. Providing parenting and adult education classes to families will provide parents with knowledge and skills that affect their children's well-being. Parenting classes teach parents different ways to build and nurture relationships with their children. Adult education classes can consist of job training, English classes, money

management, GED courses, first aid, substance abuse, and more (Halgunseth et al., 2009). Wall and Musetti's (2018) study show that providing parent education opportunities positively supports Latinx family engagement.

Child Care/Transportation. To increase family participation in different school events and meetings, schools must minimize the number of obstacles and costs the families see. A way to do this is by providing on-site childcare, transportation, and snacks at meetings (Constantino, 2008). In addition, when programs offer incentives and resources to families to attend different events, they make sure that families can get involved in the p-12 schools' activities (Halgunseth et al., 2009) and make logistics easier for families.

Home Educational Resources. P-12 schools can extend the children's learning beyond the school day. They can send home activities and materials that the families can use to support educational success. In addition, teachers can send videos of the classroom home to show how a concept is being taught and provide instructional strategies to the parents to use at home (Bailey, 2006; Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006; Feiler et al., 2006; Hughes & Greenhough, 2006). While teachers provide opportunities and resources for parents to expand what is being done at school, families feel closer to their child and the school (Halgunseth et al., 2009). For Latinx parents, motivation and guidance by the teacher are very important. Especially for parents who feel that their way of assisting their children with p-12 school differs from the teacher's expectations (Soltero-González & Gillanders, 2021).

Family Resources. Families are a wealth of knowledge and skills that the p-12 schools should value. Families have a lot to offer, and p-12 schools should incorporate them to build better school-parent relationships. Acknowledging these assets would only help students succeed in school and increase family engagement. Schools need to allow students to “maintain and sustain their home cultures while simultaneously attending U.S. schools” (Pratt et al., 2021, p. 49). Latinx families need to transfer their knowledge and experiences into the classroom to support their children’s education (Colón et al., 2020). Using funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) is a strategy that teachers can use to engage families and consists of acknowledging that people have knowledge and are competent. Funds of knowledge help identify non-school expertise families have (Hinton, 2015). Unfortunately, it is not utilized very much.

Moll (1992) explains that incorporating funds of knowledge into the curriculum is a way of seeing what the students and families bring as assets as opposed to deficits. Funds of knowledge use the experiences and skills of all families to encourage student learning. Incorporating the funds of knowledge the families bring will help make families feel that they matter and have something meaningful to share. In addition to the non-school expertise CLD families have to offer, the LatCrit lens helps to see the different factors Latinx families have to balance to create community culture.

LatCrit theory tries to balance different factors, including race and ethnicity, which serve as a social transformation and legal reform, to obtain knowledge and community culture. According to Fernández (2002) and Valdes (1997), LatCrit has four major functions: 1) the production of knowledge, 2) the advancement of social

transformation, 3) the expansion and connection of struggles, and 4) the cultivation of community. These four functions demonstrate the commitment of LatCrit to expand programs and create a community-based structure. The resources families have to offer are discussed next.

Communicate Knowledge with Teachers. Schools are not the only source of knowledge and resources to promote children's learning. Families also have a vast amount of resources that are equally important that they can bring to the relationship. However, p-12 public schools often ignore the funds of knowledge that households have without realizing that understanding these funds is key to understanding the cultural backgrounds that students have, but also that they are important and valuable resources in the classroom (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 2005). Too often, the social context of education in public schools of the CLD students is separated between home and schools, and funds of knowledge offer a way these two worlds can connect (Messing, 2005). According to Weiss et al. (2009), incorporating funds of knowledge into the classroom is a way to understand the different ways in which minority cultures see learning and the passing down of knowledge to children. This approach helps to build family-school relationships as well as enhance classroom instruction.

The bond between programs and families is stronger when family members: share knowledge with teachers, design a setting at home that supports classroom experiences, help or volunteer at the school, serve as a parent connection, and serve on program boards (Halgunseth et al., 2009). Latinx parents can volunteer at school during different lessons that emphasize their knowledge, skills, abilities, and cultural traditions (Colón et

al., 2020). One of the ideas of using funds of knowledge as an innovative way of teaching was to break away from the traditional, rote instruction that students tend to experience in schools (Moll et al., 2005). Using funds of knowledge flips the common deficit view of households to one that realizes that culture is not static but dynamic, and immigrant families are a wealth of knowledge (Amanti, 2005; González, Moll, Tenery, et al., 2005). Funds of knowledge is a way to honor the families and their identities.

Reinforce Learning/Create a Learning Environment at Home. Family members are excellent sources of knowledge regarding their children's development and learning styles. Parents must communicate this information to the teachers. The benefits of this interaction are very positive. Academic success is increased by having a positive learning environment at home which is another way of family engagement. Parent engagement in child learning at home has shown to result in higher academic achievement in children compared to other forms of parent involvement (Fantuzzo et al., 2004; Halgunseth et al., 2009; McWayne et al., 2004). Latinx parents tend to initiate activities that engage children in experiential learning, like cutting fruit and counting the number of slices or going on nature walks (Soltero-González & Gillanders, 2021). Soltero-González and Gillanders emphasize that the teacher usually does not see these activities, but they show Latinx parents "resourcefulness and commitment to their children's education" (p. 973).

Volunteering. Parents volunteering and participating in the different program activities and events have proven to boost their child's academic accomplishments and social growth, decrease teachers' misconceptions, and aid families in feeling more at ease within the school (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). P-12 schools must understand that many

families want to participate, but some obstacles prevent them from participating. Schools need to acknowledge that Latinx families do engage with their children's education even though many times they are seen as disinterested (Colón et al., 2020). The authors add that building trust between parents and schools is an excellent way to combat a deficit perspective.

There are different ways parents can be involved in their children's education. Having various opportunities to volunteer will help to increase parent-teacher collaboration. There are many different ways families can participate and volunteer in schools. For example, they can chaperone a field trip, attend fundraising activities, work in parent-teacher organizations, and plan and attend school activities (Carlisle et al., 2005; Rous et al., 2003). Parents may also donate their time and resources through other efforts like fixing the playground, donating toys and art supplies, and painting the school (Cochran, 2007). Finally, families can come into the classroom to share their experiences and interests (Halgunseth et al., 2009), which will help highlight the funds of knowledge within the Latinx families (Moll et al., 2005).

Act as Parent Liaisons. Since family liaisons have direct access to teachers and staff at the school and can observe what goes on in the classroom, they can become knowledgeable about their child's school. Being a family liaison in the child's school increases their engagement and encourages other families to be engaged (Muscott et al., 2008). Usually, family liaisons share similar backgrounds, cultures, and languages as other families in the program. Having Latinx parents serve as liaisons helps mitigate the

disconnect among Latinx families and schools, which can affect student academic achievement and parent involvement (Clarke et al., 2017).

Serve as Board Member. Often, the voices of the families are not considered when it comes to decision making in schools. However, when families serve on the program's board, they can be a part of the decision making and be actively engaged in their children's education (Halgunseth et al., 2009). It is essential that families have a say on who will teach their children and participate in policy changes. It is not easy for Latinx parents to become participants within the school structure when historically, their participation has not been institutionalized. Therefore, the schools need to make an effort to include them so they can have input in the school's life (Jasis, 2021).

Incorporating the different components suggested in Halgunseth et al.'s (2009) model will help to increase family engagement, especially for Latinx immigrant parents. Intersectionality and LatCrit focus on how the structures in society tend to keep oppressing the already oppressed and privileging the ones that are already privileged. Looking at Latinx immigrant parents' family engagement through the lens of intersectionality and LatCrit will help better understand these families' needs and expectations and how teachers and schools can use a strengths-based approach to build and maintain positive parent-teacher relationships. The section below examines the impact the change in demographics is having in public schools and the lack of teachers of color, and what it means for the students.

Change in Demographics and Teacher Workforce

There are rich and complex reasons that a family decides to immigrate to another country with a new and different culture and language. Some are escaping conflict and persecution, while others are looking for financial stability and educational mobility. No matter the reason for their immigration, they are faced with the challenges of adjusting to a new way of living with little to no support (Vesely & Ginsberg, 2011). To make things more complicated, the cultural divide between teachers and students and their families tends to make teachers continue privileging white families (Vesely et al., 2017).

Furthermore, these racial and cultural differences can negatively impact student learning and development (Brown et al., 2016; Yull et al., 2018). Humans rely on education to help them learn the skills and knowledge necessary to survive. Education has no option but to react and respond to these changes (Roberts, 2015). Consequently, p-12 schools play an essential role in helping with this adjustment and helping bridge the linguistic and cultural gap to help immigrant families navigate this difficult and unknown situation (Lowenhaupt, 2014). Moreover, teachers need to be equipped to work with and involve diverse families (Brown et al., 2016).

As explained in Chapter One, minority students are becoming the majority in public schools in the U.S. Therefore, schools are showing a wider variety of nationalities, cultures, and languages, making the classrooms more culturally and linguistically diverse (Roberts, 2015). Due to the change in demographics the U.S. is experiencing, it seems only appropriate that teachers try to encourage and foster a culture in which tolerance, appreciation, and acceptance are valued in the classroom. However, even though the

early childhood-aged population is changing, the curriculum still caters towards the majority population, leaving a “disconnect between what our students know and experience at home and the ways our students are being framed, positioned, and shaped through the curriculum” (Pratt et al., 2021, p. 58).

In addition, as a result of globalization, technology, and migration, our society continues to welcome and interact with people from other cultures. Therefore, it is also critical that teachers understand the importance of their role as educators in providing and promoting a learning environment that embraces the different backgrounds, languages, and experiences that this diverse population brings. Cushner et al. (2022) suggest that a way to accommodate the diversity present in the classrooms is that everyone, including students, teachers, and communities, “become more knowledgeable, more accepting, and better skilled at communicating with people from different backgrounds” (p. 23). The following section explores the need for diversifying the teacher workforce and its benefits for students of color.

Diversifying the Teacher Workforce

Even though American classrooms are becoming more diverse, the teacher workforce is not as diverse (Brown et al., 2016), with 88% being white (Geiger, 2018; Kumar & Lauermann, 2018). However, the teacher workforce in ECE centers tends to be more diverse than in K-12 and better reflects the student population (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2017; Migration Policy Institute, 2015). Having the teacher population being predominantly white means that most teachers in public schools come from different cultures than their students and experience certain privileges that their

students lack, putting students of color at a disadvantage (Neal et al., 2015). Cushner (2015) also emphasizes the importance of diversifying the teaching workforce worldwide to reflect the change in demographics that we are experiencing. Even though the ECE workforce is more diverse, efforts need to continue to be made to ensure the teacher population is representative of the student population.

The ECE student population diversity calls for the need of the ECE workforce to become cultural and linguistic competent to better serve these students and their families (Migration Policy Institute, 2015). According to several researchers (Goldhaber et al., 2015; Neal et al., 2015; Villegas & Irvine, 2010), there are three major reasons to diversify the teacher workforce. First, teachers of color serve as role models for all students, including white. When teachers of color serve as role models, it helps the white students question and challenge the racist stereotypes they have been socialized into. Second, due to their cultural experiences, they can incorporate those and relate better to students of color. Yull et al. (2018) argue the importance of white teachers to familiarize themselves with the cultures of the children in their classrooms. Lastly, they would “contribute to the education of students of color by reducing the acute shortage of educators for high-minority urban schools” (Neal et al., 2015, p. 7).

Having a teacher workforce that is representative of the student population would be very beneficial for schools, students, and the community (Geiger, 2018). As stated earlier, the ECE workforce tends to be more diverse but as more CLD children enter the education system, efforts must continue to make sure there is also an increase in CLD educators (Migration Policy Institute, 2015). This connection allows the students to see

successful adults who look like them and who care about not only education generally but also their lives. This negates students buying into negative stereotypes and reinforcing the idea that white people are more capable of holding leadership positions in society (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Further, Villegas and Irvine explain that having teachers of color represented in the schools sends a message about the distribution of power in American society. Even though teachers of color are not superheroes, they can positively impact learning for students of color (Haddix, 2017). The cultural differences of the homogenous teacher workforce present at schools affect student growth and learning (Brown et al., 2016) and “often lead to disproportionate suspensions and expulsions of students of color” (Yull et al., 2018, p. 322).

Furthermore, evidence shows the importance of students identifying with teachers and schools in promoting learning (Nieto, 2010). Therefore, the idea of diversifying the teacher workforce proves to be imperative. Villegas and Irvine (2010) report that increasing the representation of Latinx teachers in a school’s district “reduced the assignment of Latino students to special education, increased their placement in classes for the gifted, and lowered their rates of suspension and expulsions from school” (p. 180). Neal et al. (2015) explain that those underperforming students are the ones who benefit the most from having relationships with teachers of color. This is another reason why schools need to diversify the teacher workforce and provide the diverse student population a chance to look up to teachers who look like them and could better identify and connect with them (Nieto, 2010). Cushner (2015) adds that the lack of teacher diversity is not only present in K-12. We are also experiencing it in higher education.

Therefore, Colleges of Education should also try to recruit and retain minority faculty to offer diverse perspectives to the students. In ECE programs the teacher workforce tends to be more diverse, but white still represents a majority at 63% compared to Hispanics at 14% (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2017). The following section explores teacher education programs and professional development opportunities for pre- and in-service teachers.

Teacher Education Programs and Professional Development

Since the vast majority of teachers and pre-service teachers are white females from low-middle or middle-class with little to no cross-cultural experiences and are monolingual (Brown et al., 2016; Cushner, 2015), different experiences and courses should be offered to incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy into their practice (Kumar & Lauermann, 2018). Especially when the U.S. early childhood and school-aged population comes from a variety of countries and languages and the Latinx community is the largest minority in the country (Wall & Musetti, 2018). Brown et al. (2016) and Vesely et al. (2017) emphasize the need to educate pre- and in-service teachers on how to engage CLD students and their families to respond to the changes in demographics. Without professional development support to encourage and better integrate family engagement, teachers and schools will continue doing more of the same (McWayne et al., 2021), meaning that communities of color forms of engagement continue to be overlooked and undervalued.

Culturally responsive pedagogy entails that teachers are aware of and consider the different needs, values, and identities their CLD students and their families have and

bring to school (Pratt et al., 2021). In addition, culturally responsive teaching recognizes that students and their families have many assets that help and support learning (Nieto, 2010). Nieto further explains that culturally responsive teaching means that “there has to be a real and honest connection between the needs and cultural values of teachers and students” (p. 168). Part of culturally responsive teaching is tapping into the funds of knowledge CLD families have and incorporating them into the classroom. Preparing teachers, especially white teachers, is a step toward minimizing the racial gap between teachers and students (Neal et al., 2015). It only seems fitting that with the U.S. being already a multicultural society and continuing to be, “multicultural approaches to education are not an option” (Nelson et al., 2020, p. 227).

Vesely et al. (2017) indicated that for in-service teachers it is crucial to offer professional development sessions in which teachers can learn how to understand and work with culturally and linguistically diverse families. Furthermore, teachers need to learn how to manage stress while dealing with these challenges and support teachers to further their education (Vesely & Ginsberg, 2011). According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), supporting teachers’ development of family engagement skills proves to be an excellent strategy to increase family engagement. These professional development opportunities would allow them to be better prepared to teach the population they serve. Levy and Fox (2015) explain that there are specific characteristics that teachers should possess to support students from immigrant families. These characteristics include: accepting and understanding of diversity, being knowledgeable about their content teaching, and being flexible, in addition to showing expertise in culturally responsive

pedagogy. To better support CLD students, teachers must know how to “establish healthy and supportive school environments where students’ diverse assets are embraced and where challenges can be addressed in culturally responsive ways” (Wall & Musetti, 2018, p. 2).

Neal et al. (2015) add that it is also essential to provide a space for white teachers to question their assumptions and how these influence their teaching. When teachers develop cultural humility (recognize how their backgrounds and experiences affect their interactions with CLD students), they aspire to become more culturally aware and competent (Vesely et al., 2017). The reflection space is necessary to acknowledge the “impact their own backgrounds and perceptions have on the educational experiences of their students” (Neal et al., 2015, p. 2). For teachers to develop meaningful relationships with their students, they need to examine and transform their own beliefs and attitudes towards immigrant children and see what they bring as valuable and worthy (Nieto, 2010). The following section explains the importance of having positive student-teacher relationships.

Student-Teacher Relationships

In addition to having positive parent-teacher relationships, it is vital to have positive student-teacher relationships as these make students feel part of the learning community (Nieto, 2010). It is equally important to foster students’ learning and to help them navigate the sometimes difficult school context. On the other hand, academic success can be affected if negative teacher-student relationships exist (den Brok & van Tartwijk, 2015). The authors also explain that because each person has a different

nationality and comes from a different background, each one views these relationships from their own perspective.

Teachers should be understanding and perceptive about students' experiences and backgrounds and validate and accept who they are (Nieto, 2010). To build and maintain positive relationships, it is imperative that both teachers and students cultivate mutual acceptance and that teachers get to know students in their home-based contexts to get to know the whole child, not just limited to the walls of the p-12 school (Moll et al., 2005). In addition, it is essential to close the cultural divide between teachers and CLD families to help make home-school connections (Vesely et al., 2017). The following section focuses on what family engagement means for immigrant families and highlights the challenges this population faces when attempts are made to conform to the traditional paradigm of family engagement.

Family Engagement Among Immigrant Families

Even though there are numerous challenges that might prevent immigrant families from being engaged in their children's education, "families from all backgrounds report a desire to be involved, want their children to do well in school, and hope that their children will achieve a better life" (Weiss et al., 2009, p. 12). Unfortunately, Latinx are overrepresented in low-income communities and therefore, attend underfunded and under-resourced schools (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Even though Latinx families are very involved and supportive of their children's education, their efforts and valuable contributions are typically overlooked because the concept of family engagement varies greatly between U.S. p-12 schools and Latinx families (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). As

Gross et al. (2020) explain, educators and parents hold different views of what family engagement activities can be and conceptualize family engagement differently. For example, parents might see engagement as providing homework support at home, reading at home, or stressing the importance of obtaining an education. However, educators might see engagement as how much parents volunteer in the classroom, chaperone trips, or respond to school communication.

One of the most common challenges is that many immigrant families are not proficient in English (Davis-Kean & Eccles, 2005) and p-12 schools are not as effective when it comes to engaging newly arrived immigrants or Latinx families (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Traditionally, many teachers in the U.S. translate families' low involvement and physical presence at the schools as an absence of interest in their children's education. Teachers fail to consider the different reasons, such as language and cultural differences as explanations as to why culturally and linguistically diverse families might have limited involvement (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006). Due to cultural differences, Latinx families might be more involved at home than at school (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). This form of parental engagement should be interpreted as another type of parental involvement rather than a lack of involvement.

Another challenge is that many immigrant parents lack familiarity and knowledge about the public education system in the U.S. and lack access and familiarity with different services for their children (Davis-Kean & Eccles, 2005; O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014; Soutullo et al., 2016). Especially those parents with low educational accomplishment might be apprehensive about the p-12 school system (Plunkett et al.,

2009). These parents tend to believe that they do not have the skills to contribute to their children's education (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014) and leave the education up to the teachers and schools. Soutullo et al. (2016) add that other challenges include teachers not recognizing or noticing immigrant families' involvement at home with their children's studies. Teachers' beliefs about family engagement include many generalizations and assumptions based on current or past events. Both the teachers' and the families' sociocultural backgrounds impact the interactions between parents and teachers and how engagement is developed (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006).

COVID-19 intensified the social and health inequalities among vulnerable populations (Gil et al., 2020). The authors add that the Latinx community is around 60 million (18%) people in the U.S., and it was tremendously affected by COVID-19. This group accounts for 28.4% of the U.S. COVID-19 cases. Many families lost childcare and became the primary childcare provider, which means that many parents had to quit their jobs to stay home with their children. Remote learning relied primarily in the collaboration between educators and parents, exacerbating the importance of parent-teacher relationships (Soltero-González & Gillanders, 2021). Emphasizing the importance of the inclusive definition of family engagement on maintaining two-way and meaningful parent-teacher communication (Gross et al., 2020; Halgunseth et al., 2009; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Often, teachers see family involvement as volunteering in the p-12 school or attending parent-teacher conferences or events in school facilities. This lack of understanding causes p-12 schools to feel that immigrant families do not care about their

children's education instead of thinking they have different ways of being engaged (Soutullo et al., 2016). Often, CLD families are in search of an environment that is conducive to their engagement (Auerbach, 2011). In addition, p-12 school efforts might be perceived by families as intimidating to their school engagement (Soutullo et al., 2016). The traditional family engagement paradigm might have some positive elements; however, with the new diverse population, the paradigm inhibits different perspectives on how diverse families are involved (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006). The authors add that the traditional paradigm does not see other forms of engagement like play or visiting family members as rich experiences and ways of engagement.

Research shows that minority families do have great interest in their children's education and in being engaged. However, p-12 schools need to make an effort to break the barriers that might be interfering with their engagement to see how the minority families make a difference in their children's academic success (Weiss et al., 2009). In addition, Souto-Manning and Swick (2006) explain that the traditional paradigm tends to see what the diverse families bring as a deficit or weakness because these families were not socialized into the traditional practices. For example, Latinx students tend to be put in remediation programs merely because "they lacked some of the traditional paradigm skills deemed relevant for success" (p. 189). Further, because of the cultural differences between teachers and students, students are often "misabeled as behavior problems or having learning disabilities" (Brown et al., 2016, p. 76). In the cultural pluralism view of difference as opposed to deficit, the American society would be fortified as opposed to debilitated by the existence of different cultures. Furthermore, students would have a

higher chance of succeeding when the school experience is similar to their home experience (Cushner et al., 2022).

That many p-12 schools do not consider family engagement essential to foster children's acquiring knowledge and growth presents a barrier to family engagement (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Weiss et al. (2009) note that disadvantaged families think that learning is solely the p-12 school's responsibility (this view is reinforced by education policy) and often do not see their engagement in their children's education as pivotal. Often Latinx families, especially those from low socioeconomic status and limited education, feel that they do not know how to help and support their children. Further, under-represented families also lack polity capital which means having a sense of membership in mainstream society. Lowenhaupt (2014) explains that having a sense of membership is critical to seek the support necessary for academic success and navigating society.

Other challenges regarding family engagement that surfaced in the literature were that p-12 schools did not have a system in place to plan and maintain partnerships with the families, lack of support, and lack of vision for integrating families into the school (Soutullo et al., 2016). Teachers' perspectives and beliefs about families and students could also impact the school/teacher-parent relationship. If families' dissimilarities were perceived by teachers from a deficit view as opposed to as assets, these could negatively affect the relationship. This deficit view prevents teachers from identifying and using the funds of knowledge that these students and their families bring (Davis-Kean & Eccles, 2005; Soutullo et al., 2016). Lastly, low-income families might not be able to be involved

in schools as much as they wish due to work, transportation, childcare, and other responsibilities (Mapp & Hong, 2010; Plunkett et al., 2009), but this does not mean that they do not value their children's education.

Even though minority families have many obstacles that might prevent them from traditional means of family involvement, p-12 schools must keep in mind that parents care about their children's education and want them to succeed in life (Auerbach, 2011; Mapp et al., 2017). It is equally important to acknowledge the cultural differences that families bring and their approach to family engagement instead of disregarding it as not useful. Keeping the traditional paradigm of family engagement is only promoting further marginalization, and schools simply cannot continue to be guided by this definition without considering the rich and multifaceted sociocultural backgrounds of the students and the families represented in the schools (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006).

Therefore, Souto-Manning and Swick (2006) emphasize that as p-12 schools become more diverse, we need to change the paradigm and acknowledge the sociocultural backgrounds that the students and their families bring and honor them and their identities. Schools should "embrace diversity as a resource, rather than as a deficit" (p. 192). Furthermore, p-12 schools must build relationships with parents that are systematic and sustained throughout the years and maintain constant communication (Weiss et al., 2009). Below I discuss what research shows about teachers' perspectives of family engagement.

Family Engagement from the Teachers' Perspectives

Halgunseth et al.'s (2009) model describe the different program resources schools offer to have strong parent-teacher relationships and increase family engagement of people of color. This section highlights the need for and importance of changing from a deficit view to a strengths-based perspective that values and honors the different ways CLD families engage in their children's education. As I previously discussed, teachers and immigrant families have different ideas of what working with families is and how it can be displayed. They each have a script from their point of view. In this light, teachers' beliefs about family engagement might hinder them from seeing the valuable and different ways diverse parents can engage in their children's education. No matter what grade teachers teach, what state they teach in, what race their students are, or how advanced or struggling their students are, all students have families, and every family is different (Epstein, 2011).

To create and maintain parent-teacher relationships, p-12 schools and teachers need to ditch the CLD family deficit model of devaluing their experiences to one that focuses more on the strengths this population has (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006; Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006). Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) emphasize that parents' engagement is highly impacted by the teachers' and schools' efforts to include them in the students' education. It should not be limited to volunteering and school events, and it should identify funds of knowledge (Colombo, 2006; Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006). According to Epstein (2011), educators cannot just expect that parents are going to be involved the way the teacher expects or that parents will respond and follow their

requests. Educators need to understand and learn the cultural experiences that the students have and include them in the curriculum to represent the whole child.

Asking teachers to connect with the students' languages and cultures is not an easy task as many teachers report that they are not prepared to work with families, especially with CLD families (D'Haem & Griswold, 2017; Epstein, 2011; Ferrara, 2017; Vesely et al., 2017). In addition, many teachers see the cultural differences as a deficit and are quick to assume that if parents do not show up for a parent-teacher conference, it means that they do not value education (Sebolt, 2018). Lynch (2010) also claims that teachers need to examine their own beliefs about CLD students because those beliefs affect what they do in the classroom and student achievement. Another aspect stressed by D'Haem and Griswold (2017) is that since a majority of the teacher workforce comes from a white middle-class background, they do not know how to interact with diverse families and have negative feelings towards this population. This lack of teachers of color further highlights the importance of diversifying the teacher workforce as discussed earlier in the chapter.

In conclusion, teachers need to evaluate their own beliefs towards teaching diverse students and change their deficit view of diverse families to a view that values and recognizes funds of knowledge. After all, teachers are the ones that make decisions about their classrooms and have the power to build relationships with students and their families (Nieto, 2010). Soltero-González and Gillanders (2021) explain that “a parent-teacher relationship that validates families' funds of knowledge, including their cultural and language practices, is needed more than ever” (p. 966). Lastly, teacher education

programs need to better train pre-service teachers on family engagement, and schools need to provide professional development opportunities for in-service teachers (Brown et al., 2016; Levy & Fox, 2015; Vesely et al., 2017). The following section covers what successful partnerships with immigrant families might look like—focusing on a strengths-based approach leaving behind the deficit view.

Successful Educational Partnerships Among Immigrant Families

Earlier in the chapter, I described Halgunseth et al. (2009) social exchange model of family engagement and the different resources that p-12 schools and families bring, how building strong relationships between schools and families turns into a high level of family engagement, which in turn lead to positive outcomes for the student and the families. This section discusses possible p-12 schools' actions to change their traditional values and beliefs regarding family engagement. I also provide more guidelines on building and maintaining strengths-based partnerships between p-12 schools and families to benefit all of those involved in the process.

It is no secret that when parents are engaged in their children's education, the positive effects towards their children's behavior towards learning and their attitude towards school are immensely beneficial (Meyer & Mann, 2006). Araujo (2009) documents that teachers are trying to find ways to strengthen communication with linguistically diverse families to increase student achievement in the classroom. Having strong communication between teachers and families helps boost academic performance and helps with social adjustment (González et al., 2013). For the diverse population to succeed in school, Araujo (2009) emphasizes how important it is for families and p-12

schools to collaborate. With the increase in a diverse population in the classroom, p-12 schools need to better understand different cultures and the needs that these families bring.

Additionally, due to this demographic shift and demands from the diverse student population, it is an opportune time to evaluate the p-12 school's attitudes, values, and beliefs towards developing and nurturing parent-school relationships (Mapp & Hong, 2010). Another important aspect is the need for p-12 schools to make the parents feel welcome and valued regardless of where they are from and what language they speak. A welcoming environment is directly linked to Halgunseth et al.'s (2009) model as a program resource to increase family engagement.

Mapp and Hong (2010) explain that when professional development participants are asked what they would like to learn about home-school partnerships, the usual answer is how to connect with those families that seem to not get involved in their children's education. Generally, these families come from low socioeconomic status, have limited education, are families of color, speak a first language other than English, and are recently arrived immigrants. Mapp and Hong cite that sending emails and invitations to parents might seem like teachers are trying to reach parents; however, this method is ineffective. What the authors intend to implement is something more profound in which teachers and p-12 schools are required to test, notice, and change their attitudes and beliefs when trying to build and foster relationships with families.

Nieto (2010) explains that if p-12 schools want to foster student learning, "the very climate of schools needs to undergo a critical transformation in order to make it

clear that students of diverse backgrounds are expected and encouraged to learn” (p. 128). Halgunseth et al. (2009) add that p-12 schools that follow the traditional way of doing things to involve families might give the sense that they are indifferent to the family’s time, monetary, or educational limitations. In addition, what CLD families do at home to support their children’s education might be seen as inappropriate or ignored by the teachers and p-12 school. This deficit view needs to change to one that values what these families bring and foster strengths-based partnerships.

Language barriers and cultural differences might give the sense that CLD families do not want to get involved in their children’s education when it is quite the opposite. P-12 schools can reduce these challenges by learning more about the students’ cultural backgrounds and hiring personnel that reflects these students’ language and cultural backgrounds (Halgunseth et al., 2009). This reemphasizes the importance of further diversifying the teacher workforce since teachers of color already come in well-suited to teach the diverse population. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education (2016) agree that not having diverse staff represented in the p-12 schools and lack of trained staff to be aware and better prepared to deal with CLD families might further hinder family engagement. Halgunseth et al. (2009) and other researchers add that p-12 schools should use communication strategies congruent with the student demographic.

Cultures are very particular, and culture varies from individual to individual (Skelton, 2015). Each person defines their own culture differently. In addition, Skelton explains that when a “sense of other” is present, there are better interactions and

understandings among different groups. People can achieve having a sense of other when they are capable of thinking about what the other person is feeling and then acting upon them in a reciprocally favorable way. Skelton adds that emotions also play a crucial role in student learning. Positive feeling like motivation encourages learning. On the other hand, negative emotions like fear can hinder learning.

Often teachers think that by focusing on the different festivals, food, flags, etc., they are being international-minded and culturally responsive. Even though it is a step in the right direction, it is not enough to encourage and foster a sense of other amongst the students (Skelton, 2015). In such instances, involving families of diverse backgrounds can come in handy and the families might feel useful. This collaboration can allow teachers to promote family engagement and seek out what is important to these families and their culture. Having a strong and reliable parent-teacher relationship is crucial for students' learning and development. For families to be more involved in schools, schools need to provide resources that families see as beneficial and that their children's learning is being positively affected (Halgunseth et al., 2009).

Building and maintaining parent-school relationships is crucial for increasing family engagement and the students' academic success. Attaining such relationships needs an environment that nurtures mutual relationships, direct buy-in from the school leadership, common goals between school and families, and utilizes established procedures and regulations that encourage family engagement (Auerbach, 2011; Halgunseth et al., 2009; Weiss et al., 2006). Home visits are a good strategy for teachers and families to get to know each other, for teachers to learn more about the students'

home life and cultural backgrounds, and to efficiently solve issues (Halgunseth et al., 2009; Meyer & Mann, 2006; Vesely & Ginsberg, 2011). Meyer and Mann (2006) concluded that all the effort, time, and emotional energy that it takes to make home visits pay off because they help build and maintain parent-teacher relationships and increase family engagement. Soltero-González and Gillanders (2021) highlight the importance of getting to know parents to create culturally sensitive pedagogy:

Learning more about what parents are actually doing and what resources they need can inform the design of more culturally sustaining approaches for home-school partnerships. Culturally sustaining pedagogy promotes and sustains children's and families' skills and knowledge and gives children and families opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in school. (p. 966)

Vesely and Ginsberg's (2011) and Wall and Musetti's (2018) study shows that if p-12 schools help families connect with social services and intentionally address their needs, in addition, to help them fight for their rights, families would be more willing to get involved. These efforts will also help families build social and navigational capital (Vesely et al., 2013). Knowing why CLD families do not get involved and offering solutions to overcome these barriers are also options that p-12 schools can take on to promote parent-teacher/school relationships. It could be something as simple as providing transportation or translators. Mascadri et al. (2017) highlight the benefits of maintaining constant communication with the families to expand the teachers' cultural knowledge. These suggestions on how to build parent-school relationships to increase family

engagement align with Halgunseth et al.'s (2009) social exchange model of family engagement.

Conclusion

This literature review provided an in-depth analysis of what family engagement is, why it is important, and the different components of the *Social Exchange Model of Family Engagement*. It also discussed the change in the U.S. demographics and the importance of diversifying the workforce in p-12 schools. It also highlighted the need to provide professional development opportunities for in-service teachers on how to incorporate CLD families into the classroom and the need for teacher education programs to train pre-service teachers on how to adjust to the needs of the new population. The different perspectives family engagement has for p-12 schools/teachers and immigrant families shed some light on some of the barriers Latinx families might encounter when assimilating to the traditional paradigm and provide strategies to increase family engagement. Lastly, it offered strategies on how to build and maintain parent-teacher relationships that focus on a strengths-based approach. This literature review supports and undergirds this study.

It is evident that p-12 schools and society have to change how family engagement is viewed to a more flexible, inclusive, and accepting of cultural and linguistic differences to match the student population. Overall, there is a lot of work that needs to be done. Still, an excellent place to start is by creating and maintaining strengths-based parent-school relationships lessening the deficit view that constantly contaminates our perspectives. All of the theories discussed in this chapter explain the different

perspectives on the meaning of family engagement from immigrant families and p-12 schools/teachers. In addition, these theories provide insight on how to build positive, long-lasting relationships between educators and families, focusing on the strengths that CLD families bring. The next chapter discusses the research methodology for this study. Chapter Three includes an overview of the study, the methodological framework, my ontological and epistemological stance, the design, selection of site and participants, data collection methods and analysis, quality, ethics, significance of the study, and limitations and boundaries.

Chapter Three

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' and Latinx immigrant families' perspectives of family engagement. This study also sought to inform the different ways these families engage in their children's education and provide information on how to build strengths-based parent-teacher relationships, specifically with Latinx immigrant families. This study contributes to the field strategies teachers can learn from Latinx immigrant families to promote children's socio-emotional development to maximize students' educational experience and promote the development of parent-teacher partnerships. This chapter provides my methodological framework, including my ontological and epistemological stances, a critical review of my design type and discuss the methods for this study, including a) research questions, b) selection of site and participants, c) data collection and analysis, d) trustworthiness, e) ethics, f) methodological significance of the study, and g) limitations and boundaries of the study.

The family and teacher perspectives were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. In addition, evidence of how to build strengths-based relationships between teachers and families is shared based on interpretation of the different data collection methods explained in detail later in this chapter. Finally, this research was investigated through the lens of naturalistic inquiry and an interpretivist paradigm. These approaches emphasize the importance of conducting the study in the participants' natural settings to view their real-life situations and experiences

through their own lens. As a result, each participant in the study was able to describe their own view of family engagement and how relationships can be built and maintained to help the student succeed in the classroom and increase overall family engagement among Latinx immigrant families.

Methodological Framework

Qualitative research allows the researcher to be situated in the world and by using interpretative practices make the world visible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The goal of qualitative research is to explain by telling a story of what specific individuals do, what these experiences mean to them (Erickson, 2011), and to “uncover participants’ understandings of their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24). People’s experiences in their natural settings are what is most important in this type of research to understand how individuals make sense of their lives (Hatch, 2002).

According to Patton (2015), qualitative researchers discover significance in words and stories and are captivated with narrative and case studies. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) further state that qualitative case studies aim for meaning making and understanding using the researcher as the channel for data collection and analysis and a detailed examining approach, with the final outcome being thoroughly descriptive. Yazan (2015) highlights the three seminal authors, Yin, Merriam, and Stake, differing definitions of qualitative research and ways of conducting case study.

For this study, Stake and Merriam align best with the constructivism epistemology, discussed further in the section below. In this paradigm, “the researcher is interested in understanding the meaning a phenomenon has for those involved. Meaning,

however, is not discovered but constructed” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24). Stake (1995) writes that “a case study is expected to catch the complexity of a single case. We look for the detail of interaction with its contexts” (p. xi). Stake expands his definition by writing that case study is a meticulous and complicated process in which the goal is to comprehend its development within a specific context. In addition, Stake explains that a researcher is drawn to cases because of both their “uniqueness and commonality” (p. 1) and because he/she “seeks to understand them and want to hear their stories” (p. 1).

For a more in-depth approach to a complex issue and focused attention to a particular situation, qualitative case study is more beneficial (Stake, 2006). However, this research methodology is constantly under attack for misconceptions such as being unable to generalize, not being good enough for a strong research design, being subjective, and relying too much on the researcher’s understandings (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Stake (2006) argues that case studies “are usually studies of particularization more than generalization” (p. 8), reinforcing the benefits of being able to do a more exhaustive investigation. Flyvbjerg (2006) differentiates between generalization and generalizability by explaining that generalizations are not the only way to measure scientific progress and are one of the “many ways by which people gain and accumulate knowledge” (p. 227). Even though generalizability can be used to test the hypotheses of a case study, one has to be careful because “random samples emphasizing representativeness will seldom be able to produce this kind of insight [deeper causes behind a given problem]” (p. 229). Generalization is not the sole goal of research. Many times, there is much richer information on a

phenomenon from fewer sources than from a representation of the sample to try to generalize (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

In regards to case study being subjective, Flyvbjerg (2006) explains that case study and qualitative methods are often seen as not being as rigorous as quantitative ones. However, he also argues that “the advantage of the case study is that it can ‘close in’ on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice” (p. 235). Lastly, Flyvbjerg concludes that the goal of case study is not to summarize and generalize but instead, it should be a narrative and “allow the study to be different things to different people” (p. 238).

As a type of qualitative research, case study is naturalistic in nature (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2015). To maintain the true nature of qualitative research, this study used a naturalistic inquiry approach. Guba (1978) defined a naturalistic inquiry as an approach in which the researcher utilizes a ‘discovery’ mentality and has no control about the events developing nor the outcomes of the research. Furthermore, a naturalistic approach allows the researcher to study real-life situations as they develop and accepts everything that emerges from the inquiry without controlling anything (Patton, 2015). Stake (1995) states that by using a naturalistic approach, the researcher describes in great detail “how things were at a particular place at a particular time” (p. 38) instead of explaining the why of events.

Yazan (2015) emphasizes the importance of the qualitative case study researcher to be upfront with their epistemological stand. Stake (1995) supports this claim by stating that the experience and learning shared with the reader depends on the researcher’s idea

of knowledge and reality. A constructivist stance toward a qualitative case study allows the researcher to have a particular interaction with the case. The case evolves in a partnership between the participants and the researcher designed to welcome the reader to partake in the relationship and case findings (Hyett et al., 2014). Constructivism supports the idea of the researcher sharing material with readers in order for them to create their own generalizations (Stake, 1995). Crabtree and Miller (1999) explain that one of the benefits of case study is that because of the collaboration between the participants and the researcher, participants can convey their stories. Successful relationships between the participants and the researcher require trust. Moreover, case study allows the researcher to have a more holistic view of the case at hand (Noor, 2008) and allows for a more in-depth examination (Zainal, 2007).

The most common critique about the case study is that there is no precise definition of this design (Gerring, 2004; Schwandt & Gates, 2018; Thomas, 2011). Also, the researchers' paradigmatic views critically impact how the case study is selected and studied. Thomas (2011) explains that even though case study is a very popular method, there is not a set format that a researcher can follow. Gerring (2004) adds that researchers keep using this design but have a hard time explaining exactly what they are doing. In Campbell and Stanley (as cited in Willis et al., 2007), they argue that because case study does not have a protocol in place that researchers can follow, it has been accused of having no methodical significance. Another critique is that the identification of a case to study is no easy task. In addition, case study research is often criticized on the grounds

that it is not generalizable. However, Stake (1995) emphasizes that some generalizations can be made because the case or cases chosen are studied at great length.

In conclusion, a “qualitative case study was developed to study the experience of real cases operating in real situations” (Stake, 2006, p. 3). Case study has been used for the purpose of understanding real-life phenomenon. It does not have a concrete definition due to the different ontological and epistemological beliefs researchers bring to the work. However, case study tends to be used to study complex and challenging situations in which researchers want to understand and go in-depth about a specific phenomenon. This type of design relies on interviews, observations, and narrative data collection methods (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Willis et al. (2007) add that it is a well-rounded method that supports the idea that much of what we can understand about human behavior is due to our interactions and experiences in the social environment. The following section discusses my ontological and epistemological stance.

Ontology and Epistemology

My interpretivist/relativist ontological and constructivism/critical theory epistemological stance align well with my worldview and study design. By conducting the study in the participants’ natural setting, I was able to better understand how they act and make inferences about what family engagement means to them and how long-lasting, meaningful relationships can be built. This falls under what Willis et al. (2007) defined as an interpretivist paradigm. According to the authors, interpretivists take into consideration the influence the environment can have on the participants and attempt to understand their views of the world or, in this case, family engagement. This paradigm

allows me, as the researcher, to view the world through the perspectives and experiences of the parents and teachers involved in my study. Thus, my role as a researcher is to interpret and construct knowledge based on my inquiry and share it with the reader (Yazan, 2015). Stake (1995) adds that “an ongoing interpretative role of the researcher is prominent in qualitative case study” (p. 43).

A relativist ontology views realities as socially and experientially constructed and dependent on those who hold them (Willis et al., 2007). These authors and Crotty (1998) explain that for a relativist, their culture and experiences help define and shape the realities that they fabricate. Most importantly, a relativist “believe the value of interpretations vary—relative to their credibility and utility” (Stake, 1995, p. 102). I am aware that even though certain views are particularly important to the participants, they might not contribute to the study by answering the research questions. Therefore, I will not consider them as crucial for this study.

One of the claims of constructivism as an epistemology is that meaning is co-constructed between the researcher and the participants (Hatch, 2002). Crotty (1998) clearly explains that constructivism focuses “exclusively on the meaning making activity of the individual mind” (p. 58). Meaning that each individual has unique experiences and a way of making sense of the world that needs to be valued and respected. I am aware that there are many different views and realities, and I do not intend to claim the best view, which is very difficult to determine (Stake, 1995). However, I intend to describe how each participant engages with the world and makes sense of it. Constructivism

would help me justify the vast amount of narrative and thick description provided to allow the reader an opportunity to come up with their own ideas (Stake, 1995).

One of the goals of critical theory epistemology is to empower participants (Creswell, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), which due to my social and navigational capital (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2015) as a researcher, I am positioned to make the voices of my participants heard. This epistemology explains knowledge as subjective and political, as well as being value mediated by the researcher (Hatch, 2002). Critical theory research focuses on helping people understand and challenge the current situations with the end goal of making something happen and bringing about change (Crotty, 1998; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

My ontologies and epistemologies discussed above intersect with one another because of how I conducted my study. By nature, qualitative research is interpretive and assumes that there is no single reality. Instead, reality is socially constructed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), which supports my relativist ontology and constructivism epistemology. The relativist ontology and constructivism epistemology intersect with all of the research questions as I was able to determine the participants' perspectives of family engagement and together build an understanding of what family engagement means. In addition, as a researcher, I constantly have to interpret the information collected through the different data collection methods (Patton, 2015), which connect with my interpretivist ontology. Lastly, since I want to understand teachers' and Latinx immigrant families' perspectives on family engagement as well as find ways to create strengths-based relationships, as a conduit to help participants have their voices heard and empower them to change the way

things have been done in the past. This is how the critical paradigm connects with my study. The interpretivist ontology and critical theory epistemology provide a strong alignment with research question #3 because the participants are in their natural setting and are re-telling their stories. Therefore, I was able to identify the different ways in which Latinx immigrant families become involved in their children's education and the different ways in which the participants see family engagement. Figure 3 below shows how my ontology and epistemology stances are connected to my research questions. After the figure, the design and research questions for the study are discussed.

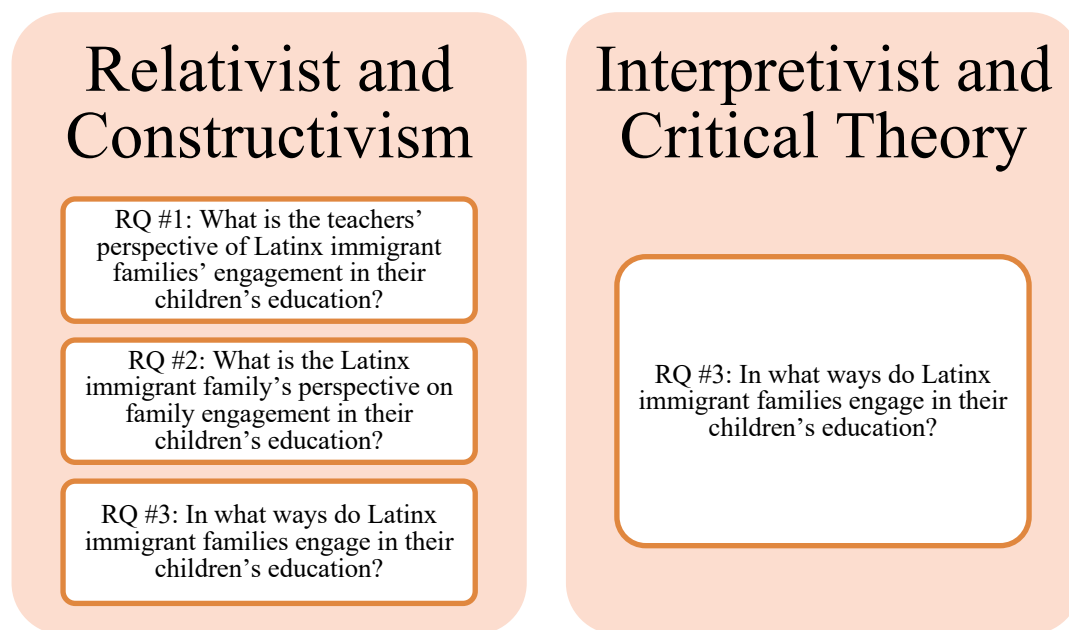


Figure 3

Ontological and Epistemological Connection to Research Questions

Design

This study consisted of an intrinsic multi-case/single site case study design (Stake, 1995) that intended to understand Latinx immigrant parents' and their children's teachers' perspectives and experiences of family engagement. The study was designed to highlight the different ways these families engage in their children's education and provides information on how to build strengths-based parent-teacher relationships, specifically with Latinx immigrant families, to decrease the deficit view that many teachers and p-12 schools have in regards to family engagement. Stake (1995) explains that an intrinsic case study is one in which we learn about that specific case, and therefore we have an intrinsic interest in the case. It is intrinsic because I am very interested in understanding the different perspectives that the Latinx immigrant family and the teacher have on family engagement and providing insight into how to build strengths-based relationships for the benefit of the students.

Qualitative inquiry according to Erickson (2011), "seeks to discover and describe in narrative reporting what particular people do in their everyday lives and what their actions mean to them" (p. 43). Since the focus of my study was a Latinx immigrant family and their child's teacher in their natural setting, the units of analysis (the cases) were a Latinx immigrant family whose parents were from El Salvador and Mexican American and their child's American teacher. The units of analysis mean that the main focus of data collection is on what is happening to the people in a specific setting and how people are affected by that setting (Patton, 2015). Therefore, the parents and teacher were an appropriate choice.

Context of the Study

To answer the research questions listed below, I conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the teacher and the father and a Zoom semi-structured interview with the mother. The teacher interview took place at her house and the father's interview took place at his business. In addition, I conducted observations during a live virtual class and the pre-K graduation. Graduation day (two options) was when parents and children came to drop off iPads, see their teacher, and get a bag filled with educational materials for the summer. It was also a special time when they got to see their teacher in person and take pictures. See Appendix A for graduation photo booth set up. I also created field notes.

Furthermore, I utilized a document review based on any written material shared between the teacher/school and the family, in addition to artifacts collected throughout the 2020-21 school year. According to Hancock and Algozzine (2017) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016), these documents may include notices sent home to parents, memos between teachers, staff, and the parents' association, formal policy statements regarding parental involvement, school bulletin boards featuring aspects of parental involvement, newspaper and other media coverage of activities featuring parental involvement, and any official records of parental attendance or presence in the school. Lastly, throughout the study, I kept a researcher journal to document my reactions and help with reflexivity. Below are the research questions for the study and the selection of the site.

- **Research question #1:** What is the teacher's perspective of Latinx immigrant families' engagement in their children's education?

- **Research question #2:** What is the Latinx immigrant family's perspective on family engagement in their children's education?
- **Research question #3:** In what ways do Latinx immigrant families engage in their children's education?

Selection

According to Reybold et al. (2013), the selection choices that we make shape “who and what matters as data” (p. 700). I used purposeful sampling (Patton, 2015) to get a more in-depth understanding of the case (Reybold et al., 2013). This type of selection focuses on the “value of information-rich cases and emergent, in-depth understanding not available through random sampling” (Reybold et al., 2013, p. 700). Thus, the authors explain that purposeful selection allows the researcher to access relevant data that is aligned with the purpose of the study, the research questions, the resources available, and the limitations presented. Stake (2006) explains that for qualitative studies, we tend to be very purposeful about selection to adapt it to our study and to go more in-depth. Reybold et al. (2013) add that purposeful selection is a tool that allows for meaning making in which the researcher constructs types of reality based on these choices. I understand the subjectivity of my selection due to my positionality as a researcher and the reasons for these choices. However, interpretation and depiction of data was not manipulated as suggested by Reybold et al.

Selection of Site

The city where I conducted the study is home to a large poultry plant industry that provides permanent employment for many immigrants (and refugees) as opposed to

seasonal jobs. The city is multilingual multiethnic, with a high percentage of its residents born outside of the U.S. The city has 54,215 residents, of which 19.8% are Hispanic and 24.7% of the population report that a language other than English is spoken at home (United States Census Bureau, n.d.). In addition, the city's public schools have 57 foreign languages represented, with Spanish speakers being the largest group at 73% of the 57 languages spoken (Harrisonburg City Public Schools, 2017). Furthermore, the city's public schools enrolled 3,348 Hispanic students out of 6508 in the 2020-2021 school year (Virginia Department of Education, 2021a). These statistics show that the city's public schools have a high percentage of Spanish-speaking students. More specifically, at the elementary school where I conducted the study, 51% of the students are Hispanic (Virginia Department of Education, 2021b). These demographics made the school system an excellent site to study.

The preschool program where the study was conducted is part of the Virginia Initiative Program (VPI), which provides high-quality education for at-risk four-year olds and is funded by the state of Virginia and the city schools. The program has classrooms in different daycare settings, a learning center, and an elementary school. I looked at the one located at the elementary school (Harrisonburg City Public Schools, 2022). Initially, I had an elementary school in mind because I personally knew the home-school liaison for the Latinx families. However, this person had a family crisis and had to step away. She connected me with others to help, but it was not successful. Through a collaboration of creating a free learning pod for the community due to p-12 school closings because of COVID-19, I met the teacher participant. This connection helped ease the process and

changed the site. Finally, the literature discussed in Chapter Two explains the extraordinarily positive impact family engagement has at an early age and how it could potentially be a salient factor of academic success. In addition, at a young age is also when parents are typically more involved in their children's education compared to middle and high school. The following section discusses the selection of participants.

Selection of Participants

Since participant selection influences research questions, data collection, data analysis, and findings (Reybold et al., 2013), it is not an easy task. For this study, the selection criteria consisted of the family being from Central or South America and their oldest child needed to be in school no further than 5th grade. The only criterion for the teacher consisted of them being monocultural-monolingual (English). Both parents were required and needed to live together to minimize reasons as to why parents might not be as involved in their children's education. I wanted the teacher to be monocultural-monolingual because "*who* I studied was intricately connected to *what* I might learn" (Reybold et al., 2013), and since I am interested in the perspectives of those teachers who do not look nor think like members of the Latinx community, these selections seem appropriate to gain insight.

For this study, the mother was from El Salvador and the father was born in Texas, but his parents were from Mexico. Their oldest child was in pre-K. The teacher participant was a white female from a small town in the Midwest where everyone was predominantly white and spoke only English. She moved to Virginia to attend college where she received her degree in education with a minor in Spanish. She graduated with

an early childhood education and a special education license and while in school, she spent a semester abroad in Guatemala. She has been teaching for over 16 years but has been in the classroom for nine years. She taught third grade for six years and then decided to resign to care of her own three children since neither her nor her husband have family in the area. For the last three years she has been teaching pre-K.

Access

To gain access to the site, first, I had to get permission from the city schools' research committee. Once approved by them, they recommended the superintendent to accept and support the study. However, the superintendent denied the request saying he needed to protect teachers from burning out and could not ask them to do any additional work. To seek approval from the city school's research committee, I sent the communication I was planning to send to the home-school liaison, which included the participants' criteria and information about the purpose of the study and myself. I also had recruitment materials the home-school liaison could use to help me identify participants. Lastly, I included the interview guides in English and Spanish. After I was informed that the superintendent did not approve my study, my whole world crumbled. The city school's research committee chair provided contact information for the county to see if maybe they would accept. I contacted the person at the county, and she was very eager to help. However, when trying to find teachers to participate, she was not successful. Finally, I realized that would not happen, and my world crumbled a bit more.

Since I personally knew the chair of the city school's research committee, I went back and asked if I could do the study if I found a teacher willing to participate. The chair

told me to try and that it could make a case for the superintendent. I reached out to my networks and the teacher from the learning pod project was one of those contacts. She graciously agreed to help me, the superintendent then approved the study, and now we had to find a family. The teacher contacted a few families, and one came back saying they would be willing to participate. However, after many attempts to set up a time to talk to explain the study, it became clear they no longer wanted to participate. COVID-19 made the selection of participants very difficult. While this was happening, I observed a live virtual class and the graduation events to see some interactions between parents and teachers/schools since they were limited because of the pandemic. Once again, my world started to crumble because I no longer had a family. One evening, I happened to pick up dinner for my family and the person working there asked me if I was a teacher because she had seen me before at the school. I told her that I was not a schoolteacher but that I worked at the local university. Suddenly, a light bulb went off in my head; she saw me at the pre-K graduation while I was doing the observation. I was very excited because I realized this could be the family I needed for my study. I talked with her, explained what I was doing, and asked if she would participate. She said yes, and then the scheduling game began. After several months, I was able to interview all of my participants. The sections below, explain the different data collection methods for the study and why I used them.

Data Collection

To explore the perspectives of family engagement of teachers and Latinx immigrant families and to explore the different ways in which Latinx immigrant families

engage in their children's education, the data collection consisted of two face-to-face and one Zoom semi-structured interview, a live virtual class observation, two observations at school events, and document review. Semi-structured interviews allow for specific information to be gathered guided by a list of questions but done in a flexible way with no predetermined order (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I interviewed each parent and the teacher. Merriam and Tisdell add that observations are a way to see and experience firsthand the phenomenon of interest in the natural setting. Therefore, it is like having front row seating to the issue at hand. According to several researchers (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), documents can consist of public or private records as described above that a researcher can access about a site or participants in the study. These sources provide invaluable information to understand the issue at hand (Creswell, 2012).

In addition, I kept a researcher's journal and field notes to aid in my reflections throughout the study and the analysis. Throughout the study, these strategies helped with reflexivity to provide quality (Reybold et al., 2013). Each data source contributed to my understanding as a researcher of the issue at hand. Having a mix of data sources allowed me to see if common issues surfaced throughout the study and to see common threads. Furthermore, using different data sources improved data credibility (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Houghton et al., 2013; Patton, 1990). This variety of data collection methods enhanced vigor to the findings as the different data sources were interwoven to facilitate a better understanding of the case (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Furthermore, having a lot of data also requires me to manage and analyze it systematically (Baxter & Jack, 2008). For this

reason, I used Microsoft Word to store and manage the data. More specific details of each data collection method are discussed below.

I had a protocol for the semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis. Each guide was created with the research questions in mind to ensure the questions were addressed and to better understand the phenomenon being studied. Each interview question helped answer the research questions (Appendices B and C) by recognizing each participants' perspective on family engagement and the different ways in which Latinx families are involved in their children's education. The observational protocol supports research questions one and two. It allowed me to see and identify the different perspectives teachers and families have based on their interactions, planned activities, environment, body language, and discussions around family engagement (Appendix D). Document analysis is a systematic procedure for studying and assessing documents (Bowen, 2009). The protocol was created to ensure the documents collected provide meaning and contribute to the issues being explored (Appendix E). This data collection method allowed me to answer all three research questions guiding the study. Figure 4 below shows how each data collection method helped answer the research questions.

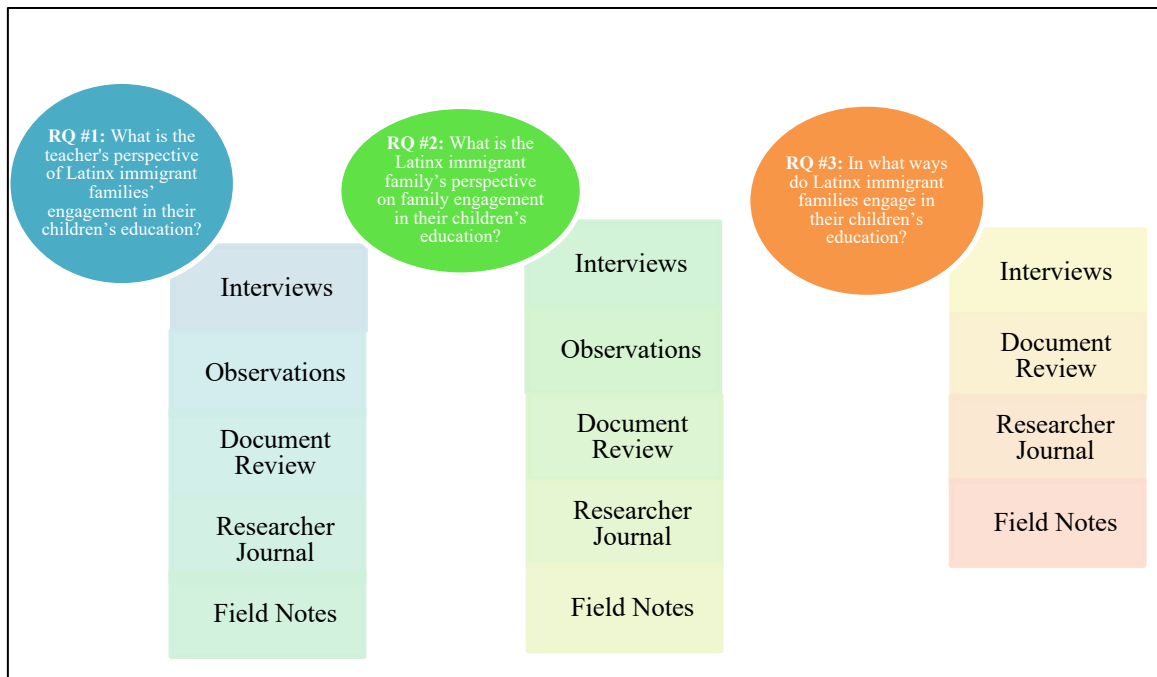


Figure 4

Data Collection Methods Relationship to Research Questions

Interviews

Interviews are seen as guided conversations that attempt to comprehend the different perspectives of the interviewees in regards to a particular topic (Enosh & Buchbinder, 2005). They are a dynamic and relational process. Brinkmann (2018) describes interviews as a verbal exchange where the interviewer tries to prompt information from another person. Face-to-face interviews allow for “interpersonal contact, context sensitivity, and conversational flexibility to the fullest extent” (p. 578). In addition, Stake (1995) explains that interviews are the main way to obtain descriptions

and interpretations from participants to access the multiple realities that researchers portray. Brinkmann (2018) explains that some of the advantages of semi-structured interviews are that they allow the researcher to follow up on topics considered important by the interviewee and be more active in the knowledge-producing aspect of the study as opposed to following a prescribed interview protocol.

Each participant (parents and teacher) was interviewed separately at a location of their choice. The interviews lasted approximately an hour and were audio-recorded to ease the transcription process and to be able to provide a transcript to each participant to allow for member checking (Perry et al., 2014). Each parent was interviewed separately and interviewed in the language of their choice (both preferred Spanish). The interview guides (Appendices B and C) provided an opportunity to have a list of guiding questions that I was able to explore with parents and the teacher during the interview (Patton, 2015). The guide was written in English for the teacher and Spanish for the parents. One of the benefits of having a semi-structured interview guide is that it provided me with the flexibility to have more of a conversation with the person, to ask more in-depth and follow-up questions, and to have some type of focus (Brinkmann, 2018; Enosh & Buchbinder, 2005; Patton, 2015).

The interview questions for the family were developed around four categories: introduction (e.g., tell me about yourself), background (e.g., tell me about your childhood), definition of family engagement (e.g., how do you define family engagement?), and life with kids (e.g., how do you think you are engaged in your children's education?). The interview questions for the teacher were developed around

three categories: introduction (e.g., tell me about yourself and experience), definition of family engagement (e.g., how do you define family engagement?), and Latinx families' engagement in their children's education (e.g., how do you see Latinx families getting involved in their children's education?).

Observations

For this study, I conducted participant observations at a live virtual class and a school event (pre-K graduation) during two days to obtain knowledge of the parents' and teachers' perspectives and understanding of family engagement. During these observations, I was able to look for evidence of building strengths-based relationships between parents and teachers. Spradley (1980) explains that there are two purposes for participant observation: 1) "to engage in activities appropriate to the situation and 2) to observe the activities people, and physical aspects of the situation" (p. 54). Therefore, the observations I conducted informed the study.

Participant observations take place in social situations in a physical space where the researcher can observe the characteristics of the event, the activities of people, and experience what it feels like to be part of the situation (Spradley, 1980). In addition, observations help the researcher toward a greater understanding of the case (Stake, 1995) and "to see firsthand what is going on rather than simply assume we know" (Patton, 2015, p. 331). Moreover, observations take place in the field and describe in detail the setting and what was observed, allowing the researcher to seize the context in which participants interact and notice things that participants might not even be aware of (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). Lastly, these authors add that observations are a

way to learn things that people would not want to talk about during an interview. To better record information and be reminded of the issues of concern, I created an observation or data gathering form as Stake (1995) suggested. See Appendix D for the observation protocol and notes.

Document Review

Document review includes any type of written material such as records, social media postings, correspondence, and letters (Patton, 2015). Documents are a great source of information about organizations and programs. For example, Patton explains that program documents can provide a hush-hush look at how processes came along, allowing the researcher to better understand the “why” of some things. The review of documents helped support different activities that I could not directly observe (Stake, 1995) due to COVID-19. I examined every parent-teacher/school communication and the p-12 school postings and documents in the 2020-2021 academic year to look for elements that might be interpreted as an invitation of family engagement or an attempt to build or not build relationships.

These documents allowed me to answer all of the research questions. I used a systematic process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Reybold et al., 2016) to secure them. One of the benefits of being online was that all the documents and communication were in one place, Seesaw – an application software used by the city schools. I read every post carefully and assessed how it related or conveyed information on the different perspectives and the different ways in which Latinx immigrant families are involved in their children’s education.

To use documents in a study, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest the following steps: first, find the documents and artifacts. Second, assess their authenticity and the conditions under which the document was produced. Third, determine whether or not the documents are primary or secondary sources. Primary sources are those “in which the originator of the document is recounting firsthand experience with the phenomenon of interest” (p. 178). Secondary sources are accounts of an event by someone who has not directly experienced the phenomenon of interest. Lastly, implement a system for coding and classifying. After I looked through all of the parent-teacher/school communication in Seesaw, I made notes for each entry to help decide whether or not to include in the study. For the entries I deemed worthy of inclusion in the study, I used a document analysis template as Mayan (2009) suggested to verify a connection to the research questions (see Appendix E). I also used a document review form (see Appendix F) to look for family engagement traits.

Researcher Journal

A researcher journal is a place where I can record my thinking, learning, and reflections (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Reflexivity is a critical aspect in qualitative research. It is a way of ownership of my own perspective, and it provides an opportunity for constant examination of what is happening, why, and my reactions (Patton, 2015). During the study, I kept a journal documenting new insights or ideas that surfaced throughout the study and data analysis. I also recorded my reactions, expectations, disappointments, and experiences during the fieldwork, as Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested.

Field Notes

Field notes are a place where detailed notes from an observation take place. There is not a precise way to take field notes and how it is done depends on the researcher and their preferences (Patton, 2015). Field notes are where the researcher writes everything that they think is significant and should be done shortly after an observation is completed while information is still fresh in the researcher's head. Field notes should be descriptive and should include date, where the observation took place, who was there, describe the physical space, the social interactions that happened, and the activities that were developing (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). The authors further explain that field notes should be so descriptive that they allow the researcher to go back to the observation during the analysis phase and allow the reader to experience the observation and site. After I conducted the observations, I wrote detailed field notes to describe what was happening, what was being said, and made observer's comments that reflected my own questions, thoughts, and feelings.

In conclusion, qualitative findings are founded on 1) in-depth, open-ended interviews, 2) direct observations, and 3) written communications. Interviews provide the researcher with direct quotes from the interviewee(s) about their understandings and feelings. On the other hand, observations allow the researcher to give detailed descriptions of the participants' behavior. Lastly, documents are a rich source of data (Patton, 2015). The researcher's journal and field notes are a way to keep track of what is happening throughout the study and add transparency. I chose these data collection methods because they align with my research method and design. In addition, they

provided me with the opportunity to understand the different perspectives that teachers and Latinx immigrant families have regarding family engagement and to recognize and offer suggestions on how to build strengths-based parent-teacher relationships. The following section focuses on data analysis and explains how it was conducted for the study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is an essential step of the study and therefore, it is necessary to do it from the beginning. The overall goal of data analysis is to make meaning of the data collected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and attempt to understand the case (Stake, 1995). To comprehend the participants' perspectives of family engagement and the different ways Latinx immigrant families are involved in their children's education, I employed coding and thematic analysis using thematic networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001). I transcribed all interviews using computer software and then reviewed the transcriptions. Since software transcriptions are not 100% accurate, I made sure that they accurately reflected what was said during the interviews by listening to them while reading the transcriptions. Lastly, I did a within-case analysis followed by a case analysis to find similarities and differences between them.

I started my data analysis with open coding to identify potentially relevant data that would help me answer my research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell add that open coding allows me to focus on patterns and insights related to the research questions and the purpose of my study. I coded with an emic perspective to analyze the data from the participants' perspective as suggested by Merriam and Tisdell.

I focused on low inference, medium inference, and high inference while coding. Low inference means that I might use new words to restate what participants have said, but I do not add any content. Medium inference is when I add my assumptions about the meaning of what the participants are saying. High inference is when I write what I think the participants' beliefs are that have not been explicitly communicated (Carspecken, 1996). Several authors (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldaña, 2016) suggest that it is important to read all of the codes several times to better organize data into categories and themes. Therefore, I read all data numerous times to achieve comprehensive and well-thought-out codes, categories, and themes. See below for an example of the teacher transcript with the codes and the low (LI), medium (MI), and high inference (HI).

50 And I just knew that that was going to frustrate me forever and I wasn't going to
51 feel like I could like actually connect with people. And I just saw myself like
52 pushing files and I didn't want to do that.

Code: she cares about people. She likes connecting to people (LI). Helping people is important to her (MI). Wanted to make a difference in a person's life (HI)

145 I very much appreciate the diversity that's in [name of the city].

Code: likes diversity. Appreciates the diversity of the city (LI). Provides an opportunity for her family to be involve and learn from others (HI)

146 husband still works for [name of county] county public schools. He's an assistant
147 principal, but all three of our kids go to [name of city] city schools. Um, all three
148 have been part of the dual program and we just like it.

Code: learn another language. Important that her own kids speak another language (LI)

I started with codes (words or phrases) that were salient (Saldaña, 2016), meaning that I was able to see a link between the data collected and possible meaning and relationship to my study or what Attride-Stirling (2001) called *basic themes*. I then looked for patterns (repetitive occurrences) to start creating categories or codify by grouping codes that are similar to one another (Saldaña, 2016) or *organizing themes* as Attride-Stirling (2001) referred to. Lastly, I created themes or concepts in order to get the data to a higher level and “more abstract constructs” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 11) or *global themes* as Attride-Stirling (2001) called.

I also used thematic analysis of the data with the use of thematic networks as suggested by Attride-Stirling (2001). According to Attride-Stirling and Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method that uncovers the themes found in the data and recognizes patterns that become themes with different categories for analysis. On the other hand, thematic networks’ purpose is to facilitate a visual of how the themes surfacing from the data are organized (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Attride-Stirling proposes that “thematic analyses can be usefully aided by and presented as *thematic networks*: web-like illustrations (*networks*) that summarize the main themes constituting a piece of texts” (p. 386).

I believe that these two data analysis strategies complement each other and allowed me to discover the participants’ perspectives about family engagement and the different ways in which Latinx immigrant families engage in their children’s education. Through the data analysis, I was also able to infer different ways in which relationships between teachers and Latinx immigrant families can be created and nurtured throughout

the years. These approaches entail a careful and focused review of the data to uncover the different stories.

Interviews with the Latinx immigrant parents were conducted in Spanish and the interview with the teacher in English. The transcripts and data analysis of the parents' interviews were also done in Spanish to stay as close as possible to the participants' realities and honor their stories. Both the Spanish version and the English translation of excerpts provide transparency throughout the study. I would also like to highlight that Spanish is my native language and that I constantly use reflexivity "to produce more accurate analyses of the research" (Pillow, 2003, p. 178). The following sections define the different measures to accomplish trustworthiness in a study and the various ways in which I met these standards.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four different criteria to establish quality or trustworthiness of qualitative research. These criteria are 1) credibility, 2) dependability, 3) confirmability, and 4) transferability. Figure 5 below shows a depiction of what trustworthiness in a qualitative study means and the different strategies that I used to enhance the vigor of the study.

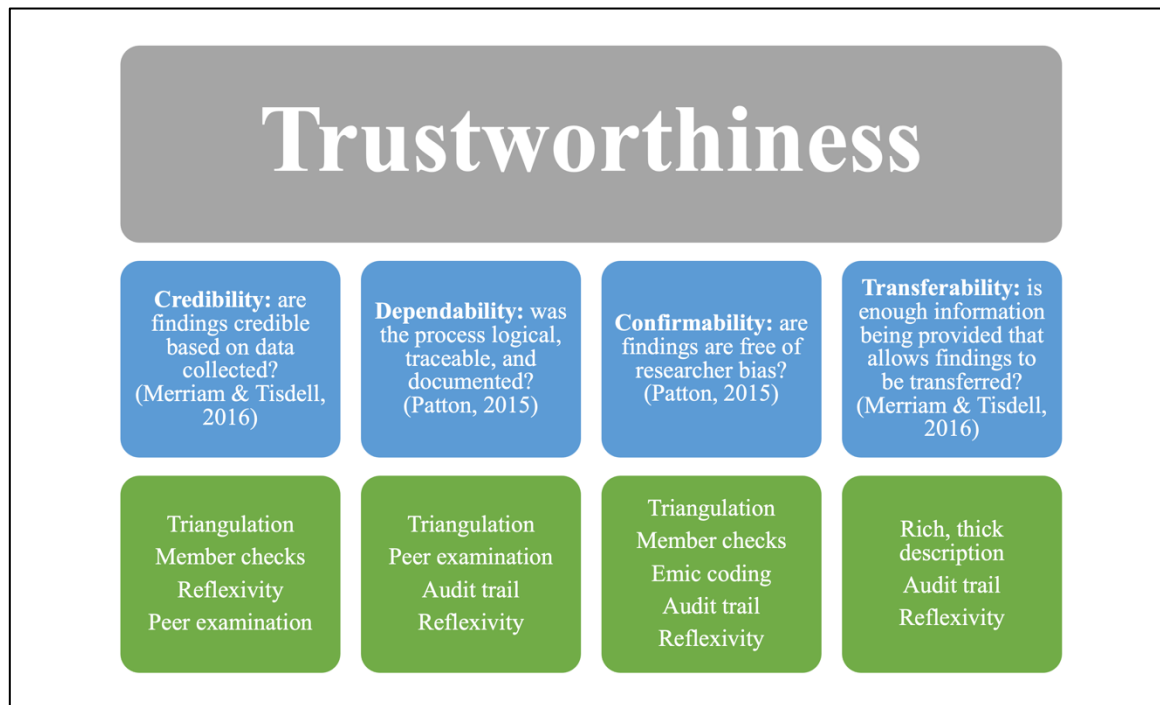


Figure 5

Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research and Strategies

Credibility

Credibility poses the question about the findings being credible based on the data collected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It is obtained by showing that the participants' experiences are accurately reconstructed by the researcher. This study obtained credibility through member checks, triangulation, peer examination, and reflexivity. In member checks, participants are asked to review drafts of material for "accuracy and palatability" (Stake, 1995, p. 115) to ensure that the researcher's interpretations are accurate and explain the researcher's interpretation in addition to possibly adding new

perceptions to the study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Triangulation allows the researcher to check data collected in a data collection method against data collected through other means of data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Essentially, having other sources of data provides a chance to revise or confirm our interpretations (Stake, 1995). Reflexivity or investigator's position refers to my positionality, which means "how the researcher affects and is affected by the research process" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 249). I have been clear about my positionality and assumptions as a researcher (refer to Chapter One). Having a researcher journal allowed me to record how I arrived at the results. Lastly, having my dissertation committee comment on the findings and paper, in general, is considered peer examination (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These practices helped boost the study's credibility.

Dependability

Dependability is where the researcher ensures the readers that "the process was logical, traceable, and documented" (Patton, 2015, p. 685). To establish dependability, triangulation, investigator's position, peer examination, and audit trail were used. The first three were discussed in the previous paragraph. An audit trail describes in great detail "how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 252). In essence, according to Merriam and Tisdell, audit trails allow the reader to follow the trail of the researcher. The authors also suggest keeping a research journal in which the researcher keeps track of the process of conducting the study (i.e., my reflections, my questions, the decisions I make

in regards to issues or ideas encountered while collecting the data) as well as a record of my interaction with the data.

Confirmability

Confirmability is attained by “establishing the fact that the data and interpretations of an inquiry were not merely figments of the inquirer’s imagination” (Patton, 2015, p. 685). Houghton et al. (2013) refer to confirmability as the neutrality of the data and results. By employing triangulation, member checks, audit trail, reflexivity, and emic coding, I provided confirmability to my study. Through emic coding, I was able to stay true to the participants’ narratives and not be influenced by my own biases and motivations. Transferability in qualitative research is difficult because one of the main reasons for selecting a case study methodology is to be able to understand the particular phenomenon in-depth and not at a surface level.

Transferability

Furthermore, since the researcher does not know where the next possible application of the research might be, but the reader does, the issue of transferability lies more with the person trying to apply the study somewhere else (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, Merriam and Tisdell further explain that to make transferability feasible, researchers need to provide the reader with a very detailed, rich, thick description to reach high levels of descriptive data. What the authors mean by rich, thick description is a “description of the setting and participants of the study, as well as a detailed description of the findings with adequate evidence presented in the form of quotes from participant interviews, field notes, and documents” (p. 257). They also add

that having a multi-case study is a way to enhance transferability. Through rich, thick description, audit trail, and reflexivity, I increased transferability of my study.

Overall, the different strategies proposed to establish trustworthiness of the study align well with my ontological and epistemological stances, the study design, and the data collection methods. I was also able to use different approaches to check my findings and collaborate with the participants to create knowledge together. The following section discusses how ethics were ensured throughout the study.

Ethics

Guillemin and Gillam (2004) suggest two types of ethics in qualitative studies. One type is procedural ethics which they define as receiving approval from an ethics committee to conduct research that involves humans. The second type is what they call *ethics in practice* which are the common ethical issues that surface during research. For procedural ethics, this study sought approval from George Mason University IRB committee. However, the committee decided that this study did not meet the definition of human subjects research since I was only going to conduct the project with one family, and case studies are not usually considered generalizable (see Appendix G). Even though the study did not need Mason's IRB approval, I still used the documents submitted to ensure procedural ethics. To maintain participant confidentiality, I used their role in the study (e.g., teacher, mother, father) as a pseudonym. I masked each participants' identity using their pseudonyms in all the transcripts. No identifiable information was shared in the final report.

For ethics in practice, I used reflexivity not only to provide trustworthiness to my study, as explained in the previous section but also to ensure ethics. I did this by continuously reflecting on how the research might affect the participants and considering how I would react if my participants shared details that might put me in an ethical dilemma (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Below, the significance of the study is discussed.

Methodological Significance of Study

Qualitative case study is a good fit for this study. It aligns very well with my ontology and epistemology. In fact, Patton (2015) suggests that constructivism is concerned with understanding a specific case within a particular context, and this is precisely what the case study design allowed me to do. There are two main uses of case study design: “to obtain the descriptions and interpretations of others” (Stake, 1995, p. 64). Since the purpose of the study was to understand teachers’ and Latinx immigrant parents’ perspectives and awareness of family engagement as well as identifying information to share on how to build strengths-based parent-teacher relationships, case study is the design that allowed me to go deeper into the topic and understand each participants’ perspectives. Furthermore, the method I used aligns with what Reybold (2003) emphasizes case study research should include. The last section of this chapter covers the limitations and boundaries of the study.

Limitations and Boundaries of Study

Several limitations affected the study. One limitation was the recruitment of participants because of a global pandemic happening and p-12 schools moving to virtual instruction. In addition, this study only represents the perspectives and experiences of a

Latinx immigrant family and one teacher. Even though it is not generalizable, the findings add to the field the perspectives and experiences of a teacher and a Latinx immigrant family towards family engagement. In addition, the study helped to find ways to create and maintain parent-teacher strengths-based relationships. Additional limitations include that the study's credibility could be compromised due to me being a novice researcher, and lastly, the convenience of the site location.

Boundaries help the researcher specify what will be studied and what will not be in the context of the study and the scope and complexity (Baxter & Jack, 2008). A strategy offered by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) to bound the case is to determine “how finite the data collection would be” (p. 39), which means setting a limit on the people who are interviewed or a limit on the number of observations. If there is no limit or no end, then the case is said to not be bounded. Since this study looked at teachers' and Latinx immigrant parents' perspectives and experiences of family engagement in young children's education in a rural setting, the context is bound by a Latinx immigrant family with children in preschool. The cases are also bounded by the duration of the data collection methods. The next chapter discusses the results of the study based on data analysis and explains how the research questions were answered.

Chapter Four

The purpose of this study was to further understand family engagement by examining teachers' and Latinx immigrant families' perspectives of family engagement. This study also sought to inform the different ways these families engage in their children's education and provide information on how to build strengths-based parent-teacher relationships, specifically with Latinx immigrant families. This study contributes to the field strategies teachers can learn from Latinx immigrant families to promote children's socio-emotional development to maximize students' educational experience and promote the development of parent-teacher partnerships. This chapter provides the teacher and the Latinx immigrant parents' perspectives of family engagement in their children's education and the different ways in which these parents engaged in their children's education. Furthermore, the chapter describes the global themes that emerged during the analysis of the different data collection methods by doing a within-case analysis followed by a case analysis. As a reminder, below are the research questions that guided the study.

- **Research question #1:** What is the teacher's perspective of Latinx immigrant families' engagement in their children's education?
- **Research question #2:** What is the Latinx immigrant family's perspective on family engagement in their children's education?
- **Research question #3:** In what ways do Latinx immigrant families engage in their children's education?

Within-Case Analysis

Case Study 1: The Teacher

The first global theme is ‘Family Structure,’ the second global theme is ‘Strengthening of Family Engagement,’ the third global theme is ‘Barriers for Immigrant Families,’ the fourth global theme is ‘Teachers’ Cultural Humility,’ and the fifth global theme is ‘Impact of COVID’ (see Table 1 for Themes). For the purpose of this study and to help answer the research questions, I focused on and developed a thematic network for the following: ‘Family Structure,’ ‘Strengthening of Family Engagement,’ and ‘Teachers’ Cultural Humility.’

Table 1

From Basic to Organizing to Global Themes

Themes as Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
Family may not be biological, e.g., not blood related	Definition of family	Family structure
Family is defined differently by everyone	Definition of family	
Family is blood-related	Definition of family	
It is hard not having family close-by	Support system	
Kids of immigrant families have several adult figures in their life	Support system	
Family is the people who support and help you when you need it	Support system	Strengthening of family engagement
Family plays a big role in a child’s education	Resources	
FE is defined differently by teachers	Resources	

Themes as Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
It is important to send supplemental materials home to encourage at-home learning	Resources	
Acknowledge parents have knowledge and skills	Resources	
Encourage parents to share their knowledge about their child	Resources	
Families are a resource	Resources	
Resources should reflect the family to encourage FE	Resources	
Communication with families is key	Communication	
Make sure families understand what is going on in their child's education	Communication	
FE is a two-way street. It's reciprocal	Communication	
Families appreciate teachers trying to communicate with them in their native language	Communication	
Frequent parent-teacher communication is important	Communication	
Parent-teacher communication is time-consuming but is important	Communication	
Use of school resources (home-school liaison and interpreters) to make communication easier	Communication	
Being honest, transparent, personable, and relatable helps to build trust and create partnerships	Trust building	
Encourage families to be engaged	Trust building	

Themes as Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
It is important to make families feel comfortable and have a welcoming school environment	Trust building	
Parents and teachers are on the same team	Trust building	
Invite parents to school so they see what their child does at school	Trust building	
Home visits are important to encourage FE and allow teachers to get to know families	Trust building	
Respect parents' choices	Trust building	
Families need to be heard	Trust building	
Trust allows for an increase in FE	Trust building	
Get to know families in their own environment	Trust building	
It is important to see the teacher as a member of the community	Trust building	
Sharing teacher parenting struggles helps build trust and rapport with families	Trust building	
It is important to build rapport with families	Trust building	
Immigrant families are not familiar with the U.S. school system. Lack navigational capital.	Limitation	Barriers for immigrant families
Immigrant families tend to live in multi-generational homes	Limitation	
Language is a barrier for immigrant families	Limitation	
Latinx families like to meet at their convenience	Limitation	
Families have different needs	Limitation	
Families don't do regular doctor visits	Socio-economic status	

Themes as Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
Immigrant families tend to seek out medical attention for emergency care	Socio-economic status	
Would like to be proficient in Spanish	Language appreciation	Teachers' cultural humility
Value of speaking another language	Language appreciation	
No need to be perfect in Spanish	Language appreciation	
Connecting with and helping people is important	Family outreach	
Make a difference in people's lives	Family outreach	
Model/encourage parents to communicate even if their English is not perfect	Family outreach	
Must be resourceful	Family outreach	
Teach parents the U.S. system	Family outreach	
Appreciates the diversity of the city	Importance of diversity	
Diversity provides an opportunity to learn from others	Importance of diversity	
Passion and commitment to the job	Above and beyond	
The job is more than being a teacher. The teacher needs to help families too	Above and beyond	
Needs to be a teacher but also a specialist in all disciplines	Above and beyond	
Understand that families and students in this program have a lot going on and come with a lot of risk factors	Empathy	
It is important to be accessible for parents	Empathy	

Themes as Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
Virtual class was unfulfilling	Virtual learning	Impact of COVID
Miss in-person classes	Virtual learning	
COVID allowed for reciprocity	Virtual learning	
COVID made parent-teacher communication easier during live learning	Virtual learning	
Virtual school allowed the teacher to get to know families better	Virtual learning	

Note. FE = family engagement

Global Theme One: Family Structure. Family Structure is comprised of two organizing themes and six basic themes. This network represents an exploration of the teacher's view of what constitutes the family structure. The discussion of family highlighted how the teacher defines family and the role that family might play in a person's life. The thematic network (see Figure 6) shows the key themes in which Family Structure was anchored: definition of family and family as a support system.

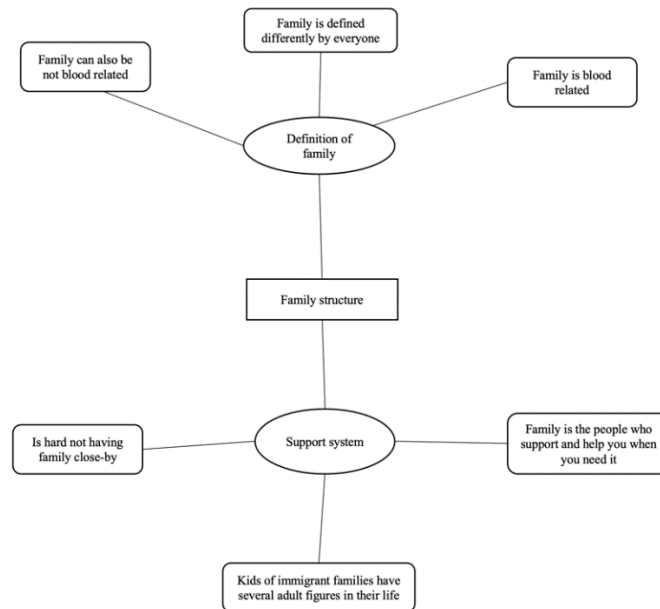


Figure 6

Thematic Network for 'Family Structure'

Organizing Theme: Definition of family. This organizing theme pertains to the way the teacher defines family. For example, the teacher explained that “blood relation is a big part of family.” Furthermore, the teacher also expressed that because she does not have any family close-by, a person can also select their family, “I will say as someone who lives in a place that has where she has no blood relatives, I have learned that, um, you can choose family too. And um, my church family...” According to this, family can come in many different forms, and when a person is far from their biological family, it is only normal to create a “new” family. For this teacher, it seemed like her definition of family has shifted based on where she is now and her experiences. Due to her being away

from her and her husband's biological family, they had to find their own support system which they can now call family.

Organizing Theme: Support system. This organizing theme pertains to the teacher's view of the role of family in a person's life. As humans, we tend to rely on family as a support system. The saying need a village to raise a child really resonates with this organizing theme because it is important to have a support system. Having one, makes life with children a bit easier. Overall, different cultures define family differently and like the teacher said, "[Family can be] someone who you can rely on someone who can be. Someone that you can just be really real with and that they can help out with whatever you need." Family is essential and usually serves as a support system. However, when a person is not near their biological family, it is typical to find a non-biological family to build a support system to help when needed.

Global Theme Two: Strengthening of Family Engagement. Strengthening of Family Engagement is comprised of three organizing themes and 27 basic themes. This network represents an exploration of the teacher's view of how family engagement can be strengthened, especially with Latinx immigrant families. The discussion of strengthening family engagement highlighted the resources important to encourage and support family engagement, the importance of parent-teacher/school communication, and the importance of trust building to create and maintain parent-teacher partnerships and increase family engagement. The thematic network (see Figure 7) shows the key themes in which the Strengthening of Family Engagement was anchored: resources, parent-teacher communication, and trust building.

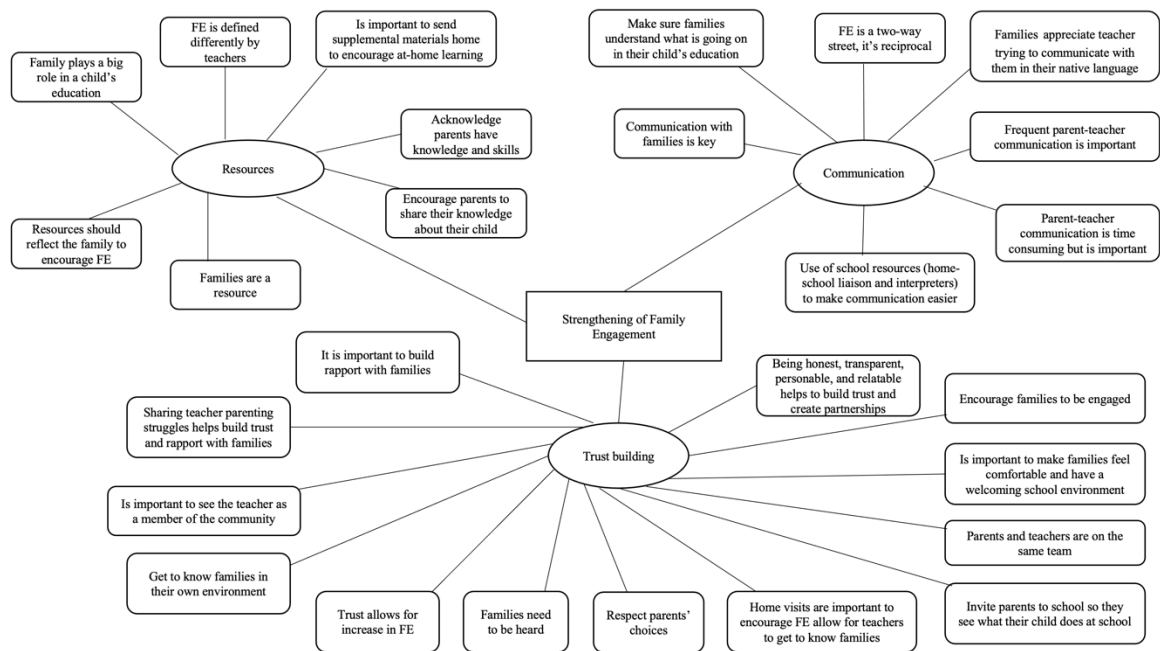


Figure 7

Thematic Network for 'Strengthening of Family Engagement'

Organizing Theme: Resources. This organizing theme pertains to the different resources that are needed and are important to increase family engagement. A critical resource is the funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992, 2005) parents have and how much they know about their child. González and Gillanders (2021) explain that “a parent-teacher relationship that validates families’ funds of knowledge, including their cultural and language practices, is needed more than ever” (p. 966). The teacher explained that she tries to:

tell families all the time, like you were their child, you were your child's first teacher. And so, whatever you can share with me about what your child like

knows and likes and is scared of. And like that helps us, that helps me be a better teacher for your child.

Therefore, she tries “to use families as a resource.”

Families play a significant role in a child’s education, and because of the parental support throughout the 2020-21 academic year, virtual learning was possible for these students. It is also important to highlight the teacher’s remark on how family engagement is defined differently among teachers, “I have worked with a number of colleagues who use the term family engagement, but it’s much more like I’m giving the information to the family.” Through the document review, I was able to see that the teacher participant’s definition of family engagement was much more than just relaying information. Lastly, the teacher was very good about physically and virtually sending supplemental material to the students to encourage at-home learning and providing materials that families could relate to in order to promote family engagement.

The teacher expressed that she learned that she could not expect the parents to engage if they did not have the resources.

You can’t read to your kids if you don’t have anything to read to them. And even if I send the most beautiful book home in English, the kid can turn the pictures and pretend to tell the story. But the true connection of hearing a story from a parent doesn’t happen.

The literature supports providing families with resources to support at-home learning, as explained in Chapter Two. Additionally, through the document review, I witnessed the constant encouragement and reminders the teacher prompted to families about sharing

any activities they were doing with their child at home. When the teacher sent home books in Spanish, she was encouraging family engagement and it was a way for her to ensure that her students and their families saw themselves reflected with the books and other resources she was using.

Organizing Theme: Communication. This organizing theme pertains to the importance of maintaining parent-teacher/school communication to boost family engagement and the different ways the teacher communicated with families to ensure they were aware and understood what was happening in their child's education. Two-way communication was evident between the teacher and the parents. This allowed the teacher to be informed on what was happening at home and how that could potentially affect the child in school. Having open communication helps build trust which also encourages family engagement as the literature shows.

To better communicate, the teacher sends communication in English and Spanish. With virtual learning, she was also able to send audio and video instructions through the app used by the school.

But I just do a lot of front to back because I figure like it probably doesn't hurt.

And there are a lot of parents who have some level of proficiency with both languages. And so, between the two options... [parents will understand].

During live learning, she was able to communicate with families right away. "I was like literally a virtual visitor in their home every day, there was much more back and forth" it was a "frequent and two-way [communication]." This allowed the teacher to have reciprocity, another key element of family engagement. Another way the teacher

communicated was by responding to every single post the student made on the app. This constant response motivated the student and the parents to send activities to the teacher. One time, the student sent a message on her own, and the mom did not realize it until later and was very proud and happy to see her daughter interacting with the teacher and sending videos.

The teacher highlighted the importance of using school resources like the home-school liaison and the interpreters to make communication with Latinx immigrant families more effortless and accessible. She admitted that sometimes arranging for these resources could be a bit time-consuming but worth it, much needed, and appreciated by the families. Latinx families appreciated very much when she tried to speak to them in Spanish even though her Spanish was not perfect. It is better to communicate even if it is in broken Spanish.

I did use Google translate this year. I wish I didn't, but I did because sometimes it was like texting back and forth at 10 o'clock at night and I didn't have any other resources. Like I would rather send slightly incorrect Spanish than no Spanish.

Families were really gracious about that.

Parent-teacher communication is essential for family engagement to occur. It also helps when CLD families see their children's teacher trying to speak another language to communicate with them.

Organizing Theme: Trust building. This organizing theme pertains to the different ways trust can be established between families and teachers and its benefits. Trust is a key element of family engagement and allows parent-teacher partnerships to be

created and maintained. Through the document review, I was able to see how the teacher always encouraged families to be engaged in their children's education by motivating them to send her activities through the app. She responded to every message with excitement and appreciation for the student work and the parent support. Part of building trust is making sure parents and students feel comfortable and welcome into the school, "and so part of what I do is show a kid school is a fun place to be and show a family like you can trust the school. We, you know, we do care about your child." With that, transparency and honesty also play a crucial role when building trust and increasing family engagement because "building trust is huge." For example, when the teacher was honest about her Spanish proficiency, parents were appreciative and thankful that she was trying, as explained in the previous organizing theme. In addition, it is important that parents know and feel that teachers and families are on the same team and work together for the benefit of the child.

I think a big part of that is just like being super transparent from the beginning and be like, I have no expectations. Like I don't care what your experience is or what you've done or what you do or don't know the reality is we're both here for your child right now.

To build trust, parents also need to feel the teacher is a member of the community and a personable and relatable person. The teacher often does this by using personal examples, "I use my kids all the time because I'm like, oh my daughter, dah, dah, dah, dah, my daughter did that" and by sharing the different activities that her family does like a regular person and a member of the community "I'm a real person too. I live in [name

of city]. Or like, my family eats Chinese food. I go order from them all the time.” She emphasized the importance of seeming an ordinary person to build trust and rapport with families.

I don’t wear makeup and I wear my scrubs and I want them to see me as like a person who lives in [name of city] and not like this put together teacher who has all the answers. I don’t have all the answers.

During my observations and the document reviews, it was clear that the teacher had an excellent rapport with the students and the families. Everyone wanted to talk to her, take pictures, and thank her for a challenging yet positive year, given the circumstances. The teacher is a firm believer in building trust to get buy-in from students and parents. She understands it is hard for immigrant parents and that there are a lot of unknowns, so she is willing to share:

I think just like checking our pride and being like, we’re all in this together. And I always use stories in my own kids all the time. So, there’s like, you know, parents are like so embarrassed about their child’s behavior and I’d be like, listen, if you knew my son when he was three. And like, I think it does help families feel better. Like, a kid is a kid no matter what color they are or what language they speak. Like, I am not afraid to ever share my parent failures, my teacher failures, my all, cause I just think it makes us more relatable.

Lastly, home visits are also essential to build trust, as supported by the literature and the teacher interview. Home visits allow for the family to be comfortable and for the teacher to familiarize themselves with the natural environment of the student and the family.

Global Theme Three: Teachers' Cultural Humility. Teachers' Cultural Humility is comprised of five organizing themes and 15 basic themes. This network represents the teacher's knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to teach in a very CLD community. Teachers should have these characteristics to be outstanding educators and develop cultural humility (recognize how their backgrounds and experiences affect their interactions with CLD students and their families) to become more culturally aware and competent (Vesely et al., 2017). The discussion of teachers' cultural humility highlighted the characteristics essential to working with CLD families. The thematic network (see Figure 8) shows the key themes in which Teachers' Cultural Humility was anchored: language appreciation, family outreach, the importance of diversity, going above and beyond the regular teacher duties, and empathy.

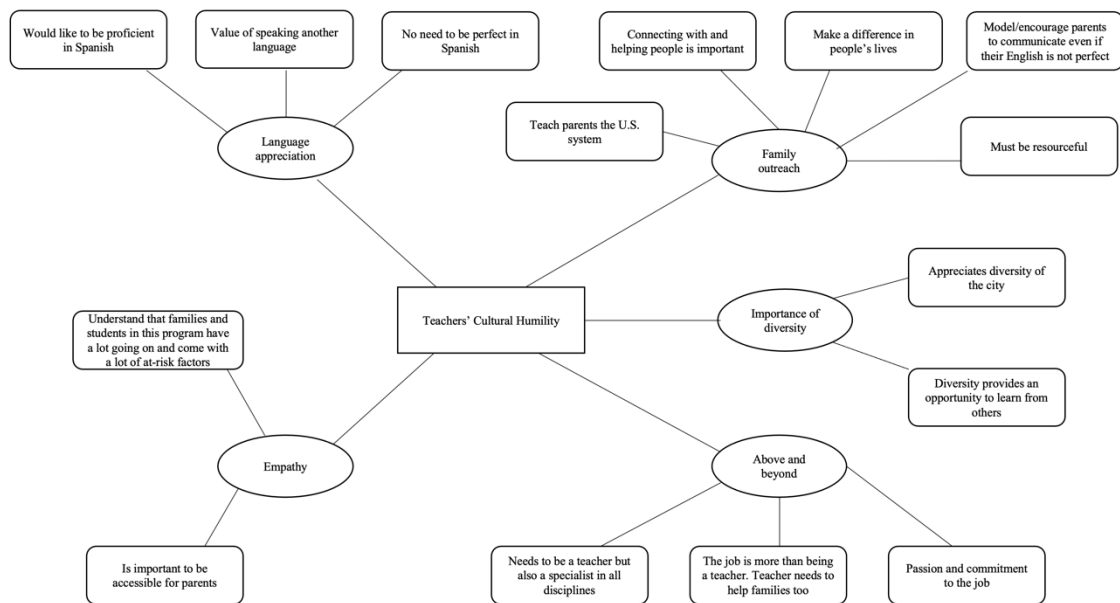


Figure 8

Thematic Network for 'Teachers' Cultural Humility'

Organizing Theme: Language appreciation. This organizing theme pertains to the appreciation and value of speaking another language (Spanish) and being willing to make mistakes while communicating with Latinx immigrant families. Early on in her education, the teacher knew that she would like to be proficient in Spanish, “I wanted to have enough language that it would be useful at some point. So, I minored in Spanish at that point.” Knowing some Spanish has allowed her to connect more with students and families. Even though she knows her Spanish is not perfect, she tries, and families value that. During the observations and the document review, I was able to see all the times the teacher made an effort to explain things in Spanish because she wanted families to understand what needed to happen. It did not need to be perfect, as the purpose was to

engage the students and their families. She explained, “there were times that I’m sure it was not right, but I guess I kind of took the lane of like an attempt is better than nothing.” Speaking another language, even if it is a few words, can help take the parent-teacher partnership to a whole new level. By being willing to make mistakes and be vulnerable, she has helping families become more comfortable around her and was helping build partnerships with the families by seeming human.

Organizing Theme: Family outreach. This organizing theme pertains to the delight of being able to help people, make a difference in people’s lives, connect people to different resources, and be resourceful to communicate with parents. When communicating with parents, keeping a two-way communication is essential. In addition, for immigrant families, teachers are often helping them navigate the U.S. school system and offering guidance for school and non-school-related issues. The teacher got into this line of work because she wanted to help others and connect with people. Initially, she started studying Social Work but switched to teacher training because “I wasn’t going to feel like I could like actually connect with people. And I just saw myself like pushing files and I didn’t want to do that.” She now feels “like I truly get to work with whole families and not just students. And I like that about what I do.” In addition, she explained that:

a lot of times, and especially families that are new to the country, like they don’t really know the system, you know, like it’s so different from where they’re from or language is an issue. And so, like I had a student this year, even when I was teaching virtually where the parents sent me a picture of him running in an

apartment complex just down here. And as soon as I saw that video, I was like that kid's gotta get to an orthopedist. I mean, the way he was moving, his body was not typical.

So, she helped get him the assistance that he needed. Through this theme, it is clear that teachers can be the connectors between families and resources, especially for CLD families. In this line of work, a person must like and enjoy connecting and helping others. The teacher is aware that many of the families at the school are at-risk and often navigating a new country. She helps as much as she can because she knows it is hard and wants to make sure parents are aware of the different resources available to them. This supports and encourages family engagement.

Organizing Theme: Importance of diversity. This organizing theme pertains to the appreciation for the city's diversity and the knowledge a person can gain from interacting with CLD families. As discussed in the selection of site, the city where this study was conducted is very diverse and the city schools have over 57 languages represented. The teacher expressed that she:

very much appreciate the diversity that's in [name of the city]. Um, so my husband still works for [name of county] county public schools. He's an assistant principal, but all three of our kids go to [name of city] city schools. Um, all three have been part of the dual program and we just like it.

This theme shows that the teacher supports the cultural pluralism view discussed in Chapter Two. This organizing theme also supports that the U.S. being culturally and linguistically diverse is an asset and not a disadvantage.

Organizing Theme: Above and beyond. This organizing theme pertains to the passion and commitment to the job, the willingness to be more than the teacher to many families at her pre-K program, and becoming an expert in many disciplines to better serve her students. This program requires her to have “mastery of more disciplines than the average classroom teacher” and deal with what they so “lovingly call it the hot mess express because you’ve got kids with behavior, kids with language, kids with cognitive, you know, you have all the things.” In addition, she often assists parents with non-school-related issues and shares her own experiences with services in the community, as the document review revealed. Due to families in the program not doing regular medical well visits, “it’s not uncommon for our students to come in without an IEP but leave our program with one.” The IEP is typical since, besides teachers, doctors could be the other entity realizing that a child is not meeting developmental milestones. Still, if regular well visits are not happening, it is up to the teacher to provide an IEP. The teacher expressed that a lot of “what I do now is a lot of education, but also a lot of social work.” This theme highlights the amount of effort and responsibilities teachers have besides teaching. Parents, especially CLD parents tend to rely on teachers for support and to inform them of opportunities and resources available to them. Latinx immigrant parents often trust teachers to have all the answers and to guide them as they navigate the unknown.

Organizing Theme: Empathy. This organizing theme pertains to understanding the issues and obstacles many of the families at this pre-K program experience due to it being mainly for students with risk factors, “it is state-funded pre-K and students have to qualify with risk factors in order to be accepted.” The risk factors could be:

English as a second language, parents are new to country, parents are incarcerated. Kids are in foster care. It's not really, there is an income piece to it, but pretty, but literally a hundred percent of our program is below. Most of them are considered below poverty level.

The teacher needs to be aware of what is happening in the child's life because it might impact their behavior.

The organizing theme also explores the importance of the teacher being accessible to families and the impact it can have on family engagement. For example, the teacher expressed that throughout the year, she felt that she was not accessible to parents through the app because it was new and nobody was used to it. Therefore, she decided to give out her cell phone number.

Most of the families I gave numbers to, I gave them to like middle and high school students because they were supporting their four-year-old sibling. And so like, you know, [name of student] 12-year-old sister would text me and ask a question or [name of student] 15-year-old brother would text me.

Often, the parents were not the ones supporting their child during live learning, and that did not mean that the parents were not engaged. They simply had other obligations. During the pandemic, due to job responsibilities many Latinx immigrant parents could not stay at home with their children. They relied on their older children to support the younger ones during virtual school.

Summary

Whether it is biological or not, the family's impact on a person and the importance of family was evident throughout the teacher interview. As Figure 6 revealed, not having biological family close-by is challenging and therefore, we tend to create a non-biological family to have a strong support system. Furthermore, the interview revealed how crucial parent-teacher communication is for family engagement and how the different definitions can affect how teachers communicate with families. Building trust and rapport with Latinx families is another key element for building parent-teacher partnerships and increasing family engagement.

Home visits were an example of how trust can begin to be built as well as the teacher being seen as a regular member of the community. Figure 7 showed how family engagement can be strengthen from the teacher's perspective and how crucial these three organizing themes are to promote more family engagement. Figure 8 showcased the importance of teachers having a sense of cultural humility and how beneficial it is to help build and maintain partnerships with CLD families. Lastly, through the different data collection methods, the importance of communicating in the same language the family spoke and how the teacher went above and beyond her teaching responsibilities to help the students and the families in her classroom was evident. Overall, the global themes in this case supported the literature's definition of family engagement. They also showcased what teachers and p-12 schools should do to build strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships and boost family engagement among Latinx families.

Case Study 2: Latinx Immigrant Family

For the second case study, I followed the same steps in data analysis as described in the first case study. The first global theme is ‘Estructura Familiar’ (Family Structure), the second global theme is ‘Percepción de Participación Familiar (Perception of Family Engagement), the third global theme is ‘Vida del Inmigrante’ (Life of an Immigrant), and the fourth global theme is ‘Elementos de la Educación’ (Elements of Education). See Table 2 for Themes. For the purpose of this study and to help answer the research questions, I focused on ‘Estructura Familiar’ (Family Structure) and ‘Percepción de Participación Familiar (Perception of Family Engagement) in the second case study analysis.

Table 2

From Basic to Organizing to Global Themes

Themes as Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
Crecer con abuelos y otros adultos en la casa (growing up with grandparents and other adults in the house)	Sistema de apoyo (Support system)	Estructura familiar (Family structure)
La familia es importante para salir adelante (family is important to get ahead)	Sistema de apoyo (Support system)	
Los hijos requieren esfuerzo y dedicación (children required effort and dedication)	Sistema de apoyo (Support system)	

Themes as Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
Tener ambos padres facilita el trabajo en equipo y la participación familiar (having both parents makes teamwork and FE easier)	Sistema de apoyo (Support system)	
La familia es biológica (family is biological)	Definición de familia (Definition of family)	
La estructura de la familia es grande (family structure is large)	Definición de familia (Definition of family)	
Con la familia se comparte (you share with family)	Definición de familia (Definition of family)	
La familia apoya el uno al otro (family supports one another)	Definición de familia (Definition of family)	
Tener una familia estable afecta la participación familiar (having a stable family affects family engagement)	Papel de la familia (Family role)	
Exponer los niños a diferentes actividades (expose children to different activities)	Papel de la familia (Family role)	
Proveer estabilidad económica (provide economic stability)	Papel de la familia (Family role)	
Mantener buenas relaciones y comunicación con la familia es importante (maintaining good relationships with family is important)	Comunicación (Communication)	Percepción de participación familiar (Perception of family engagement)
Participación familiar es comunicación entre padres y profesores (family engagement includes parent-teacher communication)	Comunicación (Communication)	

Themes as Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
Participación familiar también abarca lo emocional (family engagement also covers socio-emotional well-being)	Importancia de la participación familiar (Importance of family engagement)	
Participación familiar es importante para la educación (family engagement is important for education)	Importancia de la participación familiar (Importance of family engagement)	
Participación familiar es muy importante para motivar a los hijos a aprender ((family engagement helps motivate children to learn)	Importancia de la participación familiar (Importance of family engagement)	
Participación familiar es ayudar a los hijos a desarrollarse y descubrir su potencial (family engagement helps children's development and discover their potential)	Importancia de la participación familiar (Importance of family engagement)	
Participación familiar no es solo asistir a eventos en el colegio (family engagement is more than just attending school events)	Participación basada en familia (Family-based involvement)	
Participación familiar es pasar tiempo juntos con los hijos (family engagement is spending time with the children)	Participación basada en familia (Family-based involvement)	

Themes as Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
Participación familiar es hablar de lo que hacen los hijos en el colegio y mostrar interés (family engagement is talking with children about school and show interest in school life)	Participación basada en familia (Family-based involvement)	
Se puede aprender fuera del colegio también (learning can happen outside the school)	Participación basada en familia (Family-based involvement)	
Importante tener un ambiente adecuado para aprender (it's important to have a proper learning environment for learning to happen)	Participación basada en familia (Family-based involvement)	
Por responsabilidades laborales, no se puede tener mucha participación familiar (due to work responsibilities, can't engage a lot in children's education)	Sacrificio (Sacrifice)	Vida del inmigrante (Life of an immigrant)
Muchos sacrificios para tener y dar una mejor vida a los hijos (lots of sacrifices to have and to provide a better life for children)	Sacrificio (Sacrifice)	
Como inmigrante hay que trabajar mucho para salir adelante (as an immigrant, you have to work a lot to get ahead)	Búsqueda de una vida mejor (Pursue of better life)	
Salir del peligro y buscar una vida mas tranquila y estable (leave behind dangerous situations and pursue a more quiet and stable life)	Búsqueda de una vida mejor (Pursue of better life)	

Trabajos de temporada (seasonal employment)	La experiencia del inmigrante (Immigrants' experience)	
La vida del inmigrante es muy difícil (life of an immigrant is very difficult)	La experiencia del inmigrante (Immigrants' experience)	
Tiene poca educación y por eso no puede ayudar mucho en lo académico (have little education, therefore can't support much on the academics)	La experiencia del inmigrante (Immigrants' experience)	
Siente y vive discriminación (lives with and feels discrimination)	La experiencia del inmigrante (Immigrants' experience)	
Profesor apoya en lo académico y personal y es clave para el éxito del estudiante (teacher supports academically and personally. They are key for student success)	Papel del profesor (Teachers' role)	Elementos de la educación (Elements of education)
Papel del profesor afecta la participación familiar (teachers' role affect FE)	Papel del profesor (Teachers' role)	
Comunicación entre padres y profesor es importante (parent-teacher communication is important)	Comunicación (Communication)	
Proveer intérpretes facilita la comunicación entre padres y profesor/colegio (Providing interpreters makes parent- teacher/school communication easier)	Comunicación (Communication)	
Ser bilingüe es beneficioso (being bilingual is beneficial)	Comunicación (Communication)	

Themes as Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
Beneficios de escuchar las historias y experiencias de la familia para aprender y apreciar las raíces familiares (it's beneficial to listen to the family stories and experiences to learn about and appreciate the family roots)	Comunicación (Communication)	
Profesor asume que no hay mucha participación familiar si la tarea esta incorrecta (teacher assumes there's no FE if the homework is incorrect)	Concepto erróneo (Misconception)	
Profesor piensa que el inmigrante no apoya al estudiante porque se mantiene muy ocupado trabajando (teacher thinks that immigrant families don't support the child because they are always busy working)	Concepto erróneo (Misconception)	
Colegio también se preocupa por el bienestar de las familias y que tengan las necesidades básicas (school also worries about families well-being and having basic needs met)	Contribuyente a una buena educación (Contributor to a good education)	
Motivación es importante para seguir con la educación (motivation is important to continue with education)	Contribuyente a una buena educación (Contributor to a good education)	
Orgullo e importancia de tener educación (pride and importance of having an education)	Valor de la educación (Value of education)	

Themes as Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
Tener educación ayuda a salir adelante (having an education helps you get ahead)	Valor de la educación (Value of education)	

Note. FE = family engagement

Global Theme One: Estructura Familiar. Estructura Familiar (Family Structure) is comprised of three organizing themes and 11 basic themes. This network represents an exploration of the family's view of what constitutes the family structure. The discussion of family highlighted how the family in this study describes the role of the family in a person's life, the definition of family, and how the family serves as a support system. The thematic network (see Figure 9) shows the key themes in which the Estructura Familiar (Family Structure) was anchored: family as a support system, definition of family, and family role.

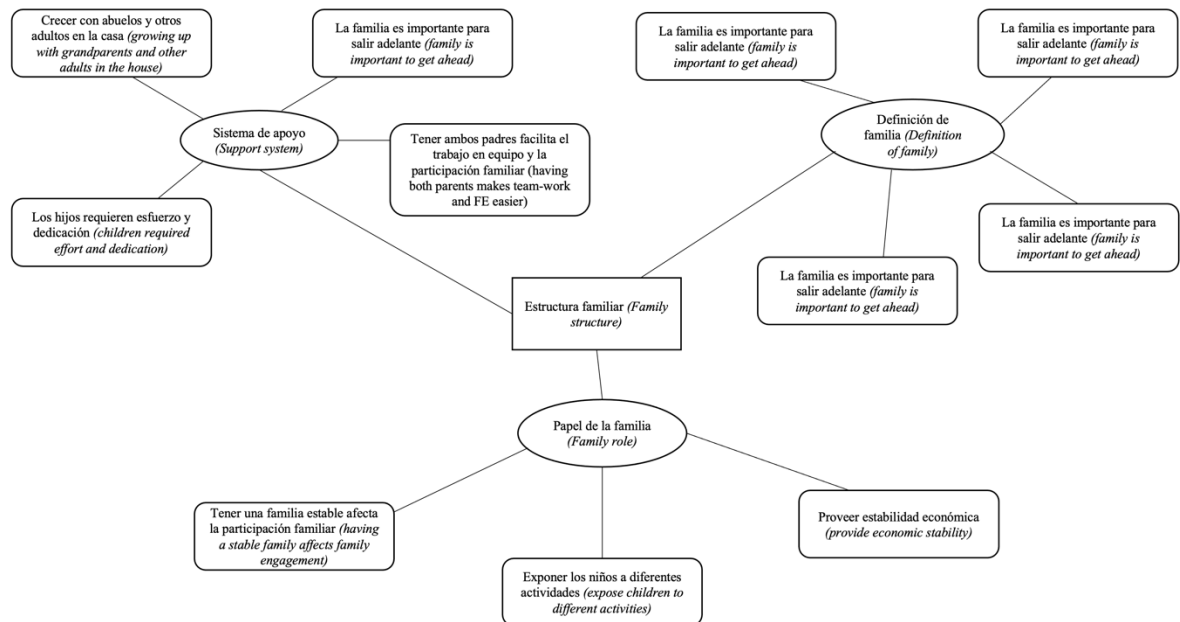


Figure 9

Thematic Network for 'Estructura Familiar (Family Structure)'

Organizing Theme: Sistema de apoyo (Support system). This organizing theme pertains to the importance of having the family as a support system. Often, immigrant families come to the U.S. and leave their children with grandparents in the home country until they are settled. Then the kids come to the U.S. This was the case for the mother as well, “mis padres se vinieron desde que nosotros estábamos pequeños. Se vinieron, inmigraron hasta aquí hasta el país. Iba a quedar con mis abuelos” (my parents came since we were little. They came, migrated to this country. I had to stay with my grandparents). Through the document review, I was able to see how both parents made an effort to be present in the child’s life and made an effort during virtual learning to make

sure the child was learning. Often, the parents made comments to the teacher about not being sure if what they were doing was right but that they were doing the best they could.

The mom explained:

siempre trato. Estoy pendiente de que ella se vaya desarrollando y que este bien preparada para cuando ya le tocará ir al colegio. Y si que hace una gran diferencia eso porque ella sabe mucho que me siento orgullosa del trabajo que hemos hecho (I always try. I'm always making sure she's developing and is well-prepared for when she has to go to school. And it does make a big difference because she knows a lot. I feel proud of the work we [parents] have done).

During the interviews, it became evident that they relied on grandparents watching the children often. Lastly, having both parents made teamwork easier and allowed for more family engagement. The father explained that he tries to help because he understands kids keep you busy:

así que ella hace lo que tiene que hacer a veces ir yo, porque yo entiendo, es difícil cuidar a un niño o dos o más. Se vuelve uno loco a veces, ya después le digo, si tú quieres ir a hacer algo para ti ve, tráeme el niño, déjame (so she does what she has to do sometimes go, because I understand, is hard to take care of one or two or more kids. Sometimes you become crazy, then I tell her if you want to go do something for you, go. Bring me the kid, leave).

This theme highlighted the support system that a family is and how having both parents and other adults around helps bring up children. Raising children is not an easy task especially in a society where work-life balance is still not possible for many. Therefore,

creating a support system that has your best interest at heart, helps increase family engagement. It is also beneficial to expose children to different activities to support their learning and to inspire creativity.

Organizing Theme: Definición de familia (Definition of family). This organizing theme pertains to the way the parents defined family. They both talked about how important family is, that family is biological, that family supports one another and how you share everything with family. The mom shared that family to her is “compartir. Pues compartir este con ellos. Eso es bueno” (share. Well share with them. That’s good) and that family is “apoyarnos el uno al otro” (support one another). Overall, raising children is not an easy job, and it is helpful to have people around who support you. The family was important for the parents, and they are lucky to have their extended family in the city to help them. Every person is different and has a different definition of family. For the parents, family includes those adults who help shape children’s lives. This aligns with the definition of family engagement and how it is a more inclusive term.

Organizing Theme: Papel de la familia (Family role). This organizing theme pertains to the importance of exposing kids to different activities for them to be able to develop to their full potential and spend less time on technological devices. The mom said, “[padres] ponga más a los hijos en actividades también para que ellos no pasen tanto [tiempo] en la televisión o el teléfono” ([parents] enroll kids more in different activities so that they don’t spend as much [time] on the tv or their phone). The father explained that providing economic stability was also an important role of the family due to the positive outcomes this could have on children. From a young age, his mom encouraged

him to save for the future, “decía mi mamá ahorra, ahorra, ahorra. Dame tu dinero, yo te lo voy a guardar, te lo ahorro” (mom would say save, save, save. Give me your money, I’ll put it away for you, I’ll save it for you). Overall, the role of the family was about providing a sense of security and exposing children to different activities to help them learn and grow as well as teaching them skills for having a stable future. Having a family that is supportive and that provides a stable home environment will help children succeed in p-12 school.

Global Theme Two: Percepción de Participación Familiar. Percepción de Participación Familiar (Perception of Family Engagement) is comprised of three organizing themes and 11 basic themes. This network represents an exploration of the family’s perspective of family engagement. The discussion of Percepción de Participación Familiar (Perception of Family Engagement) highlighted the importance of parent-teacher communication to increase family engagement, the importance of family engagement, and the different ways a family can be involved in their children’s education. The thematic network (see Figure 10) shows the key themes in which the Percepción de Participación Familiar (Perception of Family Engagement) was anchored: communication, the importance of family engagement, and family-based involvement.

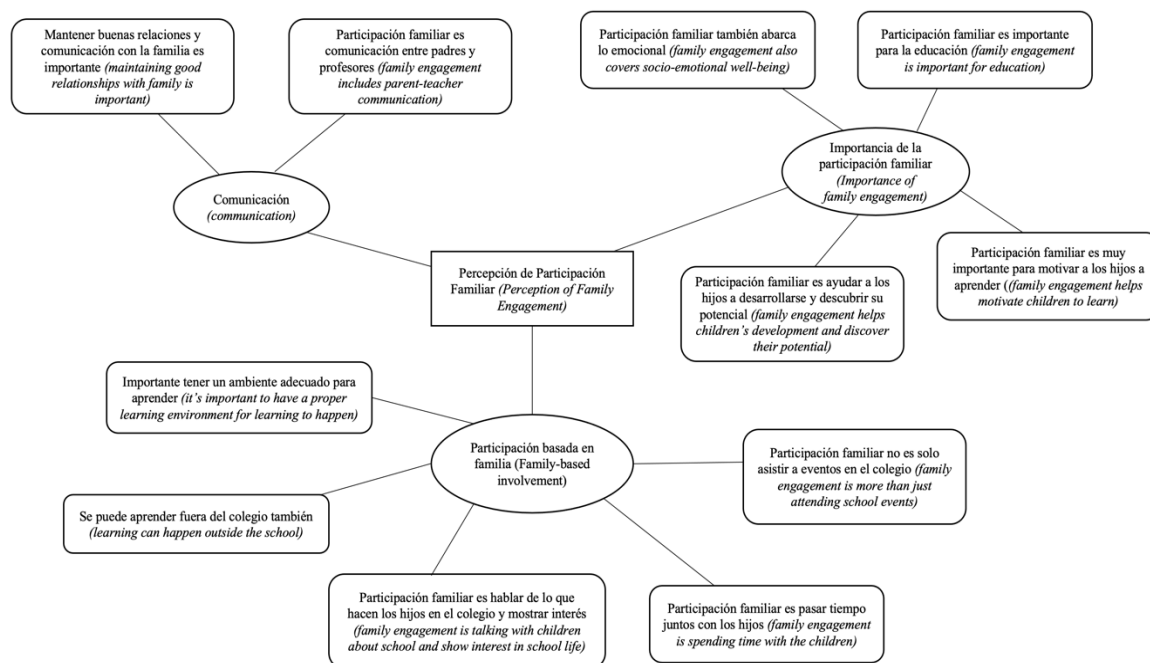


Figure 10

Thematic Network for 'Percepción de Participación Familiar (Perception of Family Engagement)'

Organizing Theme: Comunicación (Communication). This organizing theme pertains to the importance of having good relationships and communication among the family and highlights that part of positive family engagement is having parent-teacher communication. The father emphasized that even though his own father was not able to help much with academics, he always communicated and built relationships with the children, “siempre mi padre en las noches que trataba que cenáramos todos juntos y siempre sentarse a hablar y ver cómo nos fue o si tenemos algún problema. Y siempre nos trataba y nos hablaba como de la escuela mucho” (my father always at night tried to

eat dinner together and always sat down to talk and find out how our day was or if we had a problem. And always tried and spoke to us a lot about school). It was interesting how the mom thought she did not do a good job communicating with the teacher and how communication should be two-way. The mom often thought she was not good at returning emails, but it turns out she was not as bad as she thought. Sometimes she took a couple of days to respond but at least she was responding.

Yo siento que me desvié ahí porque ay no, yo con los tablets y todo eso como que no estoy pendiente nunca. Y ahí a veces miraba, había, a veces que estar chequeando en esas tabletas o en esas laptops. Yo no soy para eso. Entonces ahí donde uno se desvía (I feel that I spaced out there because me and tablets and all of that, is like I never pay attention. And sometimes, I would look. I had to check those tablets and laptops constantly. I'm not good at that. So, there's where one can space out).

From the document review, it was evident that two-way communication was happening but maybe at a slower rate due to having to rely on technology. It seemed like the mother was always trying to send videos and activities to show the things they were working on and was updating the teacher if the daughter had to miss school. Two-way communication signaled respect between the teacher and the family and showed signs of caring and empathy both of which can help increase family engagement and solidify parent-teacher partnerships.

Organizing Theme: Importancia de la participación familiar (Importance of family engagement). This organizing theme pertains to the importance of family

engagement for education, to motivate children, and how family engagement is also about the children's socio-emotional well-being. An example of this is when the mom shared how her grandmother used to go to the school only when other children were mean to her and not necessarily for school events "me recuerdo que mi abuela iba [al colegio] pero era cuando me pegaban los demás niños" (I remember that my grandmother used to go [to the school] but when other kids would hit me). When caregivers go to the school for non-academic reasons, it supports what mom shared about family engagement being about asking kids about how they are doing in school and how they are being treated. The father also thinks that family engagement is important because it helps the kids feel that parents care about them and their education. The mother also highlights the importance of motivating kids to learn so they are interested in getting an education. This organizing theme highlights the efforts the family makes to make sure their children feel supported and to help them build and strengthen their socio-emotional well-being.

Organizing Theme: Participación basada en familia (Family-based involvement). This organizing theme pertains to the different shapes and forms family engagement can take according to the family. The theme also highlights how family engagement is much more than just academics. According to the father, it is also about "pasar tiempo, jugar juntos, cenar juntos, y hacer diferentes actividades" (spending time, playing together, eating dinner together, and doing different activities). Both parents felt that family engagement is also about "estar pendiente de ellos [hijos]" (being attentive to them [children]). This theme also focuses on how learning can happen outside of the classroom during regular day-to-day activities. For example, mom mentioned how she

likes spending time outdoors. “Me gusta llevarlos siempre al parque o no sé, un sitio o con la bicicleta a caminar afuera en el vecindario, echarle agua al jardín a los a ellos que me ayuden a criarlos a ellos en mis actividades” (I like to take them always to the park or somewhere or with the bicycle to walk outside around the neighborhood, water the garden, have them help me raise them by doing my activities). Family-based involvement is about supporting children in and outside the classroom and motivating them to continue their education. This type of involvement fully aligns with the literature on family engagement. It also, shows the importance of the family interactions outside of school and the value and positive impact they have on children.

Summary

Family structure for the Latinx immigrant family is fundamental. Through the parents’ interviews and other data collection methods, it was evident that family was more than being biological (e.g., blood-related). Family supports one another and plays a significant role in a person’s life. Having both parents and providing a stable home environment help increase family engagement. In Figure 9 we can see how families serve as a support system. However, when a person is far from biological family, they create their own support system to help them out when needed. Furthermore, the parents saw the role of the family as a way to help children succeed in life and provide a safe and stable home environment. Figure 10 shows that for the parents, family engagement is essential, and parent-teacher communication is a vital component of family engagement. Having two-way communication is a strategy fully supported by the literature on family engagement. It can really help with building positive parent-teacher partnerships. In

addition, family engagement goes beyond the academic and encompasses children's socio-emotional well-being. Learning can occur outside the classroom and through parents sharing their lived experiences and day-to-day responsibilities.

Case Analysis

After examining all the data collected and creating the different codes, categories, and themes, the case studies showed some similarities and differences. I will describe the similarities first. The teacher and the family had similar perspectives when describing and defining family. In both case studies, it was clear that family was important, that family could be biological and non-biological, especially when a person moves to a different state/country. The teacher and the family both mentioned how it is very typical for immigrant children to grow up in multi-generational homes and have numerous adult figures throughout their life. Finally, both agree that family is the one that supports and helps when needed.

Another similarity across the case studies was that both agree on the importance and need of parent-teacher communication for the child and its impact on family engagement. The communication, however, needs to be reciprocal. They also agree that parents have funds of knowledge, and children can benefit from listening to the lived experiences of their caregivers. Lastly, both case studies stressed the importance of using bilingual communication using the home-school liaison, interpreters, and teachers' attempts, even if it is not perfect. Families appreciate the effort since language can often be a barrier for immigrant families. Using these resources can make communication easier and more accessible.

In both case studies, it was clear that the teacher makes a difference and can significantly impact family engagement. The teacher goes above and beyond to help students and families, shows concern, and encourages families to stay in touch. In addition, being relatable and personable can significantly impact a student and their family. For immigrant families, it is key the teacher supports students and families academically and personally.

When it comes to differences, the way the teacher and the family described family engagement differed. The teacher focused a lot on trust building to help increase and to encourage family engagement. On the other hand, the family emphasized that family engagement is essential and could be accomplished in many ways, and it was more than caring about academics. It was a lot about being present in the child's life. This connects to the trust building the parents noted was important to have with the teacher and also with the children, to show them they cared for and supported them.

Another difference was that the teacher saw the families as a resource, and the family often felt like maybe they were not doing enough. In the parents' interviews and the document review, several times the family was apologetic for maybe not doing things correctly and reminding the teacher that they were doing the best they could. It almost seemed like a plead not to be judged or give the impression that they were not trying. On the other hand, the teacher was always very appreciative of the effort families put in and acknowledged how difficult the year had been. The parents also mentioned numerous times how their own parents were not the best at family engagement due to the hardships they experience as most immigrants do when they pursue the American dream by having

job responsibilities that made it very difficult to be as engaged as they would like. It came to light that the teacher had more of a strengths-based approach perspective.

Finally, the teacher emphasized the importance of being seen as a person from the community, being personable, and relatable to increase family engagement. Making those connections with families was crucial for the teacher and allowed her to get to know the families better. She had a desire to build relationships with the families to better support the children. This was seen by the teacher as an advantage and being more accessible. On the contrary, the family kept to their own and tried to use family engagement to motivate their children to continue their education. See Figure 11 for similarities and differences between the teacher and the family.

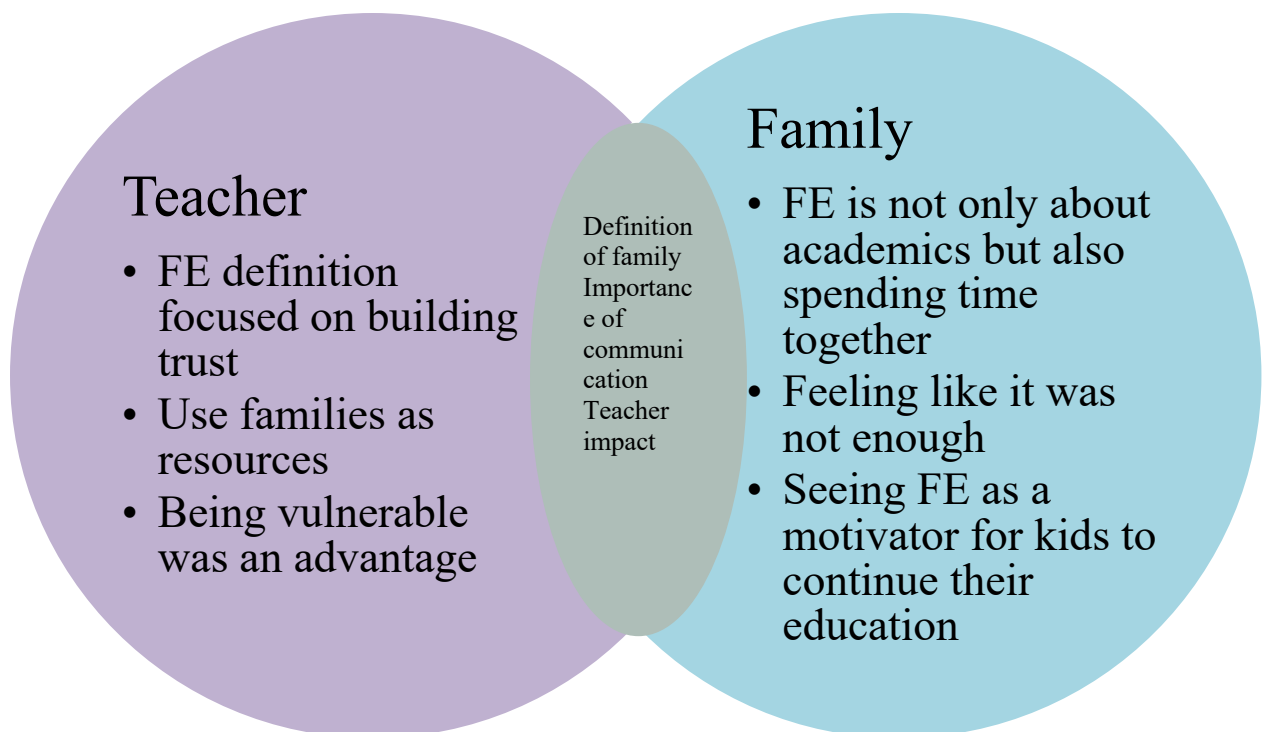


Figure 11

Similarities and Differences Between Teacher and Family

Conclusion

Overall, the teachers' perspective of Latinx immigrant families' engagement in their children's education (RQ1) is that Latinx parents will engage if they have the tools and resources on how they can do it. The teacher understands that Latinx immigrant families do care and have lots of expectations for their children to accomplish what they have not. In addition, due to virtual learning and the teacher "being" at the students' house almost every day and seeing the different posts on the app the children submitted with help from a parent/adult, allowed her to see the different ways the Latinx families engaged in their children's education.

The Latinx immigrant family's perspective on family engagement in their children's education (RQ2) goes beyond academics. It also focuses on being there for the child, providing basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, etc.), financial stability, a stable home environment, spending time together, and maintaining communication among the family and the teacher. The family also sees family engagement as providing opportunities for their children to learn and gain experiences through different activities.

Regarding the different ways Latinx immigrant families engage in their children's education (RQ3), I can report that families engage and care about their children's education. One way of showing engagement is by supporting the children with "tareas" (*homework*) at home, maintaining two-way communication with the teacher and the child, and lastly, ensuring the child has a positive learning environment. In this study, the parents perceive as homework the different activities they were doing outside of live learning. In a non-pandemic year, children in pre-K do not necessarily have homework.

Another way Latinx immigrant families engage in their children's education is by motivating children to continue their education, making them feel proud of what they have accomplished, dreaming about what they can do in the future, and having goals for when they grow up. For Latinx immigrant families, another way to be engaged is by giving opportunities to children to have different experiences through activities.

After the data analysis, it became clear that to build and maintain positive parent-teacher partnerships, communication is the main component. Communication must be reciprocal, and it should happen (if possible) in the family's preferred language. To facilitate this process, it is good to use the resources provided by the school. Additionally, building trust and rapport are also vital for parent-teacher partnerships. Lastly, involving the parents in their children's education and recognizing that they have a lot to offer will help build long-lasting partnerships. The findings reflect the definition of family engagement and the themes support the different strategies that parents, teachers, and p-12 schools should use to encourage family engagement and the creation of strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships.

Chapter Four discussed the findings of the data analysis process, and Chapter Five provides the conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Five

Chapter Four discussed the findings from the data analysis process. Chapter Five provides the interpretation of the findings, the implications for practice, the recommendations for future research, and the limitations of the study. The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' and Latinx immigrant families' perspectives of family engagement. In addition, this study sought to inform the different ways these families engage in their children's education and provide information on how to build strengths-based parent-teacher relationships, specifically with Latinx immigrant families. Previous chapters discussed the positive impact family engagement and parent-teacher partnerships could have on student success and that public U.S. p-12 schools' classrooms are becoming more CLD. These facts leave no alternative to p-12 schools but to change the traditional way they have been engaging families.

Despite the amount of literature on the importance of family engagement, there was not as much literature on the perspectives of Latinx immigrant families and teachers' perspectives on family engagement. In addition, there was not a lot of literature on the different ways these families engage in their children's education and how to build and maintain strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships with CLD families. Therefore, this study contributes to these gaps in the literature. Because of my positionality as a Latina immigrant myself and the shared language and culture I have with the Latinx community, I wanted to focus my study on Latinx immigrant families. The following section discusses the interpretation of the findings for the study.

Interpretation of Findings

This section provides the findings for each research question, RQ1 what is the teacher's perspective of Latinx immigrant families' engagement in their children's education?; RQ2 what is the Latinx immigrant family's perspective on family engagement in their children's education?; and RQ3 in what ways do Latinx immigrant families engage in their children's education? In addition, based on the data collection and analysis, this section provides suggestions on how to build strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships.

RQ1 Findings. Regarding the teacher's perspective of Latinx immigrant families' engagement in their children's education, the findings yielded that they would engage in their children's education more if the teacher/school provides the educational resources to extend learning beyond the classroom. Once the teacher realized this, she started sending more resources (e.g., books in Spanish) home so that parents could read to their children. In addition, because of virtual learning, the teacher could send videos, stories, and activities (Bailey, 2006; Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006; Feiler et al., 2006; Hughes & Greenhough, 2006) through the app for children to do to support their education. These opportunities created a space for families to connect (Halgunseth et al., 2009) and for learning to happen even among siblings, as shared in the teacher interview.

Additionally, during the teacher interview and the document review, I was able to see the teacher had a lot of empathy and understanding towards the families due to COVID-19 and virtual learning. She knew it was not the ideal situation for children to learn and understood the sacrifices and hard-work families were putting in to ensure their

children were learning. Also, as a mom herself and having her three children doing virtual school while she was also working, allowed her to experience many of the same struggles families were facing during these tiring circumstances.

Providing guidance and resources for the parents to support at-home learning is particularly important for families that feel their way of assisting their children is different than the teacher's expectations (Soltero-González & Gillanders, 2021).

Providing home educational resources for parents to support their children's education is supported by Halgunseth et al. (2009) Social Exchange Model of Family Engagement. It is one of the resources listed to increase family engagement and build strengths-based parent-teacher/school partnerships.

According to the teacher, one of the benefits of virtual learning was the ability to be at the students' house almost every day during live learning. Virtually being in the house was the equivalent of doing home visits but with an increase in frequency, as stated by the teacher during the interview. Being at the students' house provided an opportunity for the teacher to get to know the students' home life (Meyer & Mann, 2006) and a chance to relax and be seen more like real a person (Amanti, 2005). Additionally, because students uploaded videos of different activities, the teacher could see how the families were engaged in their children's education. Doing home visits also aligns with Halgunseth et al.'s (2009) Social Exchange Model of Family Engagement. It is also one of the resources listed to increase family engagement and build strengths-based parent-teacher/school partnerships (Brown et al., 2016) as teachers increase their empathy and

cultural awareness (Park & Paulick, 2021). Finally, home visits allow teachers to connect the students' home world to the school's (Araujo, 2009).

RQ2 Findings. When it comes to the Latinx immigrant family's perspective on family engagement in their children's education, it was clear that the family view was beyond academics and p-12 school. It was about being present in the child's life, providing a house, food, clothing, financial stability, a safe and stable home environment, communicating with the teacher, and providing opportunities to learn through different activities. The way the family viewed family engagement was consistent with the literature on how it should be, as explained in Halgunseth et al.'s (2009) Social Exchange Model of Family Engagement. All these forms of engagement result in higher academic achievement for children (Fantuzzo et al., 2004; Halgunseth et al., 2009; McWayne, Hampton, et al., 2004).

The document review process and the interview with the father disclosed different activities in which the family was engaging through experiential learning. This type of engagement is consistent with what Soltero-González and Gillanders (2021) explain Latinx families tend to do. In addition, these forms of engagement prove that Latinx immigrant families care about their children's education and want them to succeed in life (Auerbach, 2011; Mapp et al., 2017). It is also important to highlight the need to recognize this form of engagement equally as valuable as the typical definitions of school-based parent engagement to avoid privileging the dominant culture and oppressing the non-dominant cultures (Ishimaru et al., 2016; McWayne et al., 2021; Posey-Maddox, 2017; Yull et al., 2018). When the definition of family engagement is extended to reflect

the strategies and activities non-dominant families use, a more accepting cultural pluralism view exists where difference is valued and not thought of as a deficit.

RQ3 Findings. The different ways Latinx immigrant families engage in their children's education consist of various events that do not always align with the traditional definition of family engagement. Through the data collection and analysis, it was evident that the family in this study engaged in their child's education by providing support at home, maintaining communication with their children and their teacher, providing a positive learning environment at home, and motivating their children to continue with their education and having goals for the future. These findings inform the different ways in which a family can engage in their child's education, and even though they differ from the traditional paradigm, they should still be valued and respected by teachers and schools. Based on the document review and the interviews with the parents, the family did feel valued by the teacher and appreciated the continuous encouragement and understanding they received from the teacher.

Building Positive and Strengths-Based Parent-Teacher Partnerships

Findings

Empathetic reciprocal communication is the core to building and maintaining positive strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships. Communication enables parents and teachers to build trust and rapport, which are essential to family engagement. Additionally, communication needs to be reciprocal (two-way) and, if possible, should be in the family's preferred language of communication. Lastly, recognizing that parents have non-school expertise (Hinton, 2015) or funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992, 2005)

and using them as resources will help build and strengthen long-lasting partnerships. These findings align perfectly with the literature (California Department of Education, 2013; Halgunseth et al., 2009; Soltero-González & Gillanders, 2021) regarding what it takes to build strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships. When families describe family engagement, they tend to focus more on what is happening at home. Teachers' definition, on the other hand, focuses more on what is happening in p-12 schools. This study highlighted how much the family valued and cared about the socio-emotional well-being of their children which is very important in young children. This study shows that working in partnership with the families is learning from them how to promote children's socio-emotional development. The following section discusses the implications for practice to increase Latinx immigrant families' engagement in their children's education and strategies to develop strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships.

Implications for Practice

This section identifies five implications for practice by the schools and teachers to increase Latinx immigrant families' engagement in their children's education and build and maintain strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships related to existing literature and the findings of this study. First, the definition of family engagement needs to move from a traditional one to one that fits the new diverse population entering the schools. It must be put into action and not just on paper or lip service. Second, teachers should maintain two-way communication. To do this, schools need to provide the resources to facilitate reciprocal communication. Third, teachers should conduct more home visits. In order to do this, the educational system needs to make a drastic change for teachers to be able to

do more home visits without adding more to their already very full list of responsibilities. Fourth, funds of knowledge should be incorporated more into the curriculum, and fifth, the teacher workforce needs to reflect the p-12 school population more.

Definition of Family Engagement. Before the change in demographics in the U.S., the definition of family engagement in p-12 public schools had been centered mainly on school-based activities, which do not reflect the strategies and activities non-dominant families use (González et al., 2013; McWayne et al., 2021). This limited definition of family engagement leaves CLD families at a loss because their ways of engagement are not valued and appreciated (Hoffman et al., 2020) by teachers and p-12 schools. Therefore, this leads to teachers holding a negative perspective on how much CLD families engage in their children's education (González et al., 2013; Weiss et al., 2009) and negatively impacting the connection between parents/students and teachers/schools.

LatCrit literature emphasizes the need to recognize the different identities Latinx people have and how these impact the way they engage with their children's education. Additionally, the complexity of the life of CLD families leaves no option but to use intersectionality to see how the factors these families have to juggle help to better depict what family engagement means to them. LatCrit theory also helps understand the Latinx culture better and improve their life in the U.S., making the application and expansion of the definition of family engagement much needed.

Expanding the definition of family engagement to one that honors and values the different ways CLD families engage and focuses on building reciprocal strengths-based

partnerships would be extremely helpful and beneficial for those involved. Due to the increase of non-dominant cultures in the classrooms, it is only logical to find new ways to involve students and families more. The traditional way of family engagement no longer works. Therefore, schools need to stop seeing the perceived deficiencies (language, literacy, and culture) CLD families bring as deficits and more as assets and opportunities for growth. It is also important to apply the new definition to help build those partnerships with CLD students and their families.

Two-Way Communication. Having respectful two-way communication with all families will help to encourage Latinx immigrant families' engagement in their children's education. It would also aid in building strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships (Halgunseth et al., 2009), and parents would feel more comfortable getting involved in their children's education (Soltero-González & Gillanders, 2021). The findings of this study revealed the importance of the teacher using interpreters and the home-school liaison to better communicate with the families and send communication in both English and Spanish. In addition, schools need to ask families their preferred way of communication (which the school in this study already does), respect their choice, and listen to their feedback and needs (Halgunseth et al., 2009). The authors add that it is also imperative that the schools use communication strategies congruent with the student demographic. Having two-way communication would help academic performance and social adjustment (González et al., 2013). During virtual schooling and live classes, the teacher was able to maintain reciprocal communication with the families. This positively impacted the parent-teacher partnerships made during the school year. While teachers

maintain communication with parents, this allows them to expand their cultural knowledge (Mascadri et al., 2017).

Home Visits. The benefits of doing home visits should outweigh the time involved in conducting them. However, a drastic change in the system as a whole needs to happen to provide teachers with the time and resources needed to conduct home visits. Conducting home visits allows teachers to learn about the students and their families' home life and culture (Meyer & Mann, 2006). Given the shift in demographics, home visits seem the best option to get to know the students and their families. In addition, home visits will help to strengthen parent-teacher partnerships as they make communication easier and increase teacher empathy and cultural awareness (Brown et al., 2016; Park & Paulick, 2021). The teacher in this study often mentioned how hard virtual learning was for everyone, but she kept referring to how beneficial it was to be at the students' homes almost every day through virtual learning. Seeing the benefits home visits have on students' academic performance, the increase in family engagement, and the development of parent-teacher partnerships, home visits should be given more importance and done more often. They should not be seen as a burden. Instead, they should be seen as favorable and a way to better connect with students and their families. During the pandemic and virtual schooling, it was evident that the teacher greatly benefited from being in the students' house every day through live class. Perhaps, doing virtual home visits can be a concept that could be incorporated in the future to conduct home visits and reduce some of the burden attached to them.

Funds of Knowledge. Families hold an abundance of knowledge and skills that need to be valued by the teachers and p-12 schools to increase family engagement and improve parent-teacher partnerships. Using funds of knowledge is a way to recognize that families have non-school expertise (Hinton, 2015). Additionally, when funds of knowledge are incorporated into the curriculum, what the students and the families bring is seen as assets and not deficits (Moll, 1992). This view helps families feel appreciated and respected, provides a way for home and school to connect (Messing, 2005), and honors the identities of the families. Finally, when teachers use funds of knowledge in their classrooms, it is a way to practice culturally responsive pedagogy, which helps to highlight the many assets CLD families bring (Pratt et al., 2021).

Diversify the Teacher Workforce. The new student population calls for a diverse teacher workforce (Cushner, 2015). Unfortunately, the classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse but not the teachers (Brown et al., 2016), which leads to cultural disconnects. When the teachers do not reflect the student population, students of color are at a disadvantage (Neal et al., 2015). Having a teacher workforce that is representative of the student population is beneficial for students, schools, and the community (Geiger, 2018). In addition, teachers of color can positively impact the academic success of students of color (Haddix, 2017).

Too often, Latinx students drop out of school at a higher rate than other races and ethnicities. A way to decrease this statistic might be by diversifying the teacher workforce where students can see themselves represented. Having a diverse teacher workforce would allow students to look up to role models who look like them and would

simplify connecting due to cultural experiences. Having a diverse teacher workforce would help students tremendously. It would also help increase Latinx family engagement and assist with building and maintaining positive strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships. When Latinx students and their families have a positive experience with education, it might motivate those students to go into teaching to then them becoming role models for future CLD students. By teachers and p-12 schools facilitating positive experiences, it can help with diversifying the teacher workforce in the future. The following section discusses the recommendations for future research.

Recommendations for Future Research

Knowing that p-12 classrooms will continue to become more diverse and given the positive impact family engagement and strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships can have on students' academic success, recommendations for future research include the following. First, to conduct a longitudinal study where data collection can take place during at least one academic year. Second, to do research during normal circumstances and not in the middle of a pandemic. Third, to adjust interview questions for a clear understanding of how strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships could be built and maintained. Fourth, to include students as participants and increase the number of teachers and families' participants.

Future studies would benefit from a longitudinal study's unique insight as the researcher develops a great understanding of teachers' and Latinx immigrant families' perspectives of family engagement. During a longitudinal study, data can be collected throughout the academic year, which would be beneficial as more data sources would be

available. Additionally, through a longitudinal study, trust and rapport with participants can be developed, which could encourage participants to share more and be willing to be more open during interviews. Lastly, a longitudinal study would allow the researcher to examine the impact of family engagement and strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships over time.

Conducting future research during normal circumstances and not amidst a pandemic would provide more truthful results. It would also allow for more data sources that reflect a more typical behavior from families, teachers, and p-12 schools. Doing research when school is face-to-face, and the world is not dealing with a pandemic would allow the researcher to participate in more school-based activities and possibly experience the family's home life. Even though virtual schooling provided easy access to all the parent-teacher/school communication, it did not necessarily represent what happens in a non-pandemic year. Conducting research during non-pandemic circumstances would also allow participants to feel more comfortable as they would not have to navigate the uncertainties of virtual learning.

For future research, I recommend adjusting the interview questions to be more focused and include more questions about building strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships. Additionally, I would revise the questions so that the parents' childhood is not the main focus to go more in-depth about their own experiences as parents. However, I would say that having the parents' childhood experiences gave me some insight into their parents' influence, which was interesting to see how it impacts them as parents. Knowing the importance and the impact that strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships

have on family engagement, having more focused questions would help determine strategies to help build these partnerships. Furthermore, revising the interview questions will also help identify what is important to the participants when creating and maintaining strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships.

Lastly, for future research, I recommend increasing the number of participants in the study. I would include more families, teachers, and even students as participants. The increase of participants would allow for different perspectives on family engagement and how to build strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships. In addition, having students as participants would provide an interesting view. This study only provided the teacher and family perspective, therefore adding the student perspective and experiences of family engagement, would be beneficial to the field and provide best practices to increase family engagement. Lastly, adding more participants will increase the sample size which could benefit the study by strengthening trustworthiness. The following section discusses the limitations of the study.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. The first limitation was the recruitment of participants because of a global pandemic happening and schools moving to virtual instruction. Since going virtual posed numerous difficulties, many teachers and the school superintendent did not want to participate in the study. Also, scheduling the family interviews was difficult because everyone was extremely busy and finding time was challenging.

Another limitation of the study was that it only represented the perspectives and experiences of a Latinx immigrant family and one teacher. Even though generalization is not the primary goal of research, the small sample size limited the generalization of the study. However, the small sample size did allow for much richer information on the perspectives and experiences of teachers and Latinx immigrant families towards family engagement and the importance of strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships.

Further limitations included that the study's credibility was compromised because I am a novice researcher. However, I relied on peer examination and reflexivity to compensate for my lack of experience. Lastly, the convenience of the site location was another limitation to the study. The following section discusses the conclusion of the study.

Conclusion

Throughout the literature, it is evident that family engagement significantly impacts student success (Araujo, 2009; Clarke et al., 2017; Durand, 2011; Herrera et al., 2020; Jasis, 2021; Lin, 2003; Vesely et al., 2017; Weiss et al., 2006). Yet, with the shift in the U.S. demographics, limited effort to implement the different ways CLD families engage and the need to change from a more traditional (school-based attendance activities) to one that focuses more on building strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships. Additionally, there seem to be some discrepancies on how teachers and schools define family engagement compared to CLD families. One of the main ways to involve families is through building strengths-based relationships between CLD families and the teachers and schools. To understand the different ways in which teachers and

Latinx immigrant families view family engagement, this study sought to explain the teachers' and Latinx immigrant families' perspectives of family engagement. It also provided insight into the different ways Latinx immigrant families engage in their children's education. In addition, because a major component of family engagement with CLD families is the parent-teacher partnerships, this study provides information on how to build strengths-based parent-teacher relationships, specifically with Latinx immigrant families.

The teacher's perspective of Latinx immigrant families' engagement in their children's education is that families will engage if they are given the resources to support their children's learning at home. Since CLD families are often unsure how to support their children's education, it is crucial teachers also provide guidance and resources for parents to support at-home learning. Additionally, it is imperative that teachers know students' home lives, build empathy, and cultural awareness (Amanti, 2005; Park & Paulick, 2021) to better connect the p-12 school world to the home world (Araujo, 2009). Home visits would ease the fusion of both worlds, increase family engagement, and support the development of strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships to benefit the students' academic performance.

This study's Latinx immigrant family's perspective on family engagement in their children's education was more than academics. For most Latinx immigrant families being present in the child's life, providing basic needs and security, communicating with the teacher, and providing opportunities to learn through different activities are of utmost

importance and value. In addition, Latinx immigrant families also consider the benefits of experiential learning and consider it part of family engagement.

Latinx immigrant families engage in their children's education in various ways that differ from the traditional deficit view of family engagement. Often how Latinx families are treated is a function of implicit bias and whiteness from teachers and p-12 schools. The way Latinx immigrant families engage in their children's education is different than what p-12 schools are used to. However, it does not mean that their form of engagement is wrong or that they do not care about their children's education. On the contrary, because of these differences, intersectionality and LatCrit need to be considered because it impacts how CLD families are involved and recognize the different identities and issues they have to juggle to become socialized into the U.S. culture.

Building positive and strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships is key to increasing family engagement amongst CLD families. To aid with this, two-way communication between parents and teachers is essential. Open communication allows Latinx immigrant families to feel more comfortable getting involved in their children's education (Soltero-González & Gillanders, 2021). Another way to build parent-teacher partnerships is by recognizing that CLD families bring funds of knowledge and its immense benefits when incorporated into the curriculum. Lastly, to help with the creation of parent-teacher partnerships, it would be beneficial to diversify the teacher workforce to close the gap with cultural disconnects and create more meaningful connections between students, families, and teachers.

Considering the high impact family engagement has on students' academic success and the diversity the U.S. public p-12 schools are experiencing, connections between families and schools must continue to evolve. Expanding the definition of family engagement to one that focuses more on the assets these families bring and appreciates the different ways in which they are engaged in their children's education would encourage more strengths-based parent-teacher partnerships and increase family engagement among CLD families and their children's schools.

Appendix A

Graduation Photo Booth



Appendix B

Interview Guide for Parents

Interview protocol/guide:

1. Introduction/Bio
 - a. Review consent form
 - b. Review bio information: nationality, age, age and school grade of children, years in the U.S., any other family in the U.S.
2. Tell me about your life back in your home country (RQ2)
3. What is family to you?
4. Can you tell me what family engagement means to you? (RQ2)
 - a. Walk me through your feelings/perspectives about family engagement (RQ3)
5. Tell me about your education experiences in your home country (RQ2, RQ3)
 - a. Tell me about how your parents or other family members were involved in your education (RQ2, RQ3)
6. Tell me about your life here in the U.S.
 - a. How's life here with children?
7. Can you tell me how you think you are engaged in your children's education? (RQ2, RQ3)
8. What does the school/teacher do to encourage family engagement? (RQ2)
 - a. How might relationships be built to encourage family engagement? (RQ2, RQ3)

Guía para la entrevista

1. Introducción y biografía
 - a. Repasar el formulario de consentimiento
 - b. Repasar la biografía: nacionalidad, edad, edad y curso de los hijos, años en los Estados Unidos, alguna otra familia en los E.U.
2. Hábleme de su vida en su país
3. ¿Qué es familia para usted?
4. Me puede decir que significa participación familiar para usted
 - a. ¿Cuáles son sus perspectivas de participación familiar?
5. Hábleme de su educación en su país
 - a. Hábleme de la participación familiar de sus padres u otros miembros de su familia en su educación
6. Hábleme de su vida aquí en los E.U.
 - a. ¿Cómo es la vida aquí con niños?
7. Me puede decir usted como cree que esta teniendo participación familiar en la educación de su(s) hijo(s)
8. ¿Qué hace la escuela/profesor para inculcar la participación familiar?

- a. ¿Cómo cree que se pueden formar relaciones para inculcar la participación familiar?

Appendix C

Interview Guide for Teacher

Interview protocol/guide:

1. Introduction/Bio
 - a. Review consent form
 - b. Review bio information: age, number of years teaching, grades currently teaching
2. Talk to me about the Latinx students in your classroom
3. What is family to you?
4. Talk to me about your Latinx students' families
5. How do you define family engagement?
6. How do you see Latinx families getting involved in their children's education?
7. Talk to me about strategies that you use to engaged Latinx families in their children's education
8. How might relationships be built to encourage family engagement?

Appendix D

Observation Guide

Date of observation: June 3, 2021	
Event observed: Live virtual class	<input type="checkbox"/> F2F <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Time observation began: 10:00am	Time observation ended: 11:00am
Type of resources shared	<input type="checkbox"/> Brochures <input type="checkbox"/> Informational pamphlet <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Instructions
Language of resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> English <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Arabic <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Who is in attendance	<input type="checkbox"/> Mom <input type="checkbox"/> Dad <input type="checkbox"/> Grandmother <input type="checkbox"/> Grandfather <input type="checkbox"/> Aunt <input type="checkbox"/> Uncle <input type="checkbox"/> Family friend <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> School leadership (principal) <input type="checkbox"/> Home-school liaison
Resources provided by the school/teacher (N/A)	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
Nonverbal communication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eye contact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Voice volume <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Body movement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gestures <input type="checkbox"/> Space <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Posture <input type="checkbox"/> Touch <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Facial expressions
Item	Description
Space setting/characteristics (furniture, space configuration, temperature, decorations, etc.)	During the online class, the teacher had her background looking like a classroom. It was decorated with fun and vibrant colors. She had a daily tasks board where she checked the

	activities they had completed. She also had all of the items she was going to need for class next to her to demonstrate to the students what they needed to do.
Event activities and participants behavior (what is happening and how are the participants responding)	<p>The teacher was having a live virtual class. She started by greeting every student by their name and talking about something they had. She then sang “I Spy” with my little...and pulled up the first letter of the students’ names and ask each one to wave and say hi and share something about what they are doing. The students are very excited to share. The teacher models a lot and asks students to repeat the words even if they are on mute. The teacher practices putting on a face mask properly (with the students). Talked about why they need to wear one and asked students if they know why we use a mask. The teacher showed them a video of Elmo using a mask and explaining when and why we use them. Has students practice wearing a mask for the duration of the video. The teacher guides the students to get a piece of paper from their learning bag and shows them what she’s referring to. Reminds adults that is important to practice name writing with the students but also tells them that don’t worry if the student doesn’t know how to write their name as they start K. After the activity, the teacher sang the clean-up song. Lastly, the teacher read a book about what we do in school. As she reads, she was reinforcing what they have been learning and skills they will need as they enter K (spelling, pointing to sentences). Has them practice wearing the mask. The class finished with a good-bye song.</p>
Engagement/behavior (how are participants responding to what is happening)	<p>The students are following everything the teacher says and respond when she asks them to. The students practiced wearing their masks and were very good about it. All of the students went and got what they needed for the activity. The students very excited drawing, coloring, and writing their names. Once they finished, they showed the class what they did. Students put away the materials they used for the activity while the teacher was singing the clean-up song.</p>

	Students keep on the mask. The students all said bye and were engaged throughout the class.
Evidence of building relationships	<p>Greeted every student by their name and talked about something they had. One student asked the teacher if she still had a band-aid on. Showed concern and cared for the teacher.</p> <p>The teacher talked about missing one student and how they are going to miss the student. The teacher was very enthusiastic, spoke slowly, and repeated several times. She also talked to the parents (or whoever was supporting the students). She connected with the families as a parent herself and acknowledged that riding the bus for the first time and attending K can be scary but assured them that it will be OK.</p> <p>The teacher referred to students by their names every time she talked to them.</p> <p>Teacher explained to the adults that kids have to wear a mask in K and that it is important to practice wearing them.</p> <p>Teacher conveyed messages in English and Spanish to make sure the adults understood as well.</p>

Appendix E

Document Analysis Template (Mayan, 2009, p. 147)

1.	Name/title of document
2.	Type of document (e.g., journal article, newspaper article, advertisement)
3.	Date of document
4.	If an edition of a document, explain
5.	Author/creator(s) of document
6.	Position/organization(s) of author/creator(s)
7.	Background of author/creator(s) (e.g., credentials, faculty, experience)
8.	General overview of the document (brief, broad perspective)
9.	Unique characteristics of the document (does anything stand out?)
10.	Tone/mood of the document (what feelings does the document stimulate?)
11.	Audience for which the document was written (e.g., public, specific to organization, colleagues)
12.	Language of document (e.g., research, medical, layman)
13.	Patterns within the document (e.g., style, paragraphing, numbering)
14.	Symbols, diagrams, pictures, visuals in document (e.g., logos, photos)
15.	Viewpoint from which the document was written (may not only be the author's)
16.	Purpose/objective of document (e.g., to convince, provide information)
17.	Topic/issue of document
18.	Description topic/issue in the document
19.	Consistency of definitions & objectives with relation to other documents
20.	Conflict or agreement with other documents about the topic/issue
21.	Question(s) left unanswered by the document
Additional Notes:	

Appendix F

Document Review Form

Document/artifact	Who's perspective (teacher or parents)	Family Engagement indicators	Evidence of building/maintaining strengths-based relationships

Appendix G

IRB Approval Form



Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

Research Hall, 4400 University Drive, MS 6D5, Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703-993-5445; Fax: 703-993-9590

DATE: March 24, 2021

TO: Marjorie Haley
FROM: George Mason University IRB

Project Title: [1739398-1] A Case Study: Latinx Parents, Their Children's Teacher, and Their Family Engagement Experiences

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF NOT HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH
DECISION DATE: March 24, 2021

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office has determined this project does not meet the definition of human subject research under the purview of the IRB according to federal regulations.

You are required to follow the George Mason University Covid-19 research continuity of operations guidance. You may not begin or resume any face-to-face interactions with human subjects until (i) Mason has generally authorized the types of activities you will conduct, or (ii) you have received advance written authorization to do so from Mason's Research Review Committee. In all cases, all safeguards for face-to-face contact that are required by Mason's COVID policies and procedures must be followed.

Please remember that if you modify this project to include human subjects research activities, you are required to submit revisions to the IRB prior to initiation.

If you have any questions, please contact Katie Brooks at (703) 993-4121 or kbrook14@gmu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Please note that department or other approvals may be required to conduct your research.

GMU IRB Standard Operating Procedures can be found here: <https://oria.gmu.edu/topics-of-interest/human-subjects/>

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within George Mason University IRB's records.

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Biography

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